

Volume 38, number 4

Spring 2022

A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
DISABILITY EXAMINERS

The Advocate



Inside this issue:

President's Address	2
Mid-Year Board Meeting News	3
Tribute to Jeff Price	11
Tribute to Tonya Scott	17
Kentucky Stands Tall!	18
NDPW & NADE Awards News	19
Fraudbusters	20

President's Address



Spring Greetings,

I hope this letter finds everyone in good health! Since my last letter in the Winter edition, NADE has continued to work hard, as I know all of you have.

The annual membership drive that kicked-off in January was a success, with 54 new members registering before March. It's not too late to recruit your friends. Welcome to ALL new and returning members!

I thought I 'd provide a brief overview of NADE activity over the last quarter. The Executive Board and I met in January with the Deputy Associate Commissioner, John Owen, and his staff from the Office of Disability Determinations (ODD) for our 2nd Quarterly session. Prior to the meeting we provided Mr. Owen with information related to 827 formatting errors, and our interest in extending telehealth beyond Speech/Language Exams.

In February, many of you accepted an invitation to provide NADE with your insights for the National Disability Forum's: Equitable Access to SSA Disability Programs for LGBTQIA+ Communities (a copy of NADE's correspondence to the NDF can be found at NADE.org). Some even followed the link I included in an email to members and signed up to join the NDF meeting on February 17th to observe presentations and discussions first-hand. I am inspired by your enthusiasm and will continue to forward these opportunities to participate or observe SSA discussions, as they become available.

The full Board met in our first hybrid session for Midyear, February 28-April 02, 2022. One half of the Board traveled to Baltimore, MD, while the other joined via Zoom so we could conduct our NADE business and host representatives from multiple federal agencies. Our guest speakers and the issues/topics discussed are highlighted in this edition of the Advocate! I would like to personally thank everyone who joined in both remotely and in person.

Lastly, you will find included in this issue, a few more examples of chapters keeping it real and being real active! If your chapter needs ideas or incentives to gather remotely or in-person, please reach out to your Regional Director or the Membership Director for support. The great news as we head into the spring and summer months with fewer COVID restrictions is its just in time to observe Organ Donation Awareness (the month of April), National Disability Professional's Week's (June 20 -24) theme THROUGH IT ALL, NADE STANDS TALL! And, the grand finale (drum roll please!), a return to an in-person National Training Conference, to be held in Burlington, VT, July 31-Aug 3rd! This and much more news is available on the NADE website!

I'm so very grateful for your support and the opportunity to work on your behalf.

Stay well, and NADE Strong!

Marjorie E Garcia

president@nade.org

NADE Midyear meeting with the Office of Disability Policy

By Jennifer Nottingham

At the NADE midyear board meeting, NADE was able to meet with Steve Rollins, Acting Associate Commissioner, Ben Gurga, the Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner of the Office of Disability Policy (ODP) and several other representatives from ODP. Several disability policy related topics were discussed and were very informative.

SSA has been working to make sure the Medical Listings of Impairments are current with medical technology and advancements. ODP has been working on updating the Cardiovascular Disorders Medical Listing. This is a targeted revision, rather than a full overhaul of the listing. ODP is working on publishing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for that Listing, which we believe will happen later this fiscal year. ODP is also preparing a final rule to update the listings for the Digestive and Skin Disorders listings, stemming from the associated NPRM published a few years ago. These listing updates are also targeted revisions.

ODP is reviewing and may be replacing Social Security Ruling (SSR) 00-4p, which addresses the use of vocational expert and vocational specialist evidence and outlines what is considered other reliable occupational information in disability decisions. There have been concerns that SSR 00-4p does not provide sufficient clarity for issues adjudicators and courts must consider. ODP is also considering updated guidance to replace information currently provided in SSR 16-1p on Fraud and Similar Fault Redeterminations under Section 205 (u) and 1631 (e) (7) of the Social Security Act and SSR 16-2p on Evaluation of Claims involving Similar Fault in the Providing of Evidence.

With the COVID pandemic, an emergency message was released allowing the Disability Determination Services (DDS) to utilize other technology for some telehealth consultative examinations (CE). It permits telehealth CEs outside the SSA network for psychiatric and psychological CEs that do not require standardized testing and limited speech and language CEs. ODP expects policy will continue to support expanded use of telehealth outside the SSA network for CEs beyond the pandemic national period. Privacy requirements are one of many concerns that must be considered in writing the policy. The software used for telehealth CEs will have to be HIPAA compliant.

ODP discussed recent updates and policy reminders regarding several hot topics. There was discussion regarding presumptive disability findings and including relevant evidence from prior folders in subsequent reviews. ODP sought input from the NADE board on whether current guidance for claims with a COVID-19 impairment provides the information adjudicators need.

The NADE board greatly appreciates the staff from the Office of Disability Policy for their time and meeting with the NADE board.

NADE Mid-Year Presentation from the Office of The Inspector General

By Amber Barnes

NADE board members were joined by Don Jefferson, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations – CDI Operations, and Phillip Hanvy, Director of the Information Technology Audit Division.

Mr. Jefferson started the discussion by addressing changes and difficulties caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. When stay at home orders went into effect in March 2020, Cooperative Disability Investigations (CDI) Units across the country changed their work processes. Investigative activities that were in-person were scaled back to help protect employees and the public. CDI Unit employees were approved for remote work. At the height of the pandemic, investigative activities relied heavily upon non-contact surveillance. Currently, CDI Units are returning to normal operations, while also keeping the health of employees and the public at the forefront.

In 2017, OIG added the Cooperative Disability Investigations Division (CDID) to our Office of Investigations (OI). In 2020, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved a new senior level position for OIG in the OI to provide dedicated senior level oversight of the CDI Program. In June 2021, plans to restructure the CDI Program began. Until this time, CDI Units fell under the supervision of OI Field Divisions and supervisors. This change, while having little to no change on daily operations for SSA and DDS, gives CDIU dedicated resources and oversight. The change means supervisors do not have to split their time between managing OI and CDI.

Currently, CDI Units in the Western Field Division has already made the change. There have been no reported issues or concerns with the change. Phase Two, which will include the CDI Units in the Midwestern Field Division, are scheduled for March 31st. OIG is hoping to have the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in place for both the Western and Mid-Western Field Divisions by March 31st. The Field Divisions are separated geographically. Each field supervisor will manage 3-4 CDI Units and each SAC will have 5 to 6 supervisors. CDI Units in the Eastern Division are scheduled for May 31st.

Another difficulty discussed was the lack of a law enforcement partner in some CDIUs. To rectify this, some CDIUs are being established as hubs allowing them to provide CDI coverage to neighboring states. A hub consists of a functioning CDIU including a program specialist, a DDS examiner, a CDI team leader, and possible support staff such as an investigative analyst. CDI will utilize current law enforcement partners or rehired annuitants, who are former federal agents, as investigators to conduct investigations in states that are part of the hub. This combats a lack of law enforcement partners, since the rehired annuitants enable the CDI hub to investigate fraud in neighboring states.

Mr. Jefferson did share CDI referrals are on the decline across the country and have been since 2019. There was no one single factor that was identified as contributing primarily to the decline. He encourages DDS to continue to utilize CDI. CDI is a useful tool to DDS examiners, as it provides material evidence to help make determinations. CDI can investigate initial cases (Pre-effectuation) and CDRs (Post-effectuation). OIG and the Office of Public Service and Operations Support (OPSOS) created a CDI Desk Guide to assist SSA and DDS

employees in identifying fraud and making referrals to CDI.

After a brief Q&A with Mr. Jefferson, the NADE board heard from Mr. Hanvy, who is the Director of the Information Technology Audit Division. Mr. Hanvy started this conversation by discussing some audits his team recently completed. He discussed a concern about handling mail and person documents of claimants in the Field Offices (FO) and Social Security Card Centers (SSCC). As the pandemic hit, and temporarily changed the way the FOs and SSCCs operated, more and more claimants were required to send in sensitive, personal documents. An audit revealed, while some FOs and SSCCs were immediately returning documents, some failed to return these documents for months. This left claimants without items such as SS Cards, IDs, Driver's Licenses, Marriage Certificates, etc. This audit resulted in business practice changes and guidance being provided to FOs and SSCCs.

Another audit his office completed dealt with workman's compensation (WC) and overpayments. This audit showed that in FY2019, there were over 26k claimants/beneficiaries with overpayments due to not reporting WC payments, resulting in more than \$170 million in overpayments. Mr. Hanvy asked if a DE notices WC payments/reports in medical records, to let the FO know, to help mitigate overpayments.

Mr. Hanvy also discussed the trend they are seeing in HIT records. The vast majority of medical records are still received via ERE or paper records. HIT records only accounted for 11% of records received. There are fewer HIT partners, as vendors are choosing to use other delivery methods. They hope to increase HIT partners.

Mr. Hanvy ended his discussion by mentioning OIG's Office of Audit is currently planning their 2023 audits and would love to hear any ideas our members may have.

NADE Mid-Year Meeting with the ODRP and DCARO

By Sara Winn

NADE had the privilege of having Jennifer Pecora, Division Director in ODRP, and Kasey Torres, Director in DCARO to speak at the annual midyear meeting. Jennifer stated that since 2006, RPC's objectives have been to support a policy supported resolution for disability claims. This process has helped ODP to identify trends for training. In 2016, changes were made to the program and an RPC panel was formed. The major change that stemmed from the 2016 overhaul was that if the wrong deficiency was cited, but there was deemed to still be an error, the appropriate error would be charged. In the past, if the wrong deficiency was cited, the error was removed. Prior to this change, the percentage of errors rescinded vs upheld was about 50/50. After this change, that percentage increased, but only slightly to about 58.9%.

There are two steps that the DDS can take when rebutting an error. The Informal Resolution Request (IRR) is a chance for the reviewing OQR office to review the error and determine if the error should stand. IRR is outlined in GN 04440.401 in POMS. POMS provides guidance on the type of cases that should go through IRR prior to submitting to RPC. IRR is a simple way to resolve an error if the DDS feels OQR missed a note. The only cases that cannot be sent to IRR and RPC are technical issues. In FY2020, there were 1307 cases received at IRR level, in FY2021, there were 1253, and in FY2022 there have been 561.

When an error is cited by OQR, they complete a 1774 outlining the type of error, a summary, and the actions needed to amend the error. The case is then sent back to the DDS office. The DDS has 30 days to rebut the error. If they wait longer than 30 days, then DDS must seek regional permission. OQR reviews only what is in the case at the time and not post adjudicative evidence, however, they will alert the DDS if there was post adjudicative evidence.

NADE asked a question about errors charged to the DDS but the cases went back to the FO. Currently, there is only one type of error that occurs when this happens. Those are Group 1 Code 30. Other Work activity errors that are charged to the FO are Group 2, Code 71, and Code 85. An onset error can be cited against the DDS if resolution of SGA is unclear. There are a certain number of cases that are reviewed nationally for Targeted Denial Review, and Pre-Effectuation Reviews.

The RPC panel is comprised of three components. Prior to the RPC panel discussion, all panelists thoroughly review the case. If the ODP panelist needs to send it to Medical for a consult, this will happen prior to the discussion. The panel will then have all the case information as well as the medical consult to review during the time of discussion. ODD, ODP, and OQR all have representatives on the RPC panel. RPC has suffered staff losses and currently has 7 reviewers. There are 48 ODD cadre members and 58 OQR cadre members who participate in RPC panel discussions. No one component will defend their component, they review the evidence in the case and make a policy-based resolution. The discussion is open for anyone to listen. In FY2021, 567 cases were received for RPC with 555 cases discussed for panel review which were: 350 initials, 143 recons, and 62 CDR's. The average processing for these was 11 days. For FY2022, RPC has received 238 cases and closed 239 with an average processing time of 17 days. RPC receives the most cases right after Christmas and right after the start of a fiscal year. 70% of IRR's are upheld and 30% are rescinded. However, there are cases that were upheld at IRR and rescinded at the RPC level. These cases get special review. Usually, a case sent to IRR is resolved in 7 days. .

Currently the DDS must submit their request for IRR and RPC through the respective IRR tool and RPC website. However, in the future there is hope that the IRR process will be done through DCPS. The DDS should prioritize any cases that come back from OQR and try to process the error within 60 days. OQR reaches out on cases that go beyond the 60 days.

There are many resources to learn about the RPC process. The [RPC website](#), [eRPC](#) provides trend analysis, offers insights on onset, and provides tips for case processing. The data is provided from a national perspective, state perspective, all the way down to a DDS perspective. It can be filtered in a timeline or pie chart. There are many avenues DDS offices can explore to get information about errors. This helps to identify areas of policy that might need clarification. There is also an [ODP A-Z Disability Training Index website](#) that has an alphabetical index of training materials, including information on childhood disability, the Disability Examiner Basic Training Program (DEBTP), the Medical Consultant/Psychological Consultant handbook for MC/PC training, Online Disability Case Studies, Best Practices, a CDR guide, and Vocational Specialist information. This website is a great resource!

Mid-Year Meeting News

by Sara Winn and Amber Barnes



SSA Presenters: Grace Kim, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, John Owen, Associate Commissioner of Office of Disability Determinations, and Lucinda Davis, Deputy Associate Commissioner of Office of Disability Determinations

NADE was privileged to have representatives from SSA and the Office of Disability Determinations to speak with us. Grace and John began the discussion by thanking us for meeting with them and acknowledging that the last couple of years have been extremely challenging. Through the pandemic and associated challenges, NADE members continued to meet the needs of the public by processing disability claims. During this time, NADE members have been instrumental in the rollout of DCPS2 and Grace appreciates the flexibility demonstrated by many of you working in a hybrid mode. Currently, DCPS2 is being used to process claims in all but 3 DDSs and these 3 states (California, New York, and Puerto Rico) will deploy DCPS2 by the end of FY22.

Despite the challenges in FY21, DDSs provided amazing customer service. For instance, the DDSs processed 1.9 million initial claims, and 481,300 Reconsideration claims. Similarly, the DDSs surpassed SSA's goal for CDRs of 534,600 by processing 538,310. Unfortunately, to date in FY22, the attrition rate has increased in the examiner positions from 19.8% last fiscal year and is on track to hit 24.4% this fiscal year. This record high attrition presents many challenges for disability workload processing, and for examiners trying to manage high caseloads. To assist address both the retention and recruitment challenges, ODD has formed a workgroup including DDS and regional representatives to review and make recommendations regarding recruitment and retention options and strategies.

For FY22, SSA continues to operate under a continuing resolution, but is hopeful for a budget soon. Fortunately, Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi is supporting the continued onboarding of new employees in the DDSs, despite not having a full appropriation and remaining in a continuing resolution.

SSA is working on FY22 performance goals that focus on customer service and balancing workloads—continuing to process initial claims timely and also closing the oldest initial claims first.

SSA is developing guidance to provide state DDSs the option to telework after the pandemic has ended. We anticipate those guidelines will be issued shortly. SSA's guidance will provide flexibility for the different state requirements and needs for telework.

DCPS2

Grace provided a quick snapshot of DCPS2 progress:

Currently 49 DDSs are in production and are routing 100% of eligible claims through DCPS2. In August of 2020 the highest daily DDS user total was around 2,000 users. By January of 2022 the highest daily DDS user total had increased to over 11,000.

In the past year we have increased our DCPS2 case processing by nearly 400%. Last year at this time we had processed roughly 200,000 cases. This year, we have processed nearly 800,000 cases.

To date, in DCPS2 we have receipted over 4,115,000 claims, and we have made determinations on over 2,630,000 claims.

By the end of 2022 all DDSs will be supported by DCPS2, our national single system for case processing.

SSA's focus with DCPS2 in FY22 is to deploy the system to the last three states, increase adoption of the Assisted User Functionality (AUF), add functionality to enhance the user experience, and to ensure system performance and stability. The next update as shown on the road map will provide more efficient ways to process CE appointment and travel vouchers, foreign addresses, MC/PC payments, and inline QA reviews.

The Assisted User Functionality (AUF) in DCPS2 enables workload sharing, allowing a user in one state to assist in another without creating an Assistance Request. To date, SSA has worked with 16 states to provide national capacity assistance via AUF. Using agile development techniques, DCPS allows processes to be tweaked and updates to occur seamlessly.

Quality

Initial Quality for FY2022 is currently at 93.6% at the national level (source: [OQR QA Reports and Data](#)). We understand the challenges impacting the DDSs can impact quality. Despite those challenges, several states are doing great in FY 2021, including Colorado, Iowa, and Kansas whose Initial Quality has been above 96% and Vermont, Kansas, and Minnesota who have remained above 95% or higher for Recons. We are also encouraged by the DDSs continued participation in the Request for Program Consultation (RPC). In FY 21, RPC reviewed 555 cases with over 53% of DDSs participating. Those RPC panel discussions help us identify where our policies and training can be improved. Kudos to Alabama, Massachusetts, and Texas who submitted the most requests for review.

SSA continues to offer Quality Visit Collaborations (QVCs) as well as tips and best practices for reviewing cases to states that are encountering quality problems or falling under the quality threshold. We have several initiatives underway to help provide additional quality resources such as a collaboration with OQR and ODP on MC/PC training initiatives and the creation of a SharePoint site for DDSs to access all QVC materials.

HSPD-12

SSA has worked on several initiatives to help with reviewing applications in the HSPD-12 process since the changes to the process took effect in October, 2021. ODD has a sharepoint site that offers DDS guidance on form completion for seamless HSPD-12 application. [Office of Disability Determinations - Suitability and HSPD-12 \(ssa.gov\)](#).

Other HSPD-12 resources include the following:

[Template Language for Job Postings and Conditional Job Offers](#)

Includes language that can be used in job postings and when extending conditional job offers

[DDS Communication Points for New Hires](#)

Recommended language to use in job postings or when communicating with your conditional new hire about the suitability and credentialing process

[Completing Suitability Forms – 101](#)

Provides step by step instructions and information for the conditional new hire when completing the 306 and 85P

ODD is continuing to work with other components to resolve issues and find efficiencies within the HSPD-12 process and then communicate these back out to the states.

Other Issues

Telehealth mental status exams that do not require testing have been expanded and continued. There is now an option for SLP to be conducted via telehealth. There is updated guidance for these for minor children, attorney representatives, and ID requirements for minor children. There are also special instructions for reading of privacy guidelines.

As of February 2022, 35 states are using IMAGEN, with 3 more being added in March and 13 more by September 2022. IMAGEN improves review of the medical record process and streamlines locating documents. SSA will be surveying about user experiences and DDS experiences to increase functionality, provide training, and make improvements to the process. If asked, please provide feedback.

SSA has been reviewing the [IDEA annual report](#) regarding the agency's digital footprint. As part of this review, ODD continues to evaluate alternate forms of communication such as email and text, while balancing the need for alternate communication methods with privacy challenges.

Protecting PII is extremely important and SSA continues to discover instances where DDSs sent non-encrypted PII to addresses not included on SSA's secure partner list. John provided some examples from current audits where DDS workers sent the task list to their personal email to complete phone calls from home—which is a security violation since names and phone numbers of our claimants are PII and should not be sent outside of SSA's firewall. In another situation, the DDS employee did not notice there was PII further down in the email string, resulting in another security violation. He urged everyone to be cautious and cognizant of what is being sent through email even to other state employees whose email addresses may not be a secured partner. SSA will provide additional training specifically designed for the DDSs on this issue later this year. PII guidance can be found at Information Security Policy (ISP), section [3.3.5](#). Administrative Instructions Manual System (AIMS), section [15.04.07](#) outlines acceptable use and PII safeguarding requirements that DDS can consult when using email.

SSA continues to encourage the use of Presumptive Disability (PDs) and Presumptive Blindness to process cases. The use of PD can improve processing time and provides immediate payment to Title 16 applicants waiting for a decision. Consider a PD when the preponderance of evidence seems to support an allowance, following policy guidance. A recent Quality Newsletter was published that identified each state's PD rate. Those rates can also be accessed at the state level within the DCPS2 and legacy systems. [DDS Administrator Letter #1006](#) published in February 2021 provides a comprehensive list of resources and tips for making Presumptive Disability decisions, and a special training segment can be found under the "Presumptive Disability" header on the [A-Z Disability Training Index](#).

Grace stated that NADE offers professional training to its members and she looked forward to hearing how SSA could continue to support NADE's efforts.



NADE LEGEND RETIRES!



Jeff Price has been a leader for NADE since he first became President of THADE in North Carolina in 1990. He's been a member since 1984. He's testified before Congress four times on our behalf and assisted other NADE presidents with their testimony seven times. He was the primary author of numerous NADE position papers from 1999 to 2006. He was the first President of NADE to meet with the Social Security Advisory Board, the first to meet with the Senate Finance Committee and the first to meet a US Vice President! Some of his other major accomplishments include:



President of NADE 1998-1999, 2001-2002, and 2014-2015

Legislative Director for NADE 2003-2004, 2008-2011, and 2017-2018

Charles O. Blalock Award recipient 1997 and 2006

Lewis Buckingham Award recipient 2003 and 2018

Aside from his many contributions to NADE and the claimants we serve, he's a beloved character, a friend to countless members across the nation. Jeff retired on Thursday, March 31, but before he went, I asked if he'd be willing to sit for an interview.

What did you do before you came to DDS?

I was in graduate school. I intended to stay for only 2-3 years then pursue a law degree. I got used to having an income. With mortgage payments and car payments, going back to school was impractical.

What inspired you to join NADE?

Several people in my local chapter urged me to join. I finally took their advice! THADE members had fun and did interesting things, and I wanted to be a part of that. I didn't learn about NADE on the national level until I attended my first national conference in 1986, and I was hooked.

How did your membership in NADE benefit you in the early days of your career? I made a lot of friends at DDS. I met people outside my immediate work unit that I otherwise would not have met. I tell people that's the primary benefit of NADE membership: making new friends. Learning more about the national scope of the disability program has been a tremendous benefit to my career.

How did your membership benefit you over the years?

Having my voice heard through NADE's leadership in the halls of Congress and in meeting rooms at the Social Security Administration made a difference in my career. Later, I was a leader and used my own voice to speak for our members. I'm proud to know that NADE is respected for its expertise and professionalism.

You've been a role model for many in NADE's leadership. Who was/is your role model for leadership?

I've had two very distinct role models: Frank Giordano and Debi Gardiner. There are others, of course, but these two pushed me to become a leader in NADE. I modeled my leadership style on theirs. Both were deeply committed to NADE and the principles on which the organization was founded.

What was your favorite part about being the president?

During my first two terms, NADE still had regional conferences. Traveling to these and the national conferences allowed me to meet hundreds of NADE members, to hear what they had to say and to convey that information to the NADE Board, to SSA, to Congress, et cetera. Being a servant to our NADE organization was my favorite part.

What are you most proud of in your career with NADE?

I had an integral role in the adoption of the Single Decision Maker (SDM) and the vocational expedient. Although Congress forced the DDSs to abandon SDM in 2018 after 20 years, I honestly think it will return one day, maybe in a more structured manner. It was NADE working its butt off that persuaded SSA to push forward with the vocational expedient. The expedient exists today almost solely because of NADE. We persuaded the claimant advocate groups to endorse the concept and only NADE could have done that. We educated Congress and others as to the positive impact the expedient would have.



What's a funny story from your years with NADE?

Okay, there are so many to share (laughs). One that will always stand out was the first private meeting between the NADE leadership and the SSA Commissioner. This was in February, 1998, and I was President-elect. It was Mardi Gras and the President was from Louisiana. We decided the best way to introduce ourselves was to send the Commissioner a king cake. Unfortunately, the baker who made the cake placed in a box which was then placed inside a shipping container with no return address.

It arrived a couple of hours before we did and SSA security mistook the package for a bomb. They called the bomb squad! When we arrived for our meeting with the Commissioner, all he could do was shake his head and laugh. When I became President in 1999, we didn't send anything to the Commissioner. I didn't want to risk going through that again!

Then there's the meeting NADE had with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) when my excess speeding tickets caught up with me. OMB security thought my driving indicated a callous disregard for authority and refused to clear me to enter the building. When the NADE leadership showed up for the meeting, the OMB staff had to move the meeting to the White House Conference Center.

You've said you plan to continue to be involved with NADE after you retire. Why?

NADE has a strong group of active retired members. Once you've been committed to NADE as long as we've been, it's difficult to just walk away. I still have a lot of friends in the organization and staying active will help us stay in touch. NADE conferences are fun and interesting. I learn a lot and get to see a lot of America with people who are proud to tell you about their part of the country.

What's one change you've always hoped for, but hasn't happened, yet?

During my first term as President, I wrote a position paper calling for the elimination of the five-month waiting period. Over the years, the NADE Board realized it wouldn't happen and started asking for a reduction from five months to four or even three. That didn't happen, either, but it's a change I'd like to see. There are so many of our desperate claimants who would benefit. It would also save some money from SSI. Many disabled people collect SSI benefits while waiting for five month waiting period to elapse on their SSDI benefits.

I'd also like to see some adjustment to the medical improvement review standard (MIRS) and its application in the CDR process. It would help restore integrity in the disability program by making it easier to remove people from the rolls who are no longer disabled but continue to stay on the rolls because medical improvement can't be established because of the way the previous decision was written.

And, the SSA-3369 work history form needs to be revised to make it more user-friendly for the claimant.

If there is a Jeff Price Award in the future, what should it be for?

Tiniest handwriting! (laughs) Seriously, I'd hope it would be for someone who has dedicated years of service to NADE.



What do you hope for NADE's future?

State and regional conferences were special and unique to NADE: member-planned, member-led training conferences. A lot of people paid their own expenses to learn how to do their jobs better! SSA needs to realize what a deal it had by providing limited financial and administrative support. I hope at least the regional conferences return.

People from around the country sent tributes to Jeff Price as he retires:

Donna Hilton, Missouri -

One of the advantages of NADE has always been the opportunity to meet people all across the country who understand the work we do (or have done). One of the greatest promoters of NADE has been Jeff Price. I met Jeff early on in my NADE journey when I became the Publications/Communications Director. From the outset I was impressed with his commitment to NADE and dedication to his THADE chapter as an advocate for the disability program. He encouraged local members to get involved and attend conferences, both regional and national, in order to learn more and improve their knowledge of the program and expand their medical expertise. He even kept scrapbooks of the conferences he attended! I want to wish him many more journeys in retirement and commend him on "a job well done."

Kim Hildred, former Staff Director, U.S. House of Representatives

I was honored to work with Jeff when I served as the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Social Security, Committee on Ways and Means in the U.S. House of Representatives. Jeff and I were able to have frank conversations, he informing me about the latest developments affecting DDS examiners and me advising Jeff about the workings of Congress and the ways NADE might increase their impact in their meetings on the Hill. Always the consummate professional, Jeff was a fierce advocate for the citizens of his state and for NADE. My sincere best wishes to Jeff as he begins his life's next chapter.

Jacqueline Russell, Division Director, Disability Determination Services North Carolina

Although the North Carolina Disability Determination Services (DDS) is excited for Jeff Price, NCDDS Quality Assurance Supervisor, on his upcoming retirement, Jeff will be missed. Jeff has worked as a valued team member at the North Carolina Disability Determination Services for over 42 years, serving most of that time in the Quality Assurance (QA) department first as a QA Analyst, then as the Assistant Supervisor, and finally as the Supervisor. Jeff began his career at the DDS September 20, 1979, moving to the Quality Assurance (QA) Department March 8, 1988. During his time at the DDS, he has made not only an impact on the NC DDS but also on SSA as a whole, serving as an integral member in a variety of roles for many terms on the National Association of Disability Examiners (NADE) board advocating for the needs of SSA and the DDS including 3 terms as the NADE president, the only person to serve three terms as NADE president. During his many years on NADE, Jeff presented testimony on seven occasions through the years on behalf of the organization as an invited witness before the U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Social Security, Committee on Ways and Means. Jeff spearheaded the Vocational Expedient, writing a proposal for SSA, testifying before Congress and meeting one on one with its members, and assisting in writing the final policy. He also served on the advisory panel for SSA to write regulars for the Single Decision Maker (SDM). He has served on SSA's Request for Program Consultation Panel since its inception ensuring that the state level DDS offices had a position and a voice at the table. He has dedicated his career to developing policy, influencing positive change, and mentoring others on the Disability program.

Jeff Price began in the Supervisor role of the Quality Assurance (QA) department in late 2019. Since that time, he has worked tirelessly to strengthen the collaboration and teamwork of the QA department throughout the Division. Jeff often referred to his department as the Question-and-Answer team as he and

the QA team worked to support the Division. He has worked to change the way our DDS utilizes QA metrics to decrease the negative perception of a QA return and turning it instead to more of an opportunity for education on policy. Jeff has facilitated an open door policy between himself and Operations Supervisors as well as between the Analysts and the QA Analysts. Jeff has dedicated his time to growing his team and passing on his extensive policy knowledge to ensure that when he retires he will be leaving a strong QA team. With a lifetime of dedication to ensuring our citizens receive quality disability decisions, it is hard to put into words or fully express what an impact Jeff has made on the NC DDS.

Not only is Jeff an influence at the DDS, he serves many roles in the community as well serving as a member of the Zebulon Lions club since 1984 and serving as President of the Zebulon Lions club for 7 terms over the years. Beyond his Lions Club involvement, Jeff has volunteered for events in the town and in 2006-2007, Jeff served as the Town of Zebulon Centennial Event Chairperson. Jeff has been a member of the State Employees Association of North Carolina since 1979, serving as the district chairperson for several years. Jeff is a wine enthusiast, serving as a member of the Brotherhood of the Knights of Vine, North Carolina Chapter and filling many leadership roles in this organization. Jeff has been invited to wine conferences around the nation to present about North Carolina wines. Finally, I would like to share that Jeff is a supporter of the Arts, supporting a wide variety of organizations from UNC School of the Arts and Theater in the Park to the North Carolina Trust for Historic Preservation and the North Carolina Museum of History just to name a few.

Jeff's love of North Carolina runs deep. He eagerly shares knowledge of North Carolina history, tourism, and events, always promoting this great state. The state of North Carolina and the DDS are thankful to Jeff Price for his many contributions to the state through his work for the disabled citizens of North Carolina as well as his civic service to the state and his community.

Jennifer Pounds, North Carolina

Jeff Price has always been someone I have admired and respected. Early on in my career, Jeff encouraged me to get more actively involved with NADE and was always there to provide me with guidance and support in every role I held on the NADE Board. When I became NADE President in 2017 I knew immediately that I was going to ask Jeff to be the Legislative Director during my tenure because I wanted the best, guiding me in every interaction with SSA, Congress and the NADE Membership. During that year, Jeff provided me with professional guidance as well as emotional support during very difficult decisions. His overwhelming knowledge of the SSA Disability Program, ins and outs of Congress as well as the interworking relationships between NADE and these parties gave me the confidence to overcome adversities and always advocate for NADE's best interests even in difficult times. I will forever be grateful for Jeff's friendship as well as his influence in my professional growth.

Jeff's knowledge of NADE history is absolutely unbelievable. He is like the in human NADE Library! Dates, people, places, decisions, he knows it all off the top of his head. While I am excited for Jeff and his next role in life with retirement, I grieve for NADE and my state chapter as we will miss him being a main fixture in all events and activities.

Tonya Scott, former Secretary for NADE, Georgia

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

This is one of my favorite quotes and it really applies to my friendship with Jeff Price. When I initially joined the NADE Board many moons ago, Jeff Price welcomed me with open arms. He made me feel like I belonged. He didn't know me and I didn't know him, but that did not matter. Over the years, Jeff has been a mentor and friend. He's been my historian on all matters that are NADE, as well as other non-NADE matters. Not only is Jeff knowledgeable regarding NADE, he is one of the GOATs regarding the disability determinations process/quality.

Despite his habit of beating/tapping on desk/tables, it has been my honor and pleasure to call Jeff my friend. I wish him well in the next phase of his journey. Congratulations on your retirement, Jeff Price. #TheOriginalJP

Terri Klubertanz, former President of NADE

When I was nominated for President-elect of NADE in 2002, Jeff was an absolute treasure trove of information about what to expect as NADE President. I was unexpectedly thrown into the Presidency position after only six weeks of being President-elect. You can imagine my anxiety, not having the year to prepare for the position and learn as other Presidents had! Jeff was absolutely the best person to have around at the time.

As Jeff was Past President from 2001-02, he was there to assist me in learning the new responsibilities of my position. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor to help me transition to my new role. He was there every step of the way, answering all my questions, assisting me with writing reports, correspondence and responses, as well as providing guidance and nurturing in navigating the intricacies of communicating with all the entities involved in the disability program. He assisted me in the preparation of the multiple position papers compiled during my tenure, reviewing, editing and providing excellent guidance and positive reinforcement. He was a great sounding-board, letting me bounce off all the ideas in my head and bolstering me up when I doubted my ability to handle the tasks necessary for the organization. With his leadership, knowledge and positive, up-beat approach, I was able to transition into my new role, knowing that he would always have my back. I thank him from the bottom of my heart for all I learned from him.

Thomas Gautier, North Carolina

Jeff, you have been a true inspiration to me since I joined THADE a little over 10 years ago and provided me with the knowledge I have now to move forward within the NADE Organization as well as at DDS. The excitement on your face as you shared stories from past NADE conferences and all the people you have met along the way provided me encouragement to make my own memories over the years. The times I would walk into a THADE or NADE Board meeting and hear the sound of a pen knocking against the closest object you could find, only to have about 4 people yell all at the same time to "Stop, Jeff!" are endless. I have had the privilege of traveling with you to NADE National Training Conferences as well as NADE Mid-Year Board meetings. I will remember those times forever. The ability you have to recall NADE Conferences with a year and the city it was held in amazes me to this day.

Jeff, you will truly be missed here at the North Carolina DDS, and I wish you the absolute best in your retirement!

Tonya Scott: Secretary Extraordinaire

by Korin Gary, Communication Director



Tonya Scott recently stepped down as NADE Secretary after serving in that position for 10 years. Tonya was the rudder that kept our board meetings on a straight course. Her exceptional organization and efficiency enhanced every part of NADE business she touched. Personally, she inspired me to care about Robert's Rules of Order and shaped my editorial style for The Advocate. I reached out for thoughts from people she served with as she moves from Secretary to Chair of the NADE Constitution & Bylaws Committee.

From Jeff Price, former President - Tonya is a truly dedicated public servant who has provided outstanding service to the citizens of Georgia for many years. Equally so, she has many years of outstanding service to the SSA disability program through her involvement with NADE, serving as the Association's secretary for many years and also serving NADE as its President in 2016-2017. I served with Tonya on the NADE Board of Directors for over a decade and I am very proud to be her friend and her colleague. Although she was unsuccessful in persuading me to abandon my habit of constantly tapping with my pen, one stabbing look from Tonya's eyes would at least make me pause the tapping for a few minutes. I have the utmost respect for Tonya's sense of purpose and her commitment to NADE and to ensuring that the service our members provide to the citizens we serve is the very best it can be.

Todd Deshong, former President - As with all long-term members, Tonya Scott had an enormous knowledge about the organization. Tonya Scott was an integral part of the NADE Board. She was absolutely marvelous at recording the actions of the Board, as well as membership meetings. She was incredible at ensuring that individuals completed action items for the board and the organization. She was able to maintain order during meetings. She was indispensable for the smooth operations of the NADE Board.

Sara Winn, former President - Tonya is a valuable asset to NADE and she has served the board diligently for many years. She is great resource and always willing to offer guidance and mentoring when needed. Tonya was appreciated as Secretary because she kept meetings flowing smoothly and kept us all accountable. Tonya is someone you can go for honest advice and someone whose dedication to NADE never waivers.

Dr. Sharon Bland-Brady, former President - Tonya has been an outstanding secretary for the NADE Board. You could always count on her to have everything accurate. She was an impeccable note taker and was always willing to address any issues that came up on the board. She was also willing to mentor incoming President Elect, and current Presidents. Tonya is just amazing.

Through it All, Kentucky is Standing Tall

By Kristen Adams

A big “Hey Y’all” from the NADE members in Kentucky with some exciting updates. Despite the stresses of the past few years, Kentucky has risen to the challenges – and then some.

Kentucky is lucky enough to have two offices – the first in the small yet beautiful State capitol of Frankfort, and the second in Louisville – or the Derby City for all of you horse racing fans. The Kentucky Association of Disability Examiners (KADE) has lent its hand to helping resurrect its sister chapter: The Derby City Association of Disability Examiners or DCADE (pronounced “decade”). And big things are already happening.

One such happening is that our recently elected President of DCADE, Lesley Brown, has become the Racial Equity Team Leader for DDS’s parent agency – The Division for Income Support. In this role, she is working directly with the Cabinet Secretary for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in Kentucky.



Lesley Brown

Lesley has gathered, curated, and created materials that put some meat on the sometimes simple and superficial stories we have typically known about the role of people of color in the American experience. This has included individuals with Latinx/Hispanic, African, and Asian/Pacific Islander heritage. These stories have truly been intersectional as she has not shied away from issues associated with women’s history, ableist perspectives, nor the existence of folks who identify along the LGBTQ+ spectrums.

Lesley has created an awareness of our shared history that has greater depth and meaning – for her willingness to see and make sense of the truly amazing successes along with the hidden challenges behind each story.

Likewise, in Kentucky, KADE and DCADE are openly engaged in creating a source where adjudicators can obtain social and professional support, mentoring, and an acknowledgement of the multiple bona fide challenges that the Kentucky DDS has faced and will continue to face in the years ahead. Thank you to NADE, and we hope to see you all in real life – real soon.

National Disability Professionals Week

June 20-24, 2022

The NDPW Committee is excited to announce this year's theme for National Disability Professionals Week: **THROUGH IT ALL, NADE STANDS TALL.**

Each year NADE chapters across the country take time to celebrate their membership and all the hard work performed during the last year. After the celebration of NDPW, chapters submit summaries and sometimes pictures of their activities to compete for the NDPW award that is announced at the annual training conference. The winning chapter will receive \$25, and 2nd place will be awarded \$15.

Over the years, chapters have found exciting and inventive ways to celebrate their members in relationship to the annual theme. Chapters have competed in Scavenger hunts, hosted pot lucks, had photo booths, and even gone to group events after work. The NDPW committee looks forward to seeing what chapters come up with this year. The award submission will need to be submitted to Marcia Golden (marcia.golden@ssa.gov) by COB Friday July 8, 2022.

2022 NADE Awards Season Begins

By Jennifer Pounds

It is time to recognize your chapter members who have faithfully persevered through this pandemic and served your chapter and NADE over the past year! The Awards Committee requests that each chapter submit nominations to jennifer.pounds@ssa.gov for the 2022 NADE National Awards by Friday, June 10, 2022 at 5:00 EST. These awards will be presented at the NADE National Training Conference in Burlington, Vermont, July 31- August 2, 2022. Please see the attached criteria for the 2022 NADE Awards guidelines.

Fraudbusters

Reports from The Office of the Inspector General

MAINE: A Waldoboro woman pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to Social Security fraud and Theft of Public Money, U.S. Attorney Darcie N. McElwee announced.

According to court records, from about July 2005 through April 2019, Deborah Moore, 68, a recipient of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), concealed the presence of her husband in her household to maintain her eligibility to receive benefit payments. SSI benefits are paid to people with limited income who are blind, disabled or elderly. Moore's husband had sufficient income to render her ineligible for the benefits she received.

In multiple reviews of her eligibility for benefits, Moore falsely represented to the Social Security Administration (SSA) that she and her husband had separated in July 2005 and had lived separately since that time. At an interview with law enforcement agents, Moore admitted to concealing her living situation from SSA because she knew it would make her ineligible to receive SSI.

Moore faces up to five years in prison on the Social Security fraud charge, up to ten years in prison on the Theft of Public Money charge, a fine of up to \$250,000 on both charges, and up to three years of supervised release.



MARYLAND – Angela Marie Farr, age 36, of Leonardtown, Maryland, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to commit theft of government property and two counts of theft of government property in connection with a scheme to fraudulently obtain disability benefits from the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The total loss to the United States as a result of the fraud scheme is at least \$1,010,702.

As detailed in her plea agreement, Farr served in the U.S. Navy from August 2, 2005 until April 19, 2007, when she was administratively discharged. In 2009, Farr filed a claim for Disability Compensation stating that she suffered post-traumatic stress disorder after being sexually assaulted while on duty three years earlier. At the same time, Farr also falsely claimed to VA that she was seriously injured in a traffic accident when she was struck by a drunk driver while driving on duty in 2006. Farr claimed that she suffered from chronic neck and back pain as a result of the accident.

In support of these claims, Farr filed an entirely fabricated medical record purportedly from the Navy consisting of over 70 pages of documents supposedly authored by criminal investigators, psychologists, and physical therapists. Based on the injuries claimed and the forged supporting medical documentation, the VA rated Farr 70 percent disabled as of October 6, 2007.

In April 2016, Farr applied online for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits on the basis of the same disabilities she cited in her VA claims. In that application, Farr claimed that she was unable to work and was forced to medically retire, despite the fact that she was working for the Department of Defense at the time she applied. The Social Security Administration awarded SSDI benefits to Farr on September 17, 2016.

Farr received approximately \$440,085 in VA benefits to which she was not entitled, and approximately \$35,666 in Social Security benefit payments to which she was not entitled, resulting in a loss to the United States of \$475,751 just on Farr's claims alone. As outlined in her plea agreement, Farr will be required to forfeit an amount equal to the proceeds obtained as a result of the fraud by paying a money judgment of \$475,751, and will be ordered to pay restitution in the full amount of the victims' losses, which is at least \$1,010,702.

Farr also admitted that she conspired with and assisted her then-husband and her father, both of whom are former members of the U.S. Military, to obtain additional disability benefits by exaggerating their existing claims and documenting those exaggerated claims with forged and fraudulent documentation. Farr's then-husband received the highest amount of disability compensation paid by VA, in addition to a Caregiver Assistance stipend of more than \$2,500 per month, that he received for purportedly servicing as Farr's caregiver, despite claiming to be completely disabled himself and unable to use his arms and legs.

In total, Farr's then-husband received \$370,912 in VA benefits to which he was not entitled. Farr's father received \$168,074 in VA benefits to which he was not entitled, from which the VA has recovered approximately \$4,035. At the time of the claims, Farr's father was a civilian employee of the Navy, supervising a logistics unit of 25 people.

Farr faces a maximum sentence of five years in federal prison for the conspiracy and a maximum of 10 years in federal prison for each of the two counts of theft of government property.

ARKANSAS —A Sherwood woman was sentenced today for theft of government funds. Kelli Hogue, 59, was sentenced to 96 months in federal prison. Hogue falsified information in order to receive Social Security disability payments by informing the Social Security Administration (SSA) she had stopped working for a law firm in 2008 or 2009, which she had not. In this way, she stole approximately \$120,523 in Social Security disability payments.

Hogue pleaded guilty in August 2021. In January 2022, Hogue submitted four letters to the Court in preparation of her sentencing in support of her request for a reduced sentence. Three letters purported to be from her doctors, and one letter claimed to be from her pastor. Federal investigators interviewed those whose signatures were on the letters, but all four people said they did not write the letters in support of Hogue and that Hogue had falsified them. Judge Rudofsky revoked Hogue's pre-sentencing release and ordered her to remain in custody pending sentencing.

At today's sentencing hearing, it became public that Hogue had already repaid \$120,000 to the SSA and \$669,000 to Runyan, but she did so with money she obtained after falsifying her federal tax returns and receiving over \$4 million. The investigation regarding her false tax returns is ongoing.



Did you know that
NADE supports Disability Examiners, Support
Staff and Medical Consultants regardless of
your membership status?

Would you like to return the favor?

NADE is a non-profit 501(c)3 supported by
AmazonSmile!

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones.

Use this link to set your preference to NADE

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0888687>

You don't have to be a member of NADE to donate with AmazonSmile, but there are many reasons to join our professional organization:

Education

Advocacy for your front line perspective

Networking

Join NADE today at

<https://www.nade.org/join-nade/>

NADE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Executive Board

Name	Office	Email	State
Marjorie Garcia	President	Marjorie.e.Garcia@ssa.gov	OR
Jennifer Nottingham	President Elect	Jennifer.nottingham@ssa.gov	NV
Sara Winn	Past President	Sara.b.Winn@ssa.gov	LA
Molly Turnbull	Secretary	Molly.Turnbull@ssa.gov	IL
Julie Kujath	Treasurer	Julie.Kujath@ssa.gov	NV

Regional Directors

Name	Region	Email	State
Kristina Burbank	NE	Kristina.Burbank@ssa.gov	VT
Nicole Mayberry	Mid Atlantic	Nicole.Mayberry@ssa.gov	WV
Melissa Williamson	SE	Melissa.Williamson@ssa.gov	AL
Duane Jackson	SW	Duane.Jackson@ssa.gov	AR
Amber Barnes	Pacific	Amber.Barnes@ssa.gov	AZ
Michelle Wade	Great Lakes	Michelle.Wade@ssa.gov	MI
Trish Chaplin	Great Plains	Patricia.Chaplin@ssa.gov	MO

Council of Chapter Presidents

Name	Email	State
Jennifer Pounds	Jennifer.Pounds@ssa.gov	NC

Appointed Directors

Name	Position	Email
Jennifer Nottingham	Legislative Director	Jennifer.Nottingham@ssa.gov
Melissa Williamson	Membership Director	Membership.Director@nade.org
Korin Gary	Communications Director	Korin.M.Gary@ssa.gov