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# **NADE’s Top Issues for 2023**

* **Recruitment and Retention:** Continued funding to achieve and maintain adequate staffing levels at the Disability Determination Services (DDS). Provide the DDSs more flexibility in hiring authority.
	+ Continued support of telework opportunities for the DDS as an employment tool for retention.
	+ Continued partnership between the DDS and SSA Field Offices to provide remote work opportunities where telework from home is not possible.
	+ Ensure the DDSs have equitable ancillary support, such as access to VOIP, mail machine software and state level intranet software.
	+ Supporting DDSs to have competitive salaries will help retain experienced personnel.
	+ Expedite federal background checks to ensure a timely onboarding process.
* **Training:** Resources are needed to train new staff as well as ongoing training for experienced staff. Ensuring adequate funding for quality training and nationally uniform materials is critical for decisional accuracy and reducing processing time. Provide cooperative training between the DDS and SSA Field Offices (FO) to improve understanding of the shared disability processes.
* **Claimant Communication:** Explore ways to permit email and text messaging to claimants to aid in communication while considering privacy and security concerns. Expanding the emailer pilot. Enhancement of the mySSA accounts to allow for form completion and secure messaging center.
* **Evaluation of Vocational Regulations and Processes**: Involve DDS directly in the process to update and simplify the vocational regulations.
	+ Business processes need to be consistent between the DDS, Office of Quality Review (OQR) and ALJs.
	+ Complex and subjective policies such as transferable skills analysis (TSA) need to be simplified.
	+ Update policy leveraging the use of available technology to allow the creation of a policy compliant and objective TSA.
	+ NADE continues to advocate for the reduction in the 15-year work history to no more than10 years.
* **Customer Service Improvements:** NADE encourages efforts to build upon customer service improvements. Maintain hiring authority to keep up with attrition. Providing adequate funding for overtime to help with improving customer service. Fully staff national teleservice center to decrease customer wait times.
* **IT Modernization:** Investment in technology to make reviewing and obtaining evidence more efficient. Continued expansion and development of IMAGEN and Duplicate Identification Process (DIP) software. Increase recruitment of Health IT networks. Provide technical support for Electronic Records Express (ERE) systems.
* **CDI:** Continued support for Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units and expansion efforts to decrease fraud and abuse. Develop a training program for new CDI sites and new team members. Revisit CDI model to address challenges in recruiting local law enforcement partners and expand the law enforcement partners possibilities, such as use of retired annuitants.
* **Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS):** NADE supports a careful re-examination of the Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS) and its impact on the disability program. Revise the policy to address Comparison Point Decisions (CPD) that were poorly documented or supported.
* **CDRs:** Continued program integrity funding as an investment for timely Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs). Ensure that FOs are properly identifying the Comparison Point Decision (CPD).
* **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.Consider the impact of listing changes on Res Judicata and Collateral Estoppel.
* **Disability Case Processing System:** To meet the needs of the DDSs, NADE advocates for adequate funding for enhancement requests in DCPs and continuous open communication with the DDSs front line users.