

SWADE 2019 Conference “It Starts With Us”

By: Cynthia Thompson, OKADE

Greeting Fellow NADE Members and DDS employees!

The SWADE Conference held in Oklahoma City on May 3rd was a huge success and has proven that we could very well be the beginning of bringing the regional conferences back. Due to national budget constraints for the last several years, SSA has had to limit funding for attendance of trainings and conferences. While this has been the case, it did not stop our own Billie Thomas from organizing and implementing the first training conference in eight years for our region. The Oklahoma Board members and their team stepped up and showed out yet again when it comes to being the off the charts conference hosts. Kudos to Billie Thomas, our Regional director, and her team for a job well done!



SWADE Board members President Jeanette Hawkins, President elect Cynthia Thompson and Treasurer Bruce Smith with NADE President Sharon Brady and Regional Director Billie Thomas



OKADE President Elect Sabrina Little Axe, Past President Brigitte Harper and Current President Bruce Smith

In attendance at the conference were members from the regional office, the current NADE President Dr. Sharon Brady, and our own DDS employees. We had several members from Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana to drop in on the SWADE Conference.



On the left: Brandon Robertson DPA, Jeanette Hawkins, Paula McMullian, Cynthia Thompson, Sharon Bland-Brady, Mary Dumars, Dr. John Hopkins, and Dr. Faran Dadfarmay. On the right: attendees at the conference.

Several states attended the conference by Skype including Missouri, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Alabama. They were able to listen in and participate verbally on the conference thanks to the Oklahoma DDS IT department setting up the system to allow other states to take part. With only a few technical difficulties, rave reviews were sent after the conference with people being excited to have been able to be a part.



Nicholas Gatmen IT Supervisor and Billie Thomas SW Region Director



Sabolich Prosthetics

We had a full day of learning and networking with some very interesting speakers. A representative from Sabolich Prosthetics came to the SWADE Conference to demonstrate the advancement in prosthetic and to talk about several factors for fitting the prosthesis. He did state that with Medicaid and Medicare and Insurance, all prosthetics companies are being paid the same amount – so choosing the correct company for fitting and follow-up is very important. He also wanted to make sure that we understood that preparation and fittings and follow-ups can involve an extended period of time. He demonstrated the “stump stocking” and several prosthetics.



Mobile Medical Services

Oklahoma DDS has recently partnered with Mobile Medical Services (MMS) for x-ray services. There are several advantages to use MMS – (1) MMS will go to the Claimant’s home to perform the x-rays – so there is no long travel for the Claimant and (2) Since they go to the Claimant’s home, they can perform the x-ray in the patient’s bed – so there is no table weight limit to prevent obtaining x-rays.

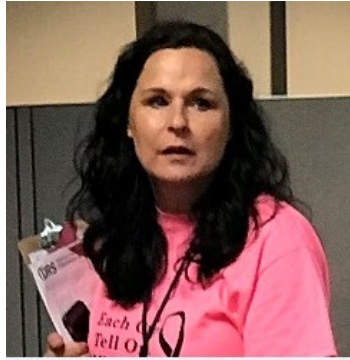
MMS brought their mobile x-ray equipment to the conference in one of their vehicles – a rather small car/van/SUV. The technician demonstrated the equipment by taking an x-ray of her Supervisor’s foot. The Tech sent the x-ray off to be read and received the report in about 20 minutes.

The use of MMS is not meant to take the place of the brick and mortar x-ray facilities we use, but to augment them for the Claimant who have problems using those facilities, due to distance or other circumstances. It was a very interesting presentation of technology which has been used in the private sector for many years – and is now being used in the disability determination process.



Pulmonary Demonstration

One of the Respiratory sources the Oklahoma DDS uses to perform Pulmonary Function Tests came to the Conference and spoke to us about PFT’s and DLCO’s. We have used this source for quite a while and have taken PR Officers to him to demonstrate PFT’s. During his presentation, he chose a volunteer and had her perform a “mock” PFT. He demonstrated how he strongly encourages the claimant to “BLOW, blow, blow, blow” during the PFT. The demonstration was well received and the group gained a new appreciation of how hard a PFT is and how much the Source relies on the claimant’s cooperation.



Crucial Conversations

Brenda Knutson, Training Specialist at the Oklahoma DDS, talked about how our relationships consist of three components: our interactions, our thoughts, and our feelings toward each other. We build and maintain our relationships one interaction and one conversation at a time. Not all conversations are created equal. When the stakes are high, there opposing opinions, and we have high emotions, we have a “crucial conversation” on our hands. Since we are wired with a “flight or fight” instinct, we often turn to silence or violence. In an effort to make our conversations as productive as possible, it is helpful to create a “pool of shared meaning.” To do this, we ask everyone involved to share with the group how they feel about and what they think about the situation. When people feel free to share this information with others, it creates a safety zone and helps deter others from immediately turning to silence or violence. CPR (Content/Pattern/Relationship) was also offered as a way to examine conversations that have historically gone poorly. Participants were also encouraged to examine their motives and “start with heart” when they face a crucial conversation. “The Path to Action,” was discussed. Participants were encouraged to listen to what story they are telling themselves. Three common stories are the victim, villain, and helpless stories. If you find yourself telling yourself one of these stories, you should take steps to make sure you have the correct story – instead of the one you made up in your own head. In your crucial conversations you should: share your facts, tell your story, ask for the other person’s story, talk tentatively, and encourage testing of the story you have in your head. When you recap and wrap up a crucial conversation, you should agree on: who will do what by when and what follow-up action is needed. Be sure to follow up as was agreed upon in your crucial conversation.



OIG Special Agent Michael Dewey with the Oklahoma CDI Unit (Cooperative Disability Investigations)

OIG Special Agent Michael Dewey gave a presentation at the conference regarding the CDI units' efforts in preserving the integrity of the SSA's disability programs. Special Agent Dewey discussed how the CDI units investigate suspicious disability claims, and how it was the CDI units' primary mission to obtain factual evidence that helps resolve questions of fraud in the SSA's disability programs. He also discussed how the CDI unit was set up with components from SSA's OIG, the SSA, the DDS and the state's law enforcement agency assigned to the CDI units, and went on to discuss the high risk factors that the SSA and the DDS should look for when reviewing disability claims. Special Agent Dewey pointed out that the Oklahoma City CDI unit had 119 allegation referrals opened and also closed out 163 cases in Fiscal Year 2018 with total savings for the SSA of \$12.5 million dollars. He went on to state that since the inception of the Oklahoma City CDI unit in 2011, this unit had saved SSA over \$128 million dollars. At the end of his presentation, Special Agent Dewey took and answered multiple questions from the conference attendees.

Overall, it was a really good informative conference, with some very Crucial Information and we could not close by not acknowledging our DDS's Administrative Team who spoke on the operations of the Oklahoma DDS. We would also like to thank our Administrator Brian Nickles for his support of not only our chapter hosting this conference, but also allowing OKADE to be the active chapter that we are. It is so very much appreciated.



Cynthia Thompson, NON-DUES Chairperson



From Left to Right: Travis Dodson CDPS Director, Brian Nickles, Division Administrator, Jama West, Deputy Administrator, Keith Tiller, Deputy Administrator, Steve Middleton, Deputy Administrator and Bruce Smith, OKADE President.



Brandon Robertson DPA, Brian Nickles, Division Administrator



Kiet Bang, OKADE Secretary and Sabrina Little-Axe, OKADE President-Elect



Brigitte Harper, OKADE Past President, Dr. Sharon Brady, NADE President