

**Social Security Advisory Board  
Minutes  
Board Meeting  
October 12, 2011**

**Location:** 400 Virginia Avenue, S.W., Suite 625  
Washington, D.C. 20024

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**SSAB Members:** Marsha Katz, Acting Chair  
Jagadeesh Gokhale  
Dorcas Hardy  
Mark Warshawsky

**Presenters:** Michael Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security  
Bob Weathers, Deputy Associate Commissioner for  
Program Development and Research, SSA  
Paul O’Leary, Project Director for Ticket to Work  
Evaluation in the Office of Program Development and  
Research, SSA  
Henry Lucas, Member, SSA’s Future Systems Technology  
Advisory Panel (by telephone)  
Dave McClure, Member, SSA’s Future Systems  
Technology Advisory Panel (by telephone)  
Blaise Heltai, Member, SSA’s Future Systems Technology  
Advisory Panel (by telephone)

**SSAB Staff:** Katherine Thornton, Staff Director  
Debi Sullivan, Deputy Staff Director  
Jackie Chapin  
Jeremy Elder  
Joel Feinleib  
Beverly Rollins  
David Warner

**Guests:** John Tamborini, TANF-SSI Project, SSA  
Debra Tidwell-Peters, Occupational Information Initiative  
Project, SSA  
Susan O’Brian, SES candidate, Office of Program  
Development and Research, SSA  
Joel Najjar, Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs,  
SSA  
Aviva Sufian, Assistant to the Commissioner, SSA

During its October meeting, the Board met in executive session, held one fact-finding meeting, and hosted a working lunch with SSA’s Commissioner, Michael Astrue. In the morning, the Board met with Bob Weathers and Paul O’Leary to discuss demonstration and pilot projects that SSA has underway currently. Those included the Accelerated Benefits Demonstration, the Mental Health Treatment Study, Youth Transition Demonstration, Benefit Offset National Demonstration, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/SSI Disability Transition Project.

***Accelerated Benefits Demonstration.*** The first phase of the demonstration project ran from October 2007 to December 2010, tested the effect of providing immediate health benefits to newly-entitled SSDI beneficiaries, and assessed potential costs and benefits of waiving the usual 24-month Medicare waiting period. During the next steps of the project, SSA will track the outcomes of its research using administrative data to assess whether there are savings from long-term employment gains, reduced health care needs, and reduced benefits. To date, the research is seeing significant results in people finding employment.

***Mental Health Treatment Study.*** The MHTS tested the hypothesis that access to supported employment services and systematic medication management could help Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries with schizophrenia return to work. The study ran from November 2006 through July 2010. Findings indicated that the treatment group had a higher 24-month employment rate than the control group by a margin of 21 percent. The treatment group also showed significant mental health status improvements as well as an overall improved quality of life. While the final report will be released soon, participants will continue to be monitored to determine whether employment and earnings gains continue.

***Youth Transition Demonstration.*** The demonstration project, which began in September 2003, identifies successful methods for transitioning young people from school to work and on to self-sufficiency. The project provides support services and needed service interventions, and tests modified SSI income and resource exclusions. Results in two or the three sites have found that the treatment groups had earnings 7 to 10 percent higher than control groups. The project will continue through the spring of 2012.

***Benefit Offset National Demonstration.*** BOND tests a \$1 for \$2 offset for annualized earnings above an annualized substantial gainful activity threshold. The offset begins after the trial work period and subsequent 3-month grace period. SSA awarded the BOND contract to Abt Associates in December 2009. Startup activities were completed during calendar year 2010. Stage 1 was started in April 2011, and an assessment report will be done in March 2012 for Stage 2. In 2017, the final report from Abt will be issued and then there will be a final report from SSA when the project is complete.

***TANF-SSI Disability Transition Project.*** The project examines how SSA and TANF agencies can serve TANF recipients with disabilities by promoting work and well-being and facilitating SSI applications. SSA, the Administration for Children and Families, and States and counties in California, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York are collaborating on this project. The project has three stages and looks only at adult SSI applicants. A report is expected to come out in December 2012 at which time SSA will determine whether it will continue to participate in the project.

During lunch, the Board met with the Commissioner of Social Security, Michael Astrue, and discussed SSA staffing issues, workloads, and the additions to the agency's list of Compassionate Allowances.

The Board also held a teleconference with three members of SSA's Future Systems Technology Advisory Panel and discussed the Panel's deliberations.

During its executive session, the Board discussed current and future projects, said goodbye to Staff Director Kate Thornton, and announced that Deputy Staff Director Debi Sullivan will act as Staff Director until a permanent Director is named.

I certify that the minutes written for the October 12, 2011 meeting of the Social Security Advisory Board are correct.

*Marsha Rae Katz*

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Marsha Katz                      Date: November 2, 2011  
Acting Chair  
Social Security Advisory Board