



NADE ADVOCATE

A Publication of the national association of Disability Examiners

Summer Edition 2026



Table of Contents:

Page 2: Presidents Address

Page 3: National Training Conference

Page 4-6-National Training conference agenda

Page 7: Nominations

Page 8: THADE

Page 9-10: Membership

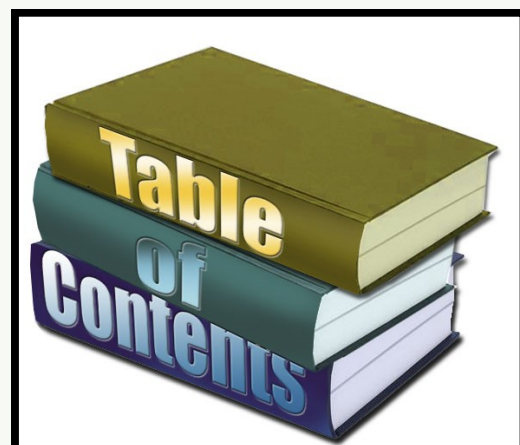
Pages 11- Changes to CCP

Page 12 Committee Chairs

Page 13: NADE MERCH

Page 14: Corporate Sponsors

Page 15: Newsletter submissions



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Hello NADE!

As my presidency comes to a close, I have been taking time to reflect on this past year. It has been hectic and rewarding; filled with learning, excitement, and trepidation. I am grateful to have been surrounded and supported by NADE leaders that have guided me throughout this year.



This year, NADE continued its mission of advocating for disability examiners by traveling to Washington, D.C., to meet with policymakers and key stakeholders, ensuring that the voices of our members were heard at the national level. We also published an opinion piece on Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs), providing meaningful examiner perspectives on an important issue affecting our program and our future. It has been a true honor to represent NADE and the voices of our members.

I am looking forward to the National Training Conference in just a few short weeks! It is such an amazing way to connect other disability professionals. The planning committee has done a fantastic job, and I know this conference will be one for the books.

Thank you for the honor of serving as president.

Amber Barnes



NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE 2026

Raleigh, North Carolina

Registration Currently Open!

NOW UNTIL JULY 15TH

NADE Member Full In Person \$295

NADE Member Daily In Person \$120/day

***Late Fees Apply Starting July 16th**

NOW UNTIL JULY 31ST

NADE Member Full Virtual \$165

NADE Member Daily Virtual \$60/day

***Late Fees Apply Starting August 1st**

HILTON RALEIGH NORTH HILLS

**BLOCK ROOM RATE \$169 +
TAX PER NIGHT**

PERKS OF ROOM BLOCK RESERVATION:

- COMPLIMENTARY SELF PARKING
- BREAKFAST INCLUDED DAILY
FOR UP TO 2 ROOM GUESTS

**DEADLINE FOR BLOCK ROOM
JULY 17TH**



Registration Deadlines:

In Person Registration Closes July 31st

Virtual Registration Closes August 5th



2026 NADE National Training Conference
Hilton Raleigh North Hills
August 9, 2026 – August 12, 2026
NADE Takes Flight!

Sunday, August 9th

3:00 – 6:00 PM	Registration
5:00 – 6:00 PM	New Attendee Orientation
6:00 – 8:00 PM	President's Reception

Monday, August 10th

7:00 – 10:00 AM	Registration
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Opening Ceremony Welcome Remarks - Jenny Angelo, THADE President Jacqueline Russell, Division Director, North Carolina Disability Determination Services
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Step Five of Sequential Evaluation - Kellen Guest, Program Expert, Quality Studies, Analytics, and Strategy (QSAS) – <i>Will discuss step five of sequential evaluation, focusing on reconnecting familiar principles and demonstrating their practical application</i>
10:00 – 10:15 AM	Networking Break
10:15 – 11:15 AM	When the Going Gets Tough: Dealing with Stress and Compassion Fatigue -Cindy Matyi, PhD - <i>Will discuss how disability professionals can recognize workplace stressors, navigate compassion fatigue, and develop resilience.</i>
11:15 – 12:00 PM	Deputy Assistant Inspector General Kevin Huse, Office of Investigations and Christopher Ruch, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Atlanta Field Division
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch on own
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Elevating Service Together - Dr. Robert Weathers, Head of Disability Policy
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Recency of Evidence - Aaron Ashley, Risk & Quality Program Advisor, Quality Studies, Analytics, and Strategy (QSAS) - <i>Will discuss how to evaluate the recency and sufficiency of medical evidence when making disability determinations</i>
3:00 - 3:15 PM	Networking BREAK
3:15 - 4:30 PM	Breakout Session: Support Staff Roundtable Discussion - <i>An opportunity to discuss items pertinent to support staff in the DDS.</i>
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Breakout Session: Ask the National Council of Disability Determination Directors (NCDDD) Roundtable: Kimberlyn Price, NCDDD President Elect; Jacqueline Russell, NCDDD Past President; Leon Scales, NCDDD Past President

3:15 – 4:30 PM	Breakout Session: Council of Chapter Presidents - <i>Meeting to discuss issues impacting local NADE chapters.</i>
4:30 – 5:15 PM	Regional Caucuses
5:15 – 6:00 PM	NADE General Assembly Meeting

Tuesday, August 11th

8:30 – 9:15 AM	Portfolio Executive Lead Update - David Stepp, Portfolio C Executive Lead
9:15 – 10:15 AM	<u>The State of Quality - Jason O’Daniel, Director, QR3, Disability Quality Review and In-grid Wilson, QSEA Branch Chief, Learning and Development</u> Quality Studies, Analytics, and Strategy (QSAS)
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Networking Break
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Taking Flight: Disability Adjudication—What’s on Our Radar - Chief Jay Ortis and Jim Parikh, Head of Service Delivery & Accountability
11:30 – 12:00 PM	When Is It Appropriate to Use Listing 2.09 - Angela Brown Ed.D., CCC-SLP Lead SLP/Project Manager – <i>Will provide an overview of listing 2.09 with tips for adjudication of speech-language cases for adults and children</i>
12:00 – 1:30 PM	NADE Awards Luncheon
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Avoiding Unnecessary Consultative Examinations - Christen King, Training & Development Specialist, Virginia DDS – <i>Will discuss strategies on how to avoid ordering unnecessary consultative examinations</i>
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Networking Break
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Breakout Session: Quality Assurance Roundtable Discussion - <i>An opportunity to discuss items pertinent to completing quality assurance reviews in the DDS.</i>
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Breakout Session: Professional Relations Officers Roundtable Discussion – <i>An opportunity to discuss items pertinent to the DDS professional relations officers.</i>
3:15 – 4:30 PM	<u>Breakout Session:</u> NADE Engagement & Leadership Roundtable Discussion – <i>NADE leaders will be discussing ideas for Chapter engagement and leadership development</i>
4:30 – 6:00 PM	NADE General Assembly Meeting

Wednesday, August 12th

8:30 – 9:15 AM	True Colors - Kimberlyn Price, Deputy Director Ohio DDS and Cheri Sayavong, Area Manager, Ohio DDS - <i>An engaging session designed to enhance communication, collaboration, and understanding by exploring personality styles and their impact on team dynamics.</i>
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Interpretation and Indications for Pulmonary Function Testing (PFT) - Dr. Clinton Leinweber – <i>North Carolina DDS MC will discuss how to interpret pulmonary function tests (PFTs) and determine when they are indicated based on case facts.</i>
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Networking Break
10:30 – 11:30 AM	<u>Evaluating Mental Disorders using the “C” criteria</u> - Jenny St. Onge MS, Supervisor, Colorado DDS - <i>Will discuss how to evaluate serious and persistent mental disorders using the C criteria</i>
11:30 – 12:00 PM	IMAGEN meets AI: “ReIMAGENing” SSA Disability Review - Dr. Ki Abel – <i>North Carolina DDS MC will discuss ways to leverage AI tools to complete medical review</i>

12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch on own
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Cardiovascular Listings Updates - J. Scott Pritchard DO – <i>Oregon DDS Lead MC will discuss upcoming updates to cardiovascular listings.</i>
2:00 – 2:45 PM	Jackie O’Brien - Director, Paws of War Eastern North Carolina – <i>Will discuss their mission to bring together rescued dogs, and disabled Veterans and First Responders, to save and change lives.</i>
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Networking Break
3:00 – 3:45 PM	The Gift of Life: Dispelling Myths about Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation - Allison Brouillette, Executive Director Donate Life North Carolina - <i>Will provide an overview of registration, donation, and transplant in North Carolina and beyond, and discuss the landscape for patients, families, and living donors.</i>
3:45 – 4:30 PM	NADE Closing Ceremonies – <i>NADE outgoing president will pass the gavel to the incoming president. The new NADE president will include closing remarks.</i>
4:30 – 9:00 PM	NADE New Board Meeting

NADE Nomination & Elections Committee - 2026

By: Todd DeShong

Hello fellow NADE members, once again it is time to consider your commitment to the organization. We are looking for members, in good standing, that have the drive and ambition to help lead this organization into the future. For those of you who have been members and have thought that you could do good work on the Board; please, read carefully. If you are energetic, friendly, and hard-working, you should consider the following. The position of President Elect is still open! For those interested in the duties of these positions; please, see the "Committee/Officer Charges" [<https://www.nade.org/about-nade/board-of-directors/nade-charges>] found within the NADE website.

After you have read about the duties of these positions, and you are still eager to fill one of those positions, there are a few additional things we need from you. We will need a resume and photograph to be published in the *Advocate*. You also have a chance to speak to the current holders of these offices. You will also be able to speak to other members of the Board, as well as others who have held these offices in the past.

If after doing your research, and speaking with family, friends, and DDS bosses, you are still interested in these positions; please, step forward.



THADE Annual Scholarship

by: Jennifer Pounds, THADE PERC Chair

Each year THADE rewards a \$750 college scholarship to a dependent child of one of our members. The recipient is selected by THADE's Professional Employee Recognition Committee. An applicant's record of past academic performance, service to his or her school and community, personal references that can attest to an applicant's character, motivation, and leadership potential and an applicant's personal statement is carefully evaluated and the financial status of the applicant, and/or his or her family, is NOT considered.

This year's recipient was Ms. Jessica Leli, the daughter of THADE members, Fred and Sally Ferguson. Ms. Leli completed her undergraduate degree from UNC Charlotte and is currently attending the attending Kenneth F. Kahn School of Law at High Point University where she has a 3.25 GPA. Ms. Leli participates in multiple extracurricular activities including Women in Law, Law Students Against Sexual and Domestic Violence as well as the Democratic Legal Society. Ms. Leli is a member of the Honor Council as well. Her references consistently highlight her exemplary professionalism, dependability, and strong work ethic. She is recognized as a hardworking individual who is genuinely committed to delivering high-quality results. Additionally, she approaches challenges with a positive attitude, demonstrating resilience and a proactive approach to problem-solving.

THADE is honored to recognize Ms. Jessica Leli as the 2026 THADE Scholarship Recipient.



Jennifer Pounds, PERC Chair and Jessica Leli



Sally Ferguson, Jessica Leli and Fred Ferguson

Strong Membership Builds a Stronger NADE

Submitted by Ebony Grissett, Membership Committee

Membership is more than just a yearly renewal — it is an investment in the strength, connection, and future of our organization. Every member brings experience, ideas, and support that help NADE continue serving professionals and the individuals we assist every day.

As we move into another membership year, now is the perfect time to renew your membership, encourage others to join, and stay actively engaged in all that NADE has to offer.

Why Membership Matters

NADE membership provides opportunities to:

- Stay informed on policy updates and industry changes
- Access professional development and networking opportunities
- Collaborate with peers across regions and states
- Share best practices and innovative ideas
- Support advocacy efforts that strengthen our profession

A strong membership base allows NADE to continue growing, improving resources, and amplifying the voices of our members.

Membership Retention Starts With Engagement

Retaining members is just as important as recruiting new ones. One of the best ways to keep members involved is by creating meaningful connections and reminding everyone of the value NADE provides throughout the year.

Here are a few ideas to help promote membership retention:

- Personally invite coworkers and colleagues to participate in meetings or events
- Welcome new members and help them feel included
- Share success stories and professional experiences
- Highlight member benefits regularly
- Encourage participation in committees, conferences, and volunteer opportunities
- Recognize and celebrate member contributions

Sometimes a simple reminder or personal outreach is all it takes to encourage someone to renew and remain active.

Don't Forget to Renew

If you have not renewed your membership yet, now is a great time to do so. Renewing early helps ensure uninterrupted access to NADE resources, communications, and member opportunities.

Please also encourage your coworkers and fellow professionals to check their membership status and renew if needed.

New Website Feature: Auto Renewal

NADE is excited to offer a new auto-renewal feature through the website to make membership renewal easier and more convenient than ever.

With auto renewal:

- Your membership renews automatically each year
- You avoid missing renewal deadlines
- Your membership remains active without interruption
- The renewal process becomes quick and hassle-free

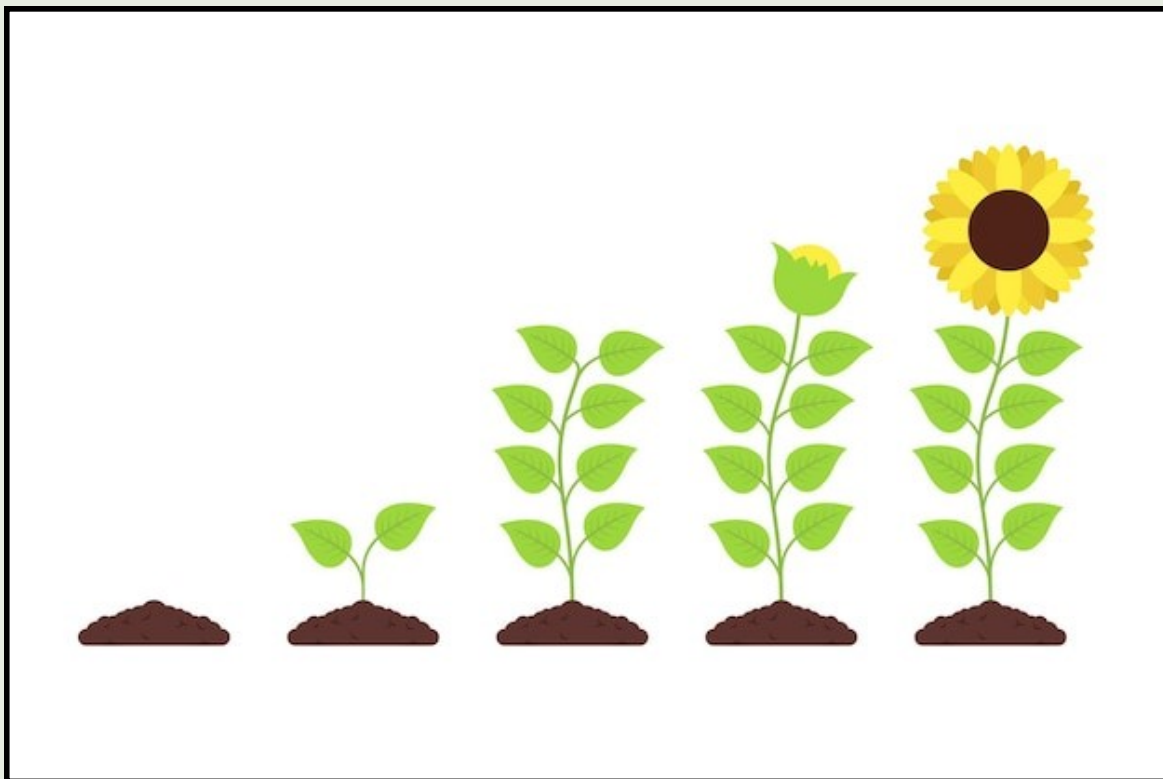
Members can enable auto renewal through their account settings on the NADE website during the renewal process.

This new feature is designed to simplify membership management and help members stay connected year-round.

Together We Continue to Grow

NADE's success depends on the dedication and involvement of its members. Whether you are renewing your membership, encouraging someone new to join, or staying engaged throughout the year, your participation makes a difference.

Thank you for being part of NADE and for helping strengthen our professional community.



CCP Chair Bylaw Change: What You Need to Know Before You Vote

By Ayanna Conley

The Vote: NADE members will decide on a proposed bylaw change at the Annual General Assembly in Raleigh this August — reclassifying the Council of Chapter Presidents (CCP) Chair from a Board Trustee to a Committee Chair.

Q: What actually changes?

The CCP Chair steps off the Board as a voting Trustee and is no longer required (or funded) to attend the Mid-Year Board Meeting or National Training Conference. The CCP becomes a formal standing committee with its own bylaws, subject to Board approval.

Q: Why is this happening?

The CCP Chair and Regional Directors have significant overlap in their responsibilities. This change reduces duplication and lets both roles focus more clearly on supporting chapters and members.

Q: Does the Council go away?

No. Chapter Presidents, President-Elects, and Immediate Past Presidents still make up the Council, and it keeps its voice in NADE matters — now through the committee structure instead of a Board seat.

Q: What do I need to do?

Come ready to vote at the Annual General Assembly in August. Voting logistics will be shared as the date approaches. Questions before then? Contact your Regional Director.

NADE 2025-2026 Committee Chairs

Awards -Melvin Carr

CDIU- VACANT

Constitution, Bylaws & Strategic Planning- Tonya Scott

Elections & Credentials- Todd Deshong

Hearings Officer- VACANT

Medical Consultant- J. Scott Pritchard DO

Membership-Marjorie Garcia

National Disability Professionals Week- Marcia Golden

Non-Dues Revenue- Julie Kujath

Organ Donation/Transplant- Joellen Chapman

Professional Development-Amber Barnes- Sharyn Perry Co-Chair

Professional Relations Officer- Keith Hearnberger EdD

Retirees- Terri Klubertanz

Support Staff- Chanell Hamilton

**If you are interested on serving on a committee,
please contact Amber Barnes.**



NADE
National Association of Disability Examiners

**New
Product**



**NADE TUMBLERS
\$20/EACH, INCLUDES
SHIPPING!!!**

email julie.kujath@ssa.gov
for details

GET your NADE MERCH!!!!

**Contact Julie Kujath
if interested in ordering NADE-
products.**

**FIND Your FAV at the National
conference!**



NADE Corporate Sponsors:



How our partnership can help you



Recruitment of medical doctors to complete examinations



Assistance with credentialing and training of doctors



Streamlined process for scheduling consultative examinations



Consistent, thorough and actionable reports



Timely, responsive communication

Email:

susan.gezana@evermedexams.com

Since our beginning in 1985, MDSI has become an industry leader and premier provider of medical disability exams.



The MDSI team specializes in providing exams in remote and hard to serve areas for Disability Determination Branches like yours! Whether your needs are in remote, urban or metropolitan areas, we can Help!

MDSI has an impeccable record of providing high quality examinations in a timely manner.

Please contact our team for immediate assistance and support for your branch/jurisdiction.

Jennifer Fryer
Chief Operations Officer
801-627-1093



Camera Pro?

Showcase your Chapter!



The NADE Communications director will be giving out prizes for your photos and Newsletter at the NTC conference! Submit them all year long but indicate that you want them for the contest!



Submit any photos and your newsletter to sara.b.winn@ssa.gov. Send any Chapter happenings that you would like included in the newsletter.