



# THE ADVOCATE

A PUBLICATION  
OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
DISABILITY  
EXAMINERS

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3  
2018

## Upcoming Events:



**NADE 2019 National Conference**  
Atlanta, GA  
August 18-21, 2019

Please submit articles or questions about the advocate to [sara.b.winn@ssa.gov](mailto:sara.b.winn@ssa.gov)

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# NADE President's Message

**Sharon Bland Brady, PhD**

I am honored and privileged to have served as NADE's President this year. As my tenure comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on this year.



In November 2018, NADE participated on a SSA National Disability Forum Panel in Washington, D.C. As a result of that successful forum, NADE was invited to join the SSA Advisory Board Forum by teleconference shortly thereafter. In March 2019, I participated in another forum in Baltimore, Maryland at SSA Headquarters. The take away from these forums? External customer service needs improvement in our DDS offices.

At our mid-year meeting, SSA dignitaries provided valuable information and updates. We were also able to meet our new Honorable Inspector General, Gail Ennis. She provided updates on the CDIU program.

I also participated in quarterly conference calls with the Office of Disability Determinations (ODD), the Office of Disability Policy (ODP), and the Office of Quality Review (OQR). These were fruitful in many ways. As a result of our conversations, OQR made some changes to how they review and provide feedback on their returns.

Our Capitol Hill visits were a big success. Jennifer Nottingham, Sara Winn, and I met with the Ways and Means committee, SSA Advisory Board, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress. We also met with other agencies to discuss issues important to NADE. For a list of NADE's top issues, please see NADE's website and page 3. We realize that many NADE members are being impacted by budget constraints, including their travel. I continue to advocate for sponsorships for NADE members to attend NADE Conferences.

The National Training Conference in Atlanta, Georgia is less than two months away. I am eager to participate in this event. I encourage NADE Sub-Chapters to come up with innovative and creative ways to sponsor members from their chapter to participate in this conference. The conference committee has worked hard to ensure a variety of topics for all audiences. SSA representatives will also speak and make themselves available for your feedback during the week. Please make sure to thank the Atlanta, Georgia chapter (GADE) for their hard work to make this conference a huge success.

I recently attended the Southwest regional conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I want to give a huge thanks to Billie Thomas for putting this outstanding conference together. I was very impressed with all of the speakers.

I thank you for entrusting in me this year to advocate on NADE's behalf. It has been a humbling experience. I'd also like to thank Tonya Scott, Jennifer Pounds, Sara Winn, Jennifer Nottingham and Jeff Price for supporting me and mentoring me in this endeavor. It has been a pleasurable and rewarding experience. I look forward to working closely with Sara Winn next year, as she becomes the NADE President. I also have enormous respect for NADE retirees.

Please renew or join NADE. The benefits of membership in a national organization such as ours can be very rewarding and educational, and an opportunity to network with people from all over the nation.



Having walked 35 miles in 5 days on Capitol Hill, our president takes a short breather

# NADE's Top Issues for 2019

- **Staffing:** Funding is needed to achieve and maintain adequate funding levels
- **CDRs:** Continued investment in timely Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs)
- **DCPS:** NADE supports continued development of the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS)
- **IT Modernization:** Investment in technology to make reviewing of evidence easier, such as the ability to identify duplicate records
- **Training:** Investment in training is critical for quality determinations
- **CDI:** Continue support for Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units and expansion efforts to decrease fraud and abuse
- **Telecommuting:** Expand upon telecommuting pilots, which can be a workload incentive
- **Reconsideration Reviews:** NADE supports the return of the reconsideration review level to all DDS's. This ensures that all applicants receive an equal opportunity for review and that DDSs will finally have a unified process. The DDS reconsideration decisions are cheaper and timelier than ALJ decisions.
- **Reduction in 15 Year Work History:** Due to vast changes in the occupational landscape, it is unfair current regulations allow claims to be denied on the basis claimants have an ability to perform a job they performed previously but which no longer exists, or a job they would no longer recognize.
- **Evaluation of Vocational Regulations and Processes:** NADE suggests a review of the vocational regulations and business process to ensure that processes are consistent between the DDS and ALJs. Vocational business processes need to be streamlined and consider the impact of transferable skills.
- **Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS):** We support a careful re-examination of the Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS) and its impact on the disability program.
- **Timely Revision of the Listings:** NADE supports SSA's ongoing efforts to make timely revisions to the Listings of Impairments to reflect technological advancements and current medical research.
- **Utilization of Disability Benefits:** NADE encourages a review of how benefits are utilized once awarded. Steps may be necessary to ensure there is adequate efforts to follow prescribed treatment, of particular concern are childhood disability cases and cash benefits.
- **Customer Service Improvements:** NADE encourages efforts to build upon customer service improvement efforts. There has been an obvious impact from hiring freezes and inability to keep up with attrition. Having adequate funding for hiring, training and overtime will help with processing time and improve decisional accuracy. Supporting DDSs to have competitive salaries will help retain experienced personnel.

## Candidate for President-Elect

### Marjorie Garcia

I would like to take this opportunity to announce my candidacy for the office of NADE President-Elect for 2019-2020.

I began my career with the DDS as an analyst in West Virginia in October 2004, and joined NADE promptly the next year. As a chapter member, I accepted a variety of roles before moving to Oregon in 2008 and joining the Salem chapter. Since joining the Oregon chapter, I've served as the chapter's chairperson for the Leadership and Development Committee, chapter Secretary, President-Elect, President and Past President. Each of these opportunities provided me with insight and knowledge of the ongoing issues facing the state DDS offices and the challenges related to sustaining a local NADE chapter.



I've remained active in the Oregon chapter while serving in an elected office on the Pacific Region board, first as Secretary, then as Pacific Region Director from 2015 to present. This board experience exposed me to the broader program issues shared by the DDDs and SSA. It allowed me to participate in round-table discussions with the Disability Program Administrators.

I've been honored, over the years, to be involved in promoting the benefits of NADE and professional growth. I am especially proud of and grateful for my peers' recognition for these efforts via the NADE Frank Barclay and John Gordon awards. I'd like to continue my work on behalf of all NADE members as your President-Elect.

I respectfully request your support.

## Candidate for Southeast Regional Director

### Melissa Williamson

Hello NADE Members!



I would like to announce my candidacy for the position of Southeast Regional Director.

Since joining NADE in 2003, I have served in multiple positions on the local, regional and national levels. I have served on multiple chapter committees to raise funds for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Donate Life, Wounded Warrior, and others.

I have served on the chapter board in the following positions and terms: President Elect 2010-2011; President 2011-2012 and 2012-2013; Past President 2013-2014; Board Member at Large 2008-2009 and 2017-2018; and Secretary 2018-2019. I served as a member of the Southeast Regional Board 2011-2013.

On the national level, I have served as a member of the Legislative Committee and Awards Committee. I served as the National Disability Professional's Week Committee Chair in 2014-2015. In August 2015, I was named to the NADE National Board as the Membership Director and have continued to serve in this capacity to date. I would like to serve as the Southeast Regional Director to work more closely with the region's chapters to grow a stronger membership base/retention and mentor up-coming leaders for our organizations future. I humbly ask for and appreciate your support.



# Candidate for Southeast Regional Director

Tonya M. Scott

I would like to take the opportunity to announce my candidacy for the office of NADE Southeast Regional Director 2019.

I have served as NADE President (2016-2017) and President-Elect (2015-2016).

I served as NADE Secretary during the period 2008-2015 and 2017-2018. Since joining the NADE Board in September 2008, I have grown in wisdom and knowledge. I have successfully fulfilled the duties charged in all of the positions held. I have truly enjoyed the time that I have served and ask for your support and vote that I may continue to serve you as your Southeast Regional Director.



I started working for the Georgia DDS October 2000. I joined NADE in April 2001. I have continued to strive to be an active, productive member in my local chapter. I have served on various committees on the local level (Community Services, Program/Social, Ways and Means, and Membership), as well as on the Regional level. I served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Southeast region for the 2006-2007 year. I served as the treasurer for our local chapter for two years, 2006-2008. I served as President of my local chapter, GADE, during 2011. I was a recipient of the NADE Charles O. Blalock Award in 2017. I was awarded the NADE Lewis Buckingham Award in 2015. I was also awarded the GADE E. B. Agnor Award for Adjudicator of the Year in 2006 and I was a 2009 Nominee for the GADE Regional Service Award. In 2011, I received the Social Security Regional Commissioner's Citation in recognition for exemplary performance and dedication in servicing the needs of the public and to the Agency.

I have benefited greatly from the NADE training opportunities. I have enjoyed attending and meeting other members. My involvement with the local chapter of GADE and with NADE activities/training has greatly benefited me in my ability to serve the claimants more effectively. I look forward to the opportunity to continue serve NADE and will dedicate the time required to perform the duties as Southeast Regional Directory.

I respectfully request your support again.

Thank you,

Tonya M Scott

# *Atlanta: **GAD**Way to the South*

**When:** August 18-21, 2019

**Where:** Crowne Plaza-Midtown Atlanta

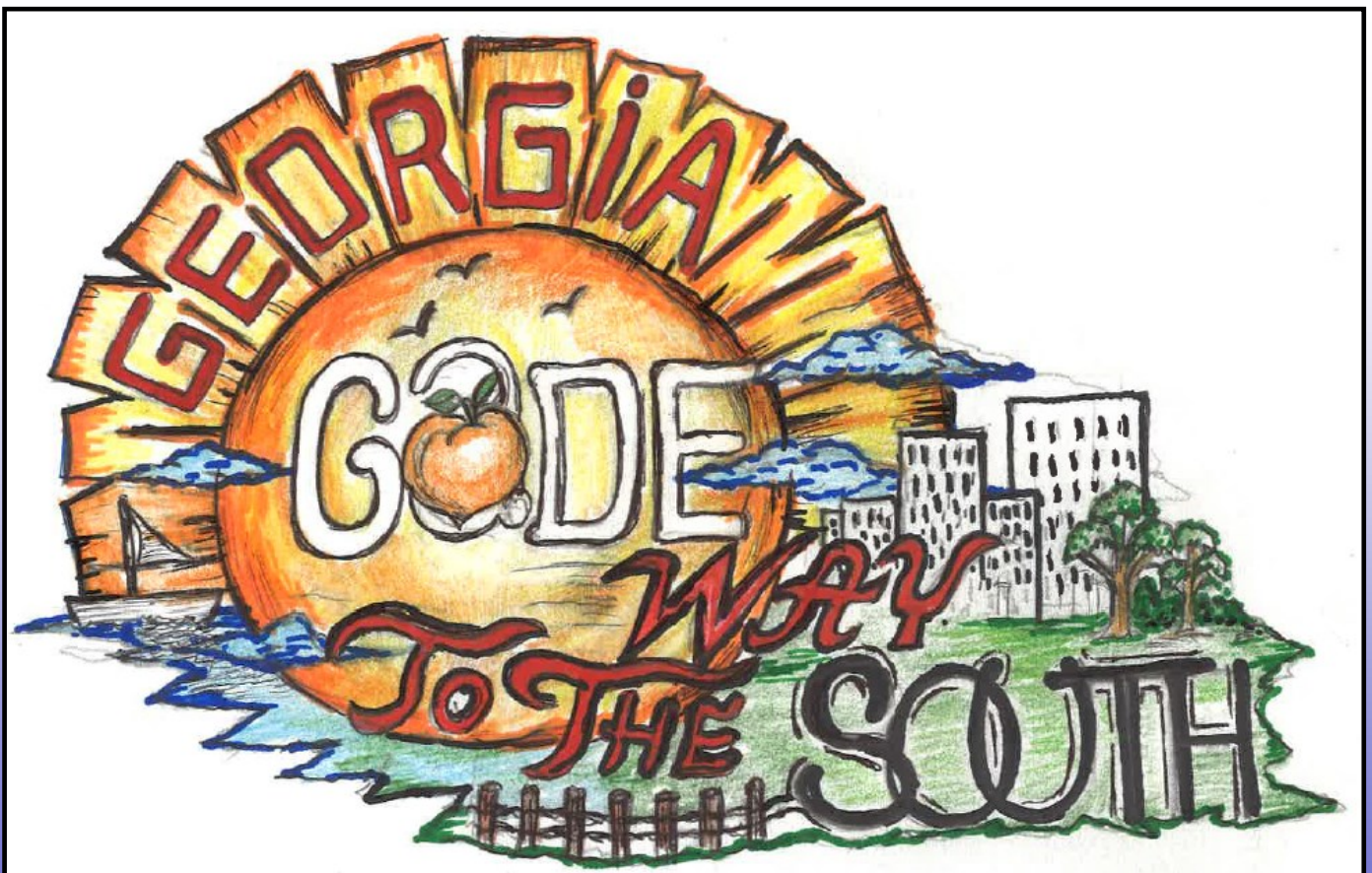
**Room Rate:** Single \$152, Double \$152

**Hosted by:** Georgia Association of Disability Employees (GADE)

NADE Members \$215 Non-Members \$275

**Early registration ends 06/14/2019**

Please visit the website: [www.nadeatl2019.com](http://www.nadeatl2019.com)



# 2019 NADE Training Conference

|                        |   |              |
|------------------------|---|--------------|
| <b>Aug<br/>18</b>      | <b>Sunday</b>   |              |
| 9:00 am – 4:00 pm      | Conference Registration   | Location TBD |
| 9:00 am – 5:00 pm      | 2018 – 2019 NADE Board Directors Meeting  |              |
| 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm      | President's Reception   |              |
| <b>AU<br/>G<br/>19</b> | <b>Monday</b>   |              |
| 7:00 am – 4:00 pm      | Conference Registration   |              |
| 7:30 am – 8:00 am      | First Time Conference Attendees Meeting   |              |
| 8:00 am – 8:45 am      | Opening Ceremonies<br>National Anthem, -----<br>Rose Mary Buehler, SSA Atlanta Regional Commissioner<br>Rita McWhorter, GA DDS Director |              |
| 8:45 am – 9:30 am      | Dr. Sharon Bland-Brady, NADE President's Address  |              |
| 9:30 am – 10:30 am     | Grace Kim, Deputy Commissioner of Operations  |              |
| 10:30 am – 10:45 am    | Networking (Break)  |              |
| 10:45 am – 11:45 am    | TBD   |              |
| 11:45 am – 1:00 pm     | Lunch on your own   |              |
| 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm      | John Owen, Associate Commissioner Office of Disability Determinations   |              |
| 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm      | Gale Ennis (or designee), OIG Inspector General   |              |
| 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm      | Networking (Break)  |              |
| 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm      | CDI Workshop by OIG Office of Investigation and ATL CDI Unit<br><i>CDI Unit Investigative Updates and Techniques Used</i>               |              |
| 4:15 pm – 5:15 pm      | NADE Membership Meeting   |              |

| Aug<br>20           | Tuesday  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| 7:00 am – 8:00 am   | Conference Registration  |  |
| 7:00 am – 8:00 am   | Council of Chapter Presidents Meeting  |  |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am   | Ms. Barbara Hallisey, Associate Clinical Services Director of Partners Behavioral Health Management of North Carolina.<br><br><i>The Opioid Epidemic: What you need to know about Pain management and Addiction</i>      |  |
| 9:00 am – 10:30 am  | DCPS Presentation<br><br>Derek Pulliam, DCPS and Mary Lindauer   |  |
| 10:30 am – 10:45 am | Networking (Break)   |  |
| 10:45 am – 12:00 pm | Bobby Howard, Life Link Director<br><br><i>Organ Donation: Facilitating the donation of desperately needed organs and tissues for waiting patients and improving clinical outcomes of patients post transplantation.</i> |  |
| 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm  | Awards Luncheon  |  |
| 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm   | Tracey Stepney, GVRA Assistive Technology<br><br><i>Advances in Hearing and Visual Assistive Technology</i>  |  |
| 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm   | Networking (Break)   |  |
| 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm   |  |  |
| 4:15 pm – 5:15 pm   | General Membership Meeting   |  |
|                     |  |  |
| Aug<br>21           | Wednesday  |  |
| 7:00 am – 9:00 am   | Conference Registration  |  |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am   | Dr. Alawode Oladele, Georgia DDS MC<br><br><i>Current HIV Treatments</i>   |  |
| 9:00 am – 10:00 am  | ATL Office of Quality Review<br>Cathy Read-Baca or Amy Swilley<br><br><i>Top 5 Vocational Deficiencies &amp; How to Avoid Them</i>   |  |
| 10:00 am – 10:15 am | Networking (Break)   |  |
| 10:15 am – 12:00 pm | Katina Wood, Center Director, Emory Proton Therapy Center<br><br><i>How Proton Therapy Works and Its effects on the Patients Who Receive the Therapy</i>   |  |
| 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  | Lunch on your own  |  |



|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Dr. Lee Brinkley Bryan, Ed.D, CRC, CVE, Director of Residential and Transition Services<br><br>Tiffany Hudson, Student Employment Services Assistant Director<br><br>Megon Steele, MS, CRC, PVE - Roosevelt Warm Springs Vocational Assessment Services Manager<br><br><i>Living and Working with Disabilities</i> |  |
| 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Speaker TBD<br>Grady Health System Burn Unit   |  |
| 3:30 pm – 3:45 pm | Networking (Break)   |  |
| 3:45 pm – 4:00 pm | Closing Ceremony and Passing of the Gavel  |  |
| 4:00 pm – 4:15 pm | NADE President's Introductory Remarks  |  |
| 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm | 2019 – 2020 NADE Board of Directors Meeting (New Board)  |  |

The training conference will take place on August 19<sup>th</sup> – August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. The conference will start with registration at 7:00 a.m.

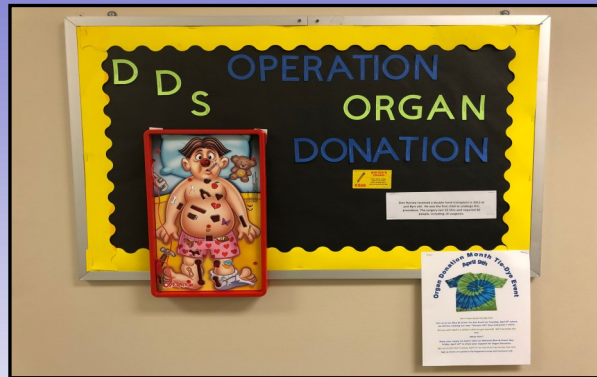
### **The Objective of the Training:**

Presentations will be from the leading medical and psychological consultants, leadership from Social Security and community based educational speakers. It is our goal to provide knowledge, skills and insights into the most current health, policy and program information. This training will better equip staff with tools for their everyday job functions.

The audience will be Social Security Administration employees, Social Security disability examiners, managers, medical consultants, para-professionals, administrative support staff: fiscal and IT, disability examiner assistants, attorneys, and executives.

# THADE ORGAN DONATION AWARENESS MONTH - April 2019<sup>10</sup>

## NC DDS – Organ Donation Committee



THADE Organ Donation Awareness Committee organized a month-long list of events and activities for the NC DDS employees to help raise their awareness of organ donation. We broke Organ Donation month down into weekly themes.

### **Week 1: Be a Lifesaver!**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, we delivered Lifesavers candy and fliers to each unit supervisor for distribution to their teams to raise awareness and encourage organ donation: Be a “lifesaver” and donate an organ!



### **Week 2: National Blue and Green Day**

National Donate Life Blue and Green Day is every year on April 12th. We tied-dyed T-shirts at work on April 9th and held a photo contest, then wore our finished shirts on April 12th.

### **Week 3: Guest Speaker**

Deanna Mitchell of Donate Life NC came to the NC DDS office on Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> to share with employees at a “Lunch & Learn” session about organ donation. DDS Employee Denise Frost also shared her family’s experience with donating organs.



## Week 4: Sign-Up Opportunities to become a Registered Donor

We tried to spread the word about Organ Donation this year via video presentations emailed to individuals during the first three weeks of April. Each video included a trivia question, and each winner received a \$10.00 gift card. The following is a link to a website we used as a resource for the videos: <https://www.organdonor.gov/awareness/materials/videos.html>

More photos from our tie-dye day:





# USE OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS EXPRESS & ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD FOR DDS/SSA REPORT SUBMISSION

By: Claude Earl Fox, M.D, M.P.H, FAAP

During the last 10 years EMR ONE has employed a unique approach for the use of SSA Medical Evidence of Record (MEF) and the submission of internal medicine, pediatric and orthopedic consultative exams to DDS offices. We have partnered with a software firm, Cy-ramedx ( CMX), in the development of an electronic records express (ERE) 10 years ago that with SSAs approval, has interfaced with and in many ways mirrors the SSA ERE site. Beginning 7 years ago CMX and EMR ONE started the development of an electronic medical record (EMR) tailored for use by providers in performing DDS/SSA CEs. These tools, collectively the ERE and EMR now interface and have been in continuous use in 10 states for the last 5 years. In the last year, our staff have been jointly reviewing volume vendors who use an electronic medical record for the submission of CEs and have found that even in the largest companies most generally still use traditional dictation and transcription systems. The Vendors using our system believe the cloud-based, HIPPA compliant ERE/EMR system is vastly superior to traditional systems. EMR applications are more efficient and cost effective (often reducing report preparation costs by half) and can help the clinical providers submit timely reports that comply with the standards and information requested by state DDS offices for their respective CEs. An example of this would be that when requesting grading of muscle strength, our EMR exhibits to the provider the scale used by DDS in grading so the medical provider is using the same scale used by DDS. The final report submitted to DDS also contains this same scale so they can see the definitions used by our provider.

The EMR system is totally cloud based and can be run on any type of computer equipment whether windows or IOS based. Since it is cloud based, no programming or claimant information is retained on any local machines in any way and providers can only access the system through a unique user name and password and/or two-factor authentication as needed or password reset requirements that can be configured for any time interval (e.g. 30 days, 60 days, etc.)

Since information can be shared in real time, reports can generally be submitted within 24-48 hours of the exam and appear to DDS as a transcribed and typed report. Also the formatting of the EMR guides the provider in how to frame his or her comments and recommendations regarding functional limitations. Additional forms/information can be submitting with the report through the federal ERE site to augment the review process.



## SWADE 2019 Conference: “It Starts With Us”



By: Cynthia Thompson, OKADE

Due to national budget constraints for the last several years, SSA has had to limit funding for attendance of trainings and conferences. This did not stop our own Billie Thomas from organizing and implementing the first training conference in eight years for our region. It was a huge success, and could forecast a return of regional conferences. The Oklahoma Board members and their team stepped up as excellent conference hosts. Kudos to Billie Thomas, our Regional director, and her team for a job well done!

Several states attended the conference by Skype including Missouri, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Alabama. They were able to listen and participate in the conference thanks to the Oklahoma DDS's IT department who set up the system. With only a few technical difficulties, we received rave reviews from remote participants.

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 advancements in prosthetics and discuss fitting prostheses. He stated 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 a “stump stocking” and several styles of prosthetics.

Oklahoma DDS has recently partnered with Mobile Medical Services (MMS) for x-ray services for our claimants. They will go to a claimant's home to perform the x-rays, and can even take the images in a claimant's bed. MMS brought their mobile x-ray equipment to the conference in one of their vehicles – a rather small van. 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.

One of the sources the Oklahoma DDS uses to perform Pulmonary Function Tests came to the conference and spoke to us about PFTs and DLCOs. During his presentation, the technician 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. The group gained a new appreciation of how hard a PFT is, and how much the technician relies on the claimant's cooperation.



OIG Special Agent Michael Dewey gave a presentation at the conference regarding the CDI units' efforts to preserve the integrity of the SSA's disability programs. The CDI units' primary mission is to obtain factual evidence that helps resolve questions of fraud in SSA's disability programs. Special Agent Dewey discussed how the CDI units investigate suspicious disability claims. He discussed how each CDI unit is set up with components from OIG, SSA, DDS and the state's law enforcement agency, and the high-risk factors that SSA and DDS should look for when reviewing disability claims. He pointed out that the Oklahoma City CDI unit closed out 163 cases in Fiscal Year 2018 with total savings for the SSA of \$12.5 million dollars. Since the inception of the Oklahoma City CDI unit in 2011, his 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.

Finally, our DDS's Administrative Team spoke on the operations of the Oklahoma DDS, which was much appreciated. We would like to thank our Administrator Brian Nickles for his support of our chapter and this conference.



**TO ORDER NADE MERCHANDISE, CONTACT:**

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All proceeds to benefit NADE/Non-Dues Revenue  
<http://www.nade.org/join-nade/nade-merchandise/>

# CORPORATE MEMBERS

Visit <http://www.nade.org/about-nade/nade-corporate-members/> for information about becoming a corporate member.

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Barbara J. Young  
Vice President of Business Development






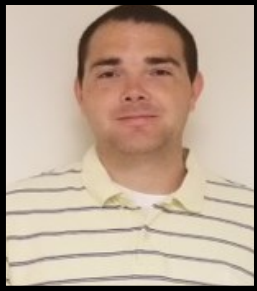
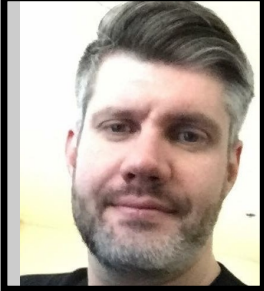








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# NADE BOARD 2018

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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