

NADE



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EXAMINERS

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# We Are NADE

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Visit

<http://www.nade.org/about-nade/nade-corporate-members/>

for information about becoming a corporate member.



## President's Message

Greetings!

I want to wish my NADE family a very Happy New Year! As we go into 2020, one of NADE's goals is to represent each member to the best of its ability. To do that, I need to hear from you. Please send your suggestions, feedback, comments and concerns through your Regional Director so that we can improve service to you, our members.

I hope you all took advantage of the 18-month recruitment bonus in January. I have offered to send prizes to the chapters who both recruit the most new members, and have the most membership renewals. NADE jackets were a success and will be offered again in the near future and available for order prior to the National Training Conference in Helena, MT. Be on the lookout for order forms.

In November 2019, I had the pleasure of traveling to DC and representing NADE as a forum member for the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB) meeting. This was a great opportunity for NADE to stay on the forefront and have a voice in upcoming policy changes and proposals.

If you are interested in being a board member and serving NADE on a national level, please contact your Regional Directors and ask about the mentor program. If you have not done so, please also check out NADE's professional certification program.

The NADE board will meet Feb. 2020 in Baltimore, MD to have our annual mid-year meeting. We will discuss NADE's top issues as well as other important NADE business. We ask that if your chapter has exciting events, fundraisers, or recruitment stories, let us hear them! Submit an article for The Advocate. I am encouraged to hear that many chapters are becoming more active, but the success of NADE depends on all of us. Have a great first quarter of 2020!

Sara Winn

NADE President



*"Be the change you want to see in the world." ~ Gandhi*

# **Actions Speak Louder Than Words:**

## **Supporting My Staff Through Support of NADE**

Jacqueline Russell, Director

North Carolina DDS



For many years, decades now, I have worked to think about how I can match my actions to my words and intentions. As a new Director, I tell my DDS staff often how much I appreciate them and their work to support our claimants. I wondered though, do I show our DDS staff that I am with them in their work, listening and learning more about the stressors of their work? Joining NADE and our state chapter became important to me because I genuinely believe I learn more about the day to day going on with our Analysts, Supervisors, Office Assistants, Case Consultants, etc. with their work. I may not be the most involved NADE member but I am involved, I do my best to show up for staff at events to serve lunch, bring items, listen at meetings to what people want to learn more about. I had the opportunity to attend the recent NADE conference which provided me with an opportunity to listen and learn from a strong panel of speakers including the Regional Commissioner, Inspector General from the Office of the Inspector General, the DCPS Deployment Manager, DQB Leaders, and many others that I had the opportunity to learn from and advocate to for my North Carolina DDS team. I don't know how many other state DDS Directors are NADE members. I do know I am glad to be a NADE member, glad to laugh, learn and serve alongside other staff at the North Carolina DDS. Your NADE members are pouring into your staff, join them. Take action now, join your state chapter to become a NADE member in January, and even better attend the next NADE conference!! I hope to see you there!

## Interview with Arizona Administrator John DeMaria



AADE in Arizona is a true success story. In 2017, the chapter had only one member. It had been fairly dormant since the 1980s. Then Amber Barnes, a NADE member since 2016, moved from CADE in Colorado to Arizona DDS. She approached John DeMaria, DDS Administrator, about increasing membership. She described all that NADE had done for her personally, and what it had done for the office in Colorado. John was new to Arizona DDS in 2017, too, and enthusiastically supported the idea. He became a member, and now the chapter has 26!

### **Why did you join NADE?**

I came to DDS as Administrator from the Family Assistance Program. I didn't have my roots in Social Security Disability. I wanted to get a better connection with staff. I appreciated NADE's inclusivity of all types of members: analysts, support staff, managers, etc. I wanted to get a new perspective on the work itself versus walking around, asking questions and sitting in trainings. I like knowing what's happening on the front lines.

### **What value do you think NADE has for your individual staff members?**

It helps align offices, our two offices in Arizona and offices across the country. NADE brings them together and fosters camaraderie. It gives people who may not have leadership experience or opportunities to lead on a peer level. It gives them freedom to partner with others in the agency versus sitting at their desk, focusing on production. Helps elevate them outside the grind of their computer, to internalize that this is more than just a job, it's a profession. I wanted to disrupt the grind culture and elevate opportunities for growth and networking. It helps develop thoughtful discourse and meaningful group dynamics. It promotes harmonious work relationships.

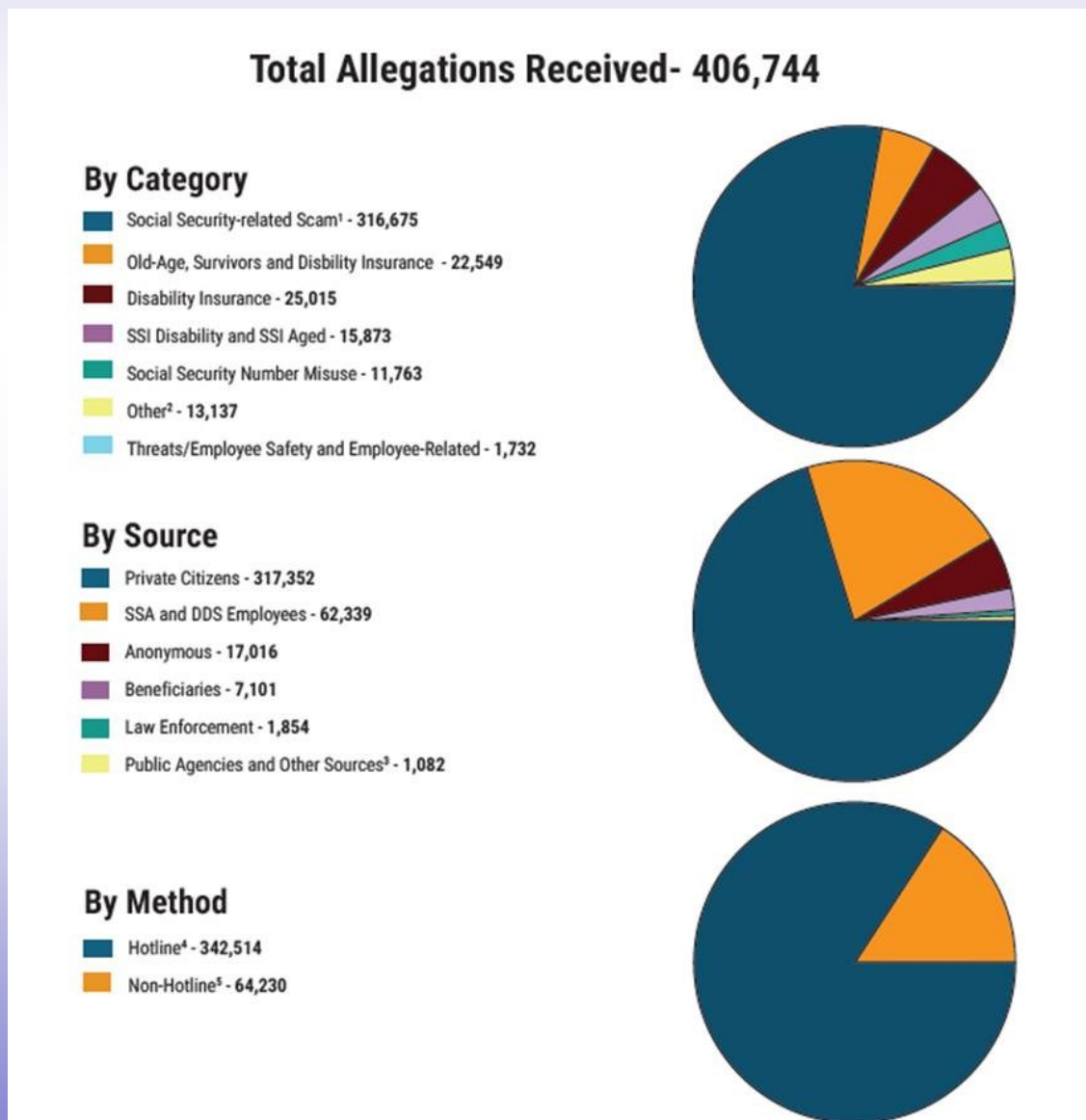
### **What value do you think NADE has for your agency as a whole?**

Our members are concerned about their numbers, so are gun-shy about attending meetings. I know that happier employees produce more. When we scale back on things like NADE in favor of production, we lose out on buy-in: people's sense that they're part of something bigger, with a greater purpose than production. If they lose that perspective, their production will suffer. Buy-in is intangible, you can't measure it, but it has value. Membership instills a sense of professionalism. When people are treated like professionals, they'll do better in their job. People who care more, do more. We all want to help the claimant, but how can we if we don't invest in the staff, invest in the health of our agency?

## CDI Goes the Distance









There's great news on the fraud-busting front! SSA opened three new Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units, in North Dakota, Idaho and Montana. CDI now has 46 units covering 40 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It also covers the US territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the US Virgin Islands. SSA continues to work with state and local partners to expand CDI coverage for all 50 states by 2022.

At the OIG website ([tinyurl.com/sse2s9y](https://tinyurl.com/sse2s9y)), you can see this pie chart and other interesting information about fraud investigations:



# FRAUD BUSTERS

Did you know that OIG has an “America’s Most Wanted”-style fugitives list? Did you know that OIG has a podcast? It’s all available at [oig.hhs.gov/fraud/fugitives](http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/fugitives). Here are some of the most wanted fraudsters in the nation:

			
<b><u>Abayomi Onajobi</u></b> DOB: <u>10-21-1969</u> Height: <u>5'9"</u> Weight: <u>195 lbs.</u>	<b><u>Ashot Sanamian</u></b> DOB: <u>08-19-1982</u> Height: <u>5'10"</u> Weight: <u>300 lbs.</u>	<b><u>Legrn Smbatyan</u></b> DOB: <u>01-10-1983</u> Height: <u>5'08"</u> Weight: <u>174 lbs</u>	<b><u>Ebong Tilong</u></b> DOB: <u>09-02-1964</u> Height: <u>6'1"</u> Weight: <u>265 lbs.</u>
			
<b><u>Daniel Guerra</u></b> DOB: <u>06-13-1964</u> Height: <u>Unknown</u> Weight: <u>Unknown</u>	<b><u>Betros Garabet</u></b> DOB: <u>03-09-1966</u> Height: <u>5'08"</u> Weight: <u>165 lbs</u>	<b><u>Amaury Perez</u></b> DOB: <u>10-16-1976</u> Height: <u>5'9"</u> Weight: <u>150-160 lbs</u>	<b><u>Khachatryan Yervand</u></b> DOB: <u>09-10-1957</u> Height: <u>5'9"</u> Weight: <u>165 lbs</u>

You can also find a list of captured fugitives there. One was Tomas De Armas. On March 4, 2016, De Armas was arrested in Miami, Florida, by U.S. Marshals. He was indicted on charges of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and health care fraud.

Investigators learned that De Armas recruited and paid Medicare beneficiaries for the use of their personal information, and then created false prescriptions for pharmaceutical drugs to bill Medicare. De Armas provided patient information to several pharmacies. Investigators linked DeArmas to between \$5 million and \$10 million in fraudulent Medicare claims.

Authorities determined he was receiving disability benefits and terminated them. De Armas inquired about the loss of benefits and provided an address for future correspondence. The address was inaccurate. Through surveillance, U.S. Marshals located and arrested him at another address. De Armas was sentenced on September 21, 2016, to 3 years and 4 months in jail. He could not avoid De long Armas of the law!



## Let's Be Safe Out There!

It's good to know that the Federal Protective Service (FPS), the local police and our DDS offices take employee safety very seriously, isn't it? Here are some examples of swift justice brought to people who threatened Social Security staff.

- Knoxville, TN: FPS investigated a 53-year-old applicant for DI benefits who threatened to kill a DDS employee after learning that his claim would be denied. He pleaded guilty to intimidation, and in September, 2019 he was sentenced to three years' probation.
- Kalamazoo, MI: When a 55-year-old from Florida who'd applied for DI benefits threatened to obtain a firearm and shoot everyone in the Kalamazoo Field Office if his application was denied in December, 2018, the office was put on alert and a Public Safety officer was dispatched to provide security. OIG and the Daytona Beach Police Department cooperated to bring him in. He was released on bond, failed to appear, and was arrested again. In August, 2019 he pleaded guilty to sending threatening interstate communications and was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison, plus two years of supervised release.
- Salem, OR: A 45 year old man threatened employees at Salem's Social Security field office when his DI benefits were denied. He attended a review hearing in July, 2019 and shouted at the administrative law judge, threatening future violence. The police were called, and he left without incident.

On September 11, 2019, he allegedly left a voicemail for an OIG employee threatening to attend the next hearing and 'make people pay.' That same day, he posted a threat on Facebook:

"Social Security tried to have me arrested, trespassed me from all SSI buildings. Some of them will not make it to December. It's time I showed them. I will make sure the whole country stands up and takes notice. I will make the front page and air on every TV station."

He was arrested shortly thereafter, and was set to be arraigned in October. We've been unable to find any current information on the case.





# A Day in the Life of a QA Examiner

## An Interview with Dawn Coulter, Oregon DDS

*This is part of a continuing series of interviews, designed to help each of us walk a mile in another's shoes, to build bridges between departments. If you're interested in participating, please email [Korin.M.Gary@SSA.gov](mailto:Korin.M.Gary@SSA.gov). Participants from all departments, including retirees, are welcome!*

### How long have you been a QA reviewer, Dawn?

I joined QA in August of 2014. I started with DDS as an analyst in September, 2006.

### What was your impression of QA before you started?

I've always appreciated QA. I appreciated the returns I received. I saw them as a learning tool, and as a challenge. I wanted to avoid making the same mistake again. I didn't think I'd become a QA reviewer because it seemed really hard. And, it is!

### Tell me about your days.

I work four 10-hour shifts Monday through Thursday. I arrive at 5:30AM, log in and clean up my work area. I use a notebook for scratch paper, so I turn to a fresh page. I get a list of cases up for review, and direction about how many cases we should choose. We each choose a balance of cases by type, so that no one is reviewing one sort of claim all day. We don't choose the claims by who the analyst was. All we know up front is the claim type. We're directed to process as many as we can in a day. The size of my caseload changes daily. When I'm ready to get started, I do QDD/CAL cases first.



### What do other work do you do, aside from reviewing cases?

We have "QA of the Day" for analysts to get a consultation. On days when I'm QA of the Day, I don't get a caseload. If it's slow, I'll offer to help other reviewers with their caseloads, and pick QDD/CAL cases off the queue when they come up. Some days, there are so many requests for a consult that I can hardly catch my breath! We're also responsible for CDIU cases, and do vocational consults.

### What do you do on your lunch break?

I go to the gym across the street. I take a Club Dance class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On other days, I'll use the treadmill or weights. I used to join our knitting group, but they switched days to conflict with Club Dance, and I love that class. I'm not willing to give it up!

(continued)

**How do you end your day?**

I write notes to myself in that notebook about things I'll need to remember the next day, like meetings and trainings. Then I gather up my stuff and head for the door!

**Do you feel like people treat you like the enemy?**

I know that some people see me as 'the bad guy,' and that hurts. Some reviewers may not mind being seen that way, but I do. I try to compartmentalize it, and remind myself and others that it's not me, it's my job. I can do my job in a kind way, and keep my returns concise, and be available for questions and concerns.

**Do you have people who march into your cubicle spoiling for an argument?**

No, management has protected us from stuff like that, by encouraging people to come to a consult with an open attitude. That doesn't happen very often at all.

**Do you feel isolated, separated from the analysts and doctors the way you are on the other side of the building?**

Yeah. That was hard, at first. I have friends who are analysts, though. They'll come over here, or I'll go over there. And when I need someone to bounce things off of, we have our lead QA analysts. They're great.

**What's your favorite part of the job? What's your biggest frustration?**

My favorite part is the fact that no two days are alike. Every day brings different cases and different workloads, different demands. My biggest frustration is that no two days are alike! Some days, I wish things could just be black and white, and I could settle into a routine. It's challenging.

**Anything else you love about the job?**

I love the opportunity to protect the claimant and the analyst. That's how I see my job: protecting the claimant and analysts from errors. I love that I'm still learning. Who'd have thought that after 14 years, I'd still be learning? But I am, I do.

## Social Security Phone Scam Education and Prevention Activities

The Social Security Administration is alarmed by the volume and success of scam calls, and we are determined to do what we can to protect Americans. Public awareness is key. We are working to educate people how to recognize a scam call, end the call, and report it to our Office of the Inspector General (OIG). We are asking advocates to help get the word out. We are providing an educational article with information for you to share with your clients as well as providing this fact sheet to help your staff handle client inquiries about these scams. We welcome any other ideas you have to help us protect Americans from these scammers.

### Overall Message

Scammers play on emotion—generally fear—to get people to act without thinking. If a caller states there is a problem with a person's Social Security Number or account:

#### 1. **HANG UP!**

2. **DO NOT** provide the caller with money — cash, gift card, wire transfers, or pre-paid debit cards — or personal information.

3. **REPORT IT** at [oig.ssa.gov](https://oig.ssa.gov)

### We have taken a number of actions to date. We:

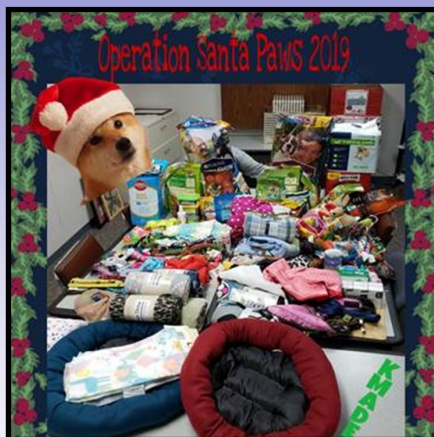
- Collaborated with major phone carriers to block many calls that attempt to spoof our toll-free phone numbers from ever reaching the public;
- Created an online reporting form for the public to report suspicious calls to OIG;
- Distributed television and radio public service announcements throughout the country, issued a national press release, and posted to social media to warn the public;
- Collaborated with OIG to display a video in 2,100 Walmart stores nationwide;
- Updated our 1-800 and field office number messages with information about the scams;
- Collaborated with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to help educate consumers how to avoid Social Security scams; and
- Shared articles and guidance with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, and the Senior Corps, as well as Social Security advocates, third-party groups and organizations.
- Provided all members of Congress with similar packages to share with their constituents.

### We are not done yet. We will:

- Continue to support the online reporting form so OIG can analyze scam trends and work to terminate service for scammers' originating and call-back numbers;
- Produce new television and radio public service announcements, and explore radio campaigns on nationally syndicated talk shows and television appearances on highly watched morning show programs; and,
- Expand our work with external groups and agencies—AARP and other organizations representing seniors, representative payee organizations, motor vehicle administrations, the United States Postal Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and others.

# OPERATION SANTA PAWS BRINGS JOY TO PETS

## Kalamazoo, MI



In December, KMADE sponsored a pet supply and toy drive to benefit [Kalamazoo Animal Rescue](#) and [All Species Kinship](#). Kalamazoo Animal Rescue serves dogs and cats, offering adoption services and reuniting lost pets with their families. All Species Kinship rescues orphaned wildlife and conducts a proactive street outreach program for dogs who are outside 24/7.

KMADE members developed a point system for donations, and provided every district/line unit a gift-wrapped collection box. Requested items included bathing and grooming supplies, dry and canned dog and cat food, dog and cat beds, collars and leashes, pet crates of all sizes, cat litter, bleach, newspapers and paper towels, etc. Bags of dry food over 20 lbs were worth five points; all other items were worth one point. The district with the most points won a pizza party on KMADE!

KMADE advertised to the nines, with large, printed posters, email blasts, and flyers hung in every member's cubicle. Even though there were several holiday donation drives going on at the same time, KMADE collected over 200 items for needy animals in one week!

"The training unit, District Q, won the contest," said KMADE president Michelle Wade. "We turned their winning pizza party into their 'graduation' from trainee-hood and celebrated with lots of other goodies as well. It was probably one of the most successful supply drives we have done, and everyone had a great time!"





## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Each of us is absorbed in our own work, dedicated as we are to quick, efficient, accurate determinations. It takes a village to clear a case! It can be hard to see life at DDS from another's perspective.

As I mentioned on page 9, I plan to make "A Day in the Life" a regular feature in The Advocate. I'd like to highlight a different DDS role in each issue: administrators, support staff, CDIU, medical consultants, etc. I'm especially keen to feature a "Day in the Life" of a retired analyst, administrator or support staffer who could speak to the way things used to be. Please consider participating! It involves a 20 minute phone interview. After the piece is written but before it goes to print, you'll have an opportunity to review it and make changes. Be aware that some departments may require approval and a separate review before publication.

I also plan to make a collage of smiling NADE members' faces the cover of every issue. One of my favorite aspects of NADE membership is the chance to connect with members across the country. Please submit your photos. Goofy pictures, dress-up days, celebrations and triumphs are all big hits. Your photo could boost someone's morale! Submit one today!

To aspiring writers who've never contributed, please consider writing for The Advocate! It's a publication with a nationwide audience, and not just within the DDS community. Disability attorneys read The Advocate. Senior members in the Social Security Administration read The Advocate, too, and members of Congress! The Advocate is a great credit for your writing resume.

Even if you're not a writer, please consider submitting story ideas. We're gearing up for the next issue already! We welcome topics of interest to any member of NADE, including but not limited to medical topics, office process innovations, morale boosters and success stories.

The more of you, our readers, we have in our publication, the better The Advocate will be. I want to hear from you!

Korin Gary

Communication Director

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