

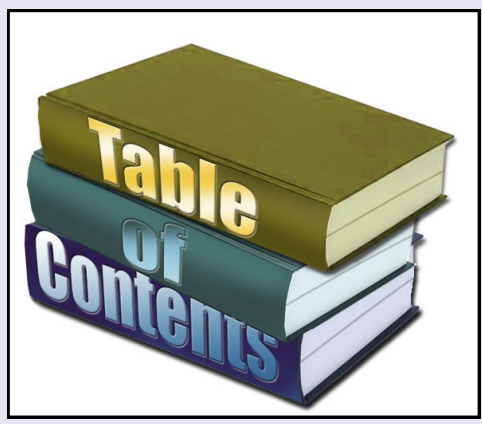
NADE ADVOCATE

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Greetings NADE Family,

I can't believe it is summer already! I hope that you are taking much needed breaks away from work to relax. What we do is challenging and we must make sure that we are taking the time to recharge. I have absolutely been taking time to have a glass of wine, dip my toes in the pool, enjoy my family, and reflect on the year ahead.

I am excited to report that we continue to increase our membership rolls! This is a testament to all the hard work that you are doing to engage your colleagues and create community. Make sure to remind everyone in your Chapter (and maybe some that wandered off and are ready to come back) to renew their memberships so that we can keep this momentum going.

We just celebrated National Disability Professional's Week (NDPW) in June. This is our time to recognize disability professionals nationwide for the exceptional work that you do. Although you may not see it, you are impacting the lives of vulnerable citizens in your state. Thank You for coming back to get the work done every day! I can't wait to hear about all the creative ways you chose to celebrate when we get together in a few weeks at the 2024 National Training Conference (NTC). I hope to see all of you there either virtually or in person. The agenda is included in this edition of The Advocate. As always, we will be hearing from many different speakers about things that impact us. I learn something new every year at NTC from both the speakers and my NADE family.

We will be holding elections for several leadership positions during the conference this year: President-Elect, Pacific Regional Director, Midwest Regional Director, and Council of the Chapter Presidents Chair. I know that it is a tough ask with all the work challenges that we are experiencing, but I am asking anyway. Please consider joining the NADE Board of Directors. Over the years, I have taken on several leadership positions on the NADE Board. I am not saying that it is easy, but it always rewarding. I hope you will consider joining me. Many hands make light work!

We have come far as an organization, but there is always more work to be done. I am glad to be on this journey with all of you. Your passion and commitment to NADE is what makes NADE great!

Ayanna Conley,

NADE President



CCP CHAIR CANDIDATE

Sara Waldsmith, Ohio



I have been an adjudicator with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities since 2009. I am currently a Senior Disability Claims Adjudicator and have been president of the Ohio Association of Disability Examiners (OADE) since 2017. During that time period, we have held at least two successful State Training Conferences, as well as participating in agency-wide celebrations of National Disability Professionals Week, working with Lifeline of Ohio, and done work in the community with those in need. While we have struggled with numbers during the pandemic, Ohio has gained a couple of new members in the last six months, and we have plans to reach out to some groups in the agency that we feel we are in a unique position to serve. As CCP chairperson, I would love to be able to communicate with other states and help NADE grow and serve those who serve others.

Pacific Regional Director
Jenny St Onge, Colorado



I would like to nominate myself for Pacific Regional Director. I have been a member of NADE for 11 years. I am currently the Colorado CADE President. This is my second time holding this position. I have attended three NADE national training conferences and will be attending this year's in OK City. I am passionate about NADE's mission and would like to be involved on a regional and national level. I am organized, timely in my responses to e-mails and able to manage large projects while meeting deadlines. I ask you to consider me for the position of Pacific Regional Director..

The Pacific region is holding an election on July 15th for Pacific RD.



The 2024 NADE National Training Conference
The Skirvin Hilton Oklahoma City, OK
August 4, 2024 – August 7, 2024
IT STARTS WITH US!

Sunday, August 4th

4:00 – 6:00 PM Registration
6:00 – 8:00 PM President's Reception

Monday, August 5th

7:00 – 4:00 PM Registration
7:30 – 8:30 AM Continental Breakfast
7:30 – 8:15 AM New Attendee Orientation
8:30 – 9:00 AM Opening Ceremony- OKADE President, Melvin Carr
Oklahoma DDS Division Administrator, Keith Tiller
Dallas Regional Commissioner, Travis Dodson
9:00 – 10:00 AM Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Michelle King (Tentative)
10:00 – 10:15 AM Networking Break
10:15 – 11:15 AM Associate Commissioner of the Office of Disability Determinations, John Owen
11:15 – 12:00 PM NADE President, Ayanna Conley – *Will discuss the top issues for those who work in the Disability Determination Service.*
12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch on own
1:00 – 2:00 PM Pediatric claims, Emily Hall DO – *Montana DDS MC will share insights on evaluating pediatric claims, with an emphasis on age appropriate milestones, helpful testing and evaluating children under the age of 3 with developmental delays.*
2:00 – 3:00 PM Indian and Tribal Health- An Indian Health Services physician will discuss the *challenges in health care access for American Indians, particularly with specialty care.*
3:00 - 3:15 PM Networking BREAK
3:15 - 4:30 PM Breakout Session: Council of Chapter Presidents meeting- *Meeting to discuss issues impacting local NADE chapters; hold elections.*
3:15 – 4:30 PM Breakout Session: The Governor of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe will share information on tribal relations, community and culture.
4:30 – 5:15 PM Regional Caucuses
5:15 – 6:00 PM NADE General Assembly Meeting

Tuesday, August 6th

- 8:30 – 9:15 AM Liked, Subscribed & Shared: The Power of Relationship & Connectivity, Charles Galbreath – *Known for reforming Juvenile Justice systems, by implementing a therapeutic group approach. Mr. Galbreath will share the importance of connecting in the social service setting.*
- 9:15 – 10:00 AM Associate Commissioner of Office of Disability Policy, Hope Grunberg
- 10:00 – 10:15 AM Networking Break
- 10:15 – 11:00 AM Dr. Damon Anthony Williams, PT, DPT, NBC-HWC – *Will share how physical therapy initial exams are conducted and how a physical therapist formulates a treatment plan.*
- 11:00 – 12:00 PM Neurodevelopmental and neurocognitive disorders, Winifred Ju PhD- Oregon DDS PC will provide information on how to evaluate neurodevelopmental disorders and neurocognitive disorders.
- 12:00 – 1:30 PM NADE Awards Luncheon
- 1:30 – 2:30 PM Deputy Assistant Inspector General of the Office of Investigations, Kevin Huse
- 2:30 – 2:45 PM Networking Break
- 2:45 – 3:30 PM Breakout Session: Executive Director of Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services, Melinda Fruendt – *Will discuss interagency relationships.*
- 2:45 – 3:30 PM Breakout Session: Disability Hearing Officers Roundtable Discussion- *An opportunity to discuss items pertinent to the DDS Disability Hearing Officers.*
- 2:45 – 3:30 PM Breakout Session: Professional Relations Officers Roundtable Discussion – *An opportunity to discuss items pertinent to the DDS professional relations officers.*
- 3:30 – 4:30 PM Veterans Affairs: *Will discuss programs available to assist veterans with disabilities and address common physical and mental health challenges of veterans.*
- 4:30 – 6:00 PM NADE General Assembly Meeting

Wednesday, August 7th

- 8:30 – 9:30 AM Division Director, Office of Quality Review, Kasey Torres
- 9:30 – 10:00 AM Field Office Mock Interview, Lannette Campbell District Manager – *Will conduct a mock disability interview with a local field office.*
- 10:00 – 10:15 AM Networking Break
- 10:15 – 11:00 AM Assistive Technology and Career Service Training for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Tanya Skelly, ATCP/AT Specialist III – *Will share the adaptive technology and training services that are used to help the blind and visually impaired with employment needs.*
- 11:00 – 12:00 PM Respiratory Disorders and ordering PFTs, J. Scott Pritchard DO – Oregon DDS MC will discuss the clinical exams findings and tests to consider with respiratory disorders. *Will discuss when Pulmonary Function Tests are needed.*
- 12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch on own
- 1:00 – 2:00 PM Oklahoma Brain Injury Alliance - *A Medical provider will discuss traumatic brain injuries system of care and resources.*

CONFERENCE DAY 3 CTD.....

Wed August 7th-

- 2:00 – 2:45 PM Oklahoma Brain Injury Alliance - *A care taker and advocate will discuss the impact of acquired brain injuries on survivors.*
- 2:45 – 3:00 PM Networking Break
- 3:00 – 3:45 PM Oklahoma Organ and Tissue Donation, LifeShare of Oklahoma- *Will discuss the types of organs/tissue that can be donated; the donation and recovery process. An organ recipient will share their story.*
- 3:45 – 4:30 PM NADE Closing Ceremonies – *NADE outgoing president will pass the gavel to the incoming president. The new NADE president will include closing remarks.*
- 4:30 – 9:00 PM NADE New Board Meeting





NADE's Top Issues for 2024

- **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.
 - **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:** Continue to 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 technology use to allow for form completion, document uploading, and secure messaging by claimants and appointed representatives.
 - **Evaluation of Vocational Regulations and Processes:**

While work has been done to update vocational policy and processes, NADE continues to advocate for additional streamlining, taking into consideration the overall impact on the disability workload and decisional outcomes. 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.

[Continued focus on modernizing the occupational database and software used for vocational analysis](#)

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. Explore programs that can efficiently identify duplicate records. Increase recruitment of Health IT networks. Provide technical support for Electronic Records Express (ERE) systems, with focus on eventual replacement of the system.
- **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 continued 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.

National Case Processing System: To meet the needs of the DDSs, NADE advocates for adequate funding for enhancement requests in NCPS and continuous open communication with the DDSs front line users.

NATIONAL OFFICERS



PRESIDENT

Ayanna Conley

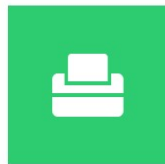
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A Note From the Editor:

Thank you for submitting articles to spotlight the wonderful happenings at NADE chapters across the nation. Special thanks to Rhea Novak who assists with editing articles. Please feel free to submit articles throughout the year! If you are interested in being mentored for Communications Director, please contact me.

Submit your articles to:

sara.b.winn@ssa.gov

