

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD Annual Report 2012

August 2013



**The Social Security Advisory Board**

An independent, bipartisan Board created by the Congress and appointed by the President and the Congress to advise the President, the Congress and the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration on matters related to the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Programs

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

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We are pleased to provide you with the fifteenth *Annual Report of the Social Security Advisory Board*. The year proved to be a very busy one as the Board planned for a major forum on disability policy while continuing to monitor Social Security's financing and solvency issues and ongoing administrative activities at the Social Security Administration (SSA). Despite changes to the Board and staff, we believe 2012 was a productive year for the Board as we carried out our mandate to advise the President, the Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on matters related to the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income programs.

The Board devoted significant time to the Social Security disability process and programs as well as the larger policy questions about disability reform. We issued two major disability-related publications. In February, we released our third update to one of our most popular and often cited publications, [\*Aspects of Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials\*](#). We also continued research into the representation of claimants and issued a report in September entitled, [\*Filing for Social Security Disability Benefits: What Impact Does Professional Representation Have on the Process at the Initial Application Level\*](#).

As is our practice, the Board held meetings on a monthly basis, inviting SSA's Commissioner, the Inspector General and other SSA executives throughout the year to discuss the challenges they face in administering programs that pay over \$800 billion in benefits annually. In addition, we consulted with advocates, researchers, and experts on existing projects, future innovations, and current problems such as SSA's aging technology infrastructure. Having provided feedback both before and after its implementation, we were pleased to see the agency initiate a new online service portal in 2012 accessed through the [\*My Social Security\*](#) web link.

In May, we traveled to Atlanta and met with disability stakeholders to hear first-hand about the challenges facing individuals with disabilities. We also had the opportunity to meet with employees in SSA field offices and hearing offices where we heard about increasing workloads and other issues that they are facing. Despite the challenges, we also saw the pride in public service that these employees bring to their jobs.

Internally, the Board said goodbye to Acting Chair Marsha Katz and Board Member Mark Warshawsky, whose terms expired at the end of September. Barbara Kennelly became the Acting Chair on October 1, 2012. Debi Sullivan was formally appointed Staff Director, though she had been ably handling this role for many months before her appointment, and Claire Green joined the Board staff as Deputy Staff Director.

The Board ended the year without a quorum, with just three Board members remaining for the final three months of the year. While advanced planning of projects and studies ensured that our work continued throughout 2012, the lack of appropriate representation on the Board made it more

difficult to do that work. Although we regained a quorum in early 2013, we appeal to the President and members of the Senate to support the timely nomination and appointment of the three vacant positions on the Board.

We hope you will find our report helpful.

Barbara B. Kennelly, Acting Chair

Bernadette Franks-Ongoy

Jagadeesh Gokhale

Dorcas R. Hardy

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## FINANCING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

As part of our statutory mandate, the Board regularly meets with numerous officials responsible for evaluating the financial status of the Social Security and Medicare systems. In 2012 the Board met separately with the Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and the two Public Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

In June, we met with the Chief Actuary of Social Security, Stephen Goss, for a briefing on the 2012 Social Security Trustees Report released at the end of April 2012. Mr. Goss reported that the 75-year actuarial deficit increased from 2.22 percent of payroll to 2.67 percent of payroll due primarily to updated data—including a slightly higher COLA than was expected, lower taxable earnings, lower fertility rates and levels of immigration—and changes in assumptions including lower interest rates over the next 10 years, fewer hours worked, and slightly higher disability incidence. Combined OASDI Trust Fund reserves are projected to be exhausted in 2033, three years earlier than last year’s projection of 2036, with 75 percent of benefits still payable after exhaustion. In addition, the discussion topics included the solvency of the DI Trust Fund, whose reserves are expected to be exhausted in 2016, two years earlier than last year’s projection of 2018. At that time only 79 percent of disability benefits will be payable. The Chief Actuary explained that the reserves of the DI trust fund are expected to be exhausted sooner because of the short term effects of the recent recession and the slow recovery of the economy and labor markets.

Another topic for discussion was the response of the Trustees to the 2011 report of the Social Security Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods which was chartered by the Board in 2010. The Trustees changed some assumptions that were recommended by the Technical Panel (e.g., hours worked, disability incidence) and also presented some data in new ways (e.g., presentation of stochastic and traditional scenarios on one chart). The staff members who advise the Trustees were expected to meet later in June to carefully review all of the Panel’s recommendations.

At the July Board meeting, we met with Richard Foster, Chief Actuary for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to discuss the findings of the 2012 Medicare Trustees Report released at the end of April 2012. The Hospital Insurance Trust Fund is expected to be exhausted in 2024 so it does not meet the short-range test of financial adequacy. The changes made by *The Affordable Care Act* (ACA) have reduced the HI deficit through a combination of cuts to providers and the higher payroll tax for high-income earners beginning in 2018. The expenses of the HI trust fund exceeded income in 2011 and are projected to continue to do so until at least 2020. The actuaries noted that the Trustees’ cost projections assume that physician reimbursement reductions, required under current law, will not be overridden by Congress as they have in almost every year, and that similar provider payment reductions enacted in the *Affordable Care Act of 2010* will be enforced. Based on skepticism that such reductions would actually take effect as planned, the actuaries present in the Trustees’ report alternative cost projections that are

considerably higher. The ACA authorizes new research on delivery and payment reforms and we discussed how better integration of services could reduce waste and give providers a greater incentive to be efficient. The Actuary advised that any effects of these efforts will not be known for several years.

The findings of the 2010-2011 Medicare Technical Review Panel which was charged with reviewing the assumptions and methods used in Medicare projections were also discussed during the session. The Trustee agreed with most of the Panel's recommendations and incorporated as many of them as were feasible in the current report, but several recommendations will require more work.

In September the Board met with the two Public Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds, Robert Reischauer and Charles Blahous. We discussed the experience of the Trustees producing the 2012 Trustees report, the approaching depletion of the DI Trust Fund and the practical impact of the recent recommendations of the 2011 Social Security Technical Panel. We discussed differences between the Medicare Technical Panel, which has a relatively limited charge, and the Social Security Technical Panel, which is responsible for making recommendations across a broad array of issues. Both Trustees agreed that the panels serve an important purpose by prodding those involved to consider changes to the system.

## THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Since its inception, the Board has focused much of its efforts on the study of SSA's disability programs. With the exhaustion of the DI trust fund expected in 2016, the Board continued to look for ways to improve the administration of current programs and identify reform proposals to ensure that the nation's disability system provides the best possible supports and services to individuals with disabilities. The majority of 2012 was spent preparing for a forum on the state of our nation's disability policy. Board meetings and discussions in 2012 centered on gathering expert opinions, research, and experiences with SSA's disability programs. Discussions also focused on programmatic policy, examining the administration of the programs to ensure that they were meeting the needs of target populations.

### FOCUS ON THE DISABILITY PROCESS

During the first few months of the year, the Board met with a number of experts to discuss the disability decision-making process. We met with representatives of the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) to discuss the comprehensive review of issues that impact the appeals process that they had been contracted by SSA to undertake. As the review criteria were in the development stage, the Board was invited to participate in a working group to advise the ongoing study. In March, the Board hosted a panel of experts that included both practicing Administrative Law Judges and professors of administrative law to discuss the role of Administrative Law Judges in the Social Security process. They noted two important factors -- SSA's disability programs have some serious problems with regard to the consistency of the decision-making process and the resulting appeals are an enormous cost to SSA.

The Board met with representatives from both SSA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) regarding their collaboration to improve SSA's disability determination process. SSA sought assistance from NIH to identify new diagnostic tests to expedite case allowances, with the goal of making the disability determination process faster, more efficient, and more accurate. We also received a demonstration of a new Computer Adaptive Testing process that is being developed to aid SSA with functional assessments of physical impairments. In an ongoing effort to monitor the operational issues, the Board met with SSA officials in April and received a briefing regarding the implementation of the Disability Claims Processing System (DCPS). DCPS is a multiyear SSA effort to create a common case processing system to be used by all State and Federal disability determination offices. It is expected to result in improvements throughout the life of the claim, and will eliminate the need for "work-arounds" and manual interventions. DCPS will ultimately replace the outdated, inefficient legacy systems, resulting in information being stored in one central location – a huge advantage for data collection and research purposes.

The Board's May trip to Atlanta provided us with an opportunity to meet with disability stakeholders. To begin with, we met with three panels of experts to discuss the disability

programs. The first panel, comprised of SSA executives discussed SSA's increasing workloads and budget constraints. The second panel, made up of disability advocates, discussed issues that prohibit individuals with disabilities from entering and staying in the workforce. The panel offered a number of recommendations on how to help these individuals obtain and keep jobs, including raising the substantial gainful activity level and simplifying the return to work process. The third panel, consisting of academicians, told the Board about difficulties the public has getting information about the Social Security programs. The panel also discussed how people with disabilities remain isolated and unemployed due to the lack of good information about available programs, and what services are needed for individuals with disabilities to enter the workforce and remain employed.

In addition to the panels, the Board was briefed on the status of the Disability Determination Services' (DDS) operations which have been adversely affected by increasing workloads. Regional officials described how the agency had supported the DDSs and found ways to assist with their increasing volume of work. The Board then heard from the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) representatives. Challenges and successes of managing ODAR backlogs and improving performance were discussed.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR A BOARD FORUM ON DISABILITY POLICY

In the summer of 2012, the Board began a series of meetings with individuals to assist in developing the agenda for a policy forum on disability issues. At the June meeting the Board members discussed a number of disability issues with the Director of Disability Research at RAND, Nicole Maestas. The discussion focused on research that pinpoints applicants on the margin, where decisions to award or deny benefits are the most subjective and where early intervention to keep people in the workforce may have the most impact. Board members also met with SSA officials to discuss SSA's new Disability Research Consortium (DRC); we were told that the success of SSA's Retirement Research Consortium informed the agency's development of the DRC which will conduct collaborative research through research centers. SSA expected to award cooperative agreements for the first centers by the end of fiscal year 2012.

In October, the Board met with experts and agency officials to discuss current initiatives to assist individuals with disabilities navigate the confusing array of work incentive programs. We viewed a demonstration of the DB101 program by Bryon MacDonald from the World Institute on Disability; the program is an online resource to aid beneficiaries as they attempt to return to work. We also heard from SSA representatives and contractors involved in the Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) project which the agency is hoping will encourage beneficiaries to attempt to return to work. As a follow-up to the BOND discussion, the Board met with individuals who offered alternative offset proposals and experience with benefit offsets. Another topic the Board explored was the interplay between private disability insurance (PDI) and the SSDI program. Leading industry representatives were asked to discuss current practices as well as

their thoughts on the industry's view of possible SSDI reforms. Other disability experts met with the Board to discuss a variety of issues including term-limited or temporary benefits, SSA's Ticket-to-Work program, shortcomings of the current SSDI program, and limitations regarding the current work incentives structure.

In addition to monthly meetings, the Board also convened two informal panels with policy experts. At the November panel discussion, the experts discussed a number of issues including the SSDI definition of disability with respect to the goals of the ADA, early intervention's role in possible disability reforms, initiatives designed to increase the labor force participation of individuals with disabilities, public policy education activities and multi-media information services on health, benefits, paid work and disability. During the second discussion in December, experts reviewed current research on disability reforms in other countries, reform proposals that focus on experience rating as a way of reducing enrollment in the SSDI program, and practical insights into what incentives, programs, strategies, etc. are successful in getting individuals with disabilities back in the workforce. From these panels, we refined the agenda of our upcoming forum to focus on strategies that would assist people with disabilities to remain in or return to work.



## IMPROVING SSA'S COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

SSA has a responsibility to communicate in an authoritative, accurate, and effective manner with two equally important groups: the workers who pay the taxes needed to finance Social Security programs, and the individuals currently receiving benefits or who may be applying for benefits in the future. SSA's primary vehicle for communicating with the first group has been the *Social Security Statement*. The agency has now moved the statement to the internet which is also increasingly being used to communicate with and provide services to the second group. In the last few years, the Board has monitored SSA's efforts to develop online services; as those efforts took a significant step forward in 2012, the Board continued to provide feedback on the agency's efforts.

### THE SOCIAL SECURITY STATEMENT

In 2009, the Board published *The Social Security Statement: How It Can Be Improved*, one of our strongest reports that focused on SSA's communication strategies. The report provided a comprehensive review of the *Social Security Statement* – SSA's primary vehicle for communicating with the American public – and provided a number of recommendations that we believe, if implemented, would result in improved understanding by the public. In 2012 we began work on an update of that report in light of the changes that have occurred at SSA since that report was released. As part of that update, we met with representatives from the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board to discuss their new web-based customer service applications and communications strategy with a hope that their experience could provide some insights into similar activities at SSA. Similar discussions were held with TIAA-CREF, the second largest pension payer in the country next to SSA. We will continue working to gather more information and insights on the *Social Security Statement* in the coming months and expect to release the update of our prior report sometime during the summer of 2013.

### SSA'S NEW ONLINE SERVICE PORTAL

In addition, in May of 2012, the agency unveiled a new, secure online customer service portal, "My Social Security," through which members of the public can access the same information that appears on their individual *Statement*. At our June Board meeting, we met with Social Security Commissioner Michael Astrue and other agency officials for a briefing and demonstration of the "My Social Security" customer service portal and the new, online version of the *Social Security Statement*. Mr. Astrue assured the Board that the *My Social Security* portal is extremely secure, using a level-three authentication protocol. SSA contracted with the credit bureau Experian to assist with fraud prevention and generate random "out of wallet" quizzes to verify an individual's identity.

Aside from being able to view one's *Social Security Statement* online, Mr. Astrue indicated that the *My Social Security* account will soon allow individuals to obtain benefit verifications, check earnings records, change their address and phone number, and edit direct deposit information, although an exact timeframe was not given. Ultimately, the *My Social Security* portal has the potential to save valuable time and resources for the agency as it seeks to streamline services and reduce the workload burden on already-stressed field offices across the country.

## ISSUES WITH EXISTING ONLINE SERVICES

While SSA expands online services through the *My Social Security* portal, the Board is concerned about problems with existing online services. During our May visit to Social Security offices in Atlanta, Georgia, we met with field office employees to elicit their feedback on various topics affecting the agency. On IT issues, field office employees raised several serious concerns, particularly regarding the online application process. One recurring problem with internet claims is that when they arrive at the office they are not fully completed. In fact, employees we visited estimated that as many as 95 percent of online applications, including retirement claims, require some kind of call-back by field office staff, adding it could be easily avoided with improvements to the online process. In order to successfully apply online for disability benefits, one must fill out two entirely separate forms – the application form and the medical evidence collection form – in order for the submission to be complete. The system in place today does not explain up front that there are two forms that need to be completed and it does not block claimants from submitting only one form; therefore, many individuals complete only one part of the process and assume they have successfully applied for benefits. Agency officials have repeatedly told the Board that a “fix” is in the works; however, no resolution has been implemented to date.

At our July Board meeting, we met with the officers from the National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCCSMA), a 3,500-member organization that represents Social Security field office managers all over the nation. They also expressed their concerns about SSA's online services, and in particular, the online disability application mentioned in the previous paragraph. In addition, they raised specific concerns over the quality of online applications completed with the help of for-profit third party representatives. They indicated that these representatives may be more interested in extending the process to increase their fees than they are in the needs of the claimant or the quality of the claim.

## SSA OPERATIONS: EFFORTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

As part of our mandate, the Social Security Advisory Board is instructed to review and make recommendations regarding how SSA serves the public. The Board takes this responsibility seriously and over the years has kept a watchful eye on the general operations of the agency. In addition, we monitor carefully the level of administrative resources that the Congress provides each year to SSA and on how the agency uses the resources given. As the baby boom generation ages toward retirement and into disability-prone years, more people are applying for SSA benefits. When coupled with our recent economic downturn, SSA's workloads have grown beyond projections. Further, the agency's staff is not immune to demographic and economic pressures. As more of SSA's workforce becomes eligible for retirement, many of the agency's most seasoned employees are leaving. While the agency is experiencing higher attrition due to the retirement wave, SSA must concurrently deal with hiring limitations because of the hiring freeze and tightened fiscal environment.

In 2012, we continued to monitor SSA's ability to meet the needs of the public by meeting with SSA executives and frontline staff, members of the public, organizations that assist Social Security claimants, and other agency stakeholders.

### MEETINGS WITH SSA EXECUTIVES

At our March Board meeting we met with SSA's Deputy Commissioner for Operations, who briefed us on the agency's strategies to address the most pressing workload problems, hardships due to the hiring freeze throughout most of the agency since 2010, and decreasing administrative dollars. We were told that the agency could face

employee furloughs if the situation deteriorates further. The agency is concerned that case processing times will increase and that SSA's previous standards regarding the level of service provided to the public are unsustainable given the decrease in budget and staffing resources. The agency is particularly concerned about backlogs that are likely to develop in post-entitlement activities, including cost-saving program integrity workloads such as continuing disability reviews (CDRs) and non-disability SSI redeterminations.

At other meetings, we met with Deputy Commissioners for Budget, Facilities, and Management and Human Resources. We learned more about the agency's large real estate costs—\$725 million in rent and an additional \$200 million in contracts for security guards. The agency is looking at ways to scale back its real estate footprint by consolidating offices, co-locating SSA components at a single site and possibly co-locating with other Federal, state or local agencies. We also heard about the impact of the hiring freeze which has been in effect for two-and-half years. Officials reported that overall staffing was down about 10 percent. Further complicating the staffing issues

is the fact that attrition has not been even throughout the agency, creating severe staffing shortages in some places. Since most of the agency's attrition has been through retirements, training has become especially critical. The training budget, however, has been cut and agency plans to develop a new training system have been scaled back significantly. Finally, as is our practice, we received a briefing from SSA's executives with responsibility for the agency's budget to get an update on the budget and staffing outlook for FY 2013, the likelihood of sequestration in the spring, and other budget-related issues. Overall the picture revealed an agency struggling to deliver comprehensive service with fewer resources and experienced staff, a situation that the Board believes could have been alleviated if the agency had engaged in adequate long-term strategic planning.

At our November Board meeting, we met with the SSA executive responsible for developing a service delivery plan which is due to be released sometime in 2013. We were told that SSA is scrutinizing the Board's 2011 report, *A Vision of the Future for the Social Security Administration*, seeking Congressional input, as well as input from the public, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), agency employees, employee unions, and other stakeholders about:

- new or different ways the agency can provide core and non-core services to the public;
- suggestions on how to proceed with automation and enhancing electronic services; and
- other suggestions about how the agency handles workloads and interacts with the public.

Finally, during our December meeting, we met with SSA's Deputy Commissioner, Carolyn Colvin to discuss her views on the future of SSA. Ms. Colvin indicated that systems modernization, enhancing SSA's exchange program with other agencies and organizations, and improving accuracy and quality were among her top priorities. In addition, she hopes that the agency will take a hard look at where work is done and by who, as much of the agency's work should be processed electronically and, therefore, can be more portable.

## BOARD VISIT TO ATLANTA

During our trip to Atlanta, we had an opportunity to talk with SSA's frontline employees, managers and staff from two field offices in the Atlanta metropolitan area. As always, we found these employees to be insightful and innovative. The following are just a few of the issues and ideas that were brought to our attention:

- Social Security programs can be confusing to many workers and their families. Complex provisions such as the Government Pension Office (GPO) provision, Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), and the Workers' Compensation offsets are difficult to understand. Further, beneficiaries do not understand how working affects their disability benefits and this often leads to overpayments.

- When an individual does a search for “disability” on the major Internet search engines, links to SSA’s disability programs do not come up at the top of the list. Searchers are often directed first to sites that appear to be Social Security but are really commercial websites for attorneys and other representatives soliciting business from SSA claimants, or sites that gather personal information for marketing purposes.
- Since no interest is charged on overpayments, SSA has little success in recovering large overpayments in a timely manner. Collection agreements are frequently for minimal amounts over many years.
- Several issues were raised regarding third party representatives. Employees believe representatives need training on how to file an application for benefits and gather medical evidence. Representatives can be appointed to a case right up until the date of the hearing and then become entitled to fees from past-due benefits. Many employees indicated that SSA should not be involved in the payment process for representatives.
- It was recommended that SSA charge a fee for processing duplicate Social Security cards. The public coming into local offices generally expect to pay for duplicate cards in the same way they are required to pay for a replacement driver’s license.
- SSA needs to do a better job monitoring representative payees. SSA tells payees what is expected of them but does not enforce these rules.

#### MEETING WITH SSA’S INSPECTOR GENERAL

At our July meeting, the Board met with SSA’s Inspector General Patrick O’Carroll and representatives from the accounting firm Grant Thornton, LLP who recently conducted four separate audits of SSA’s cost allocation system (CAS) methodology under a contract with SSA. Grant Thornton’s core concern about SSA’s CAS methodology is the way that SSA allocates shared administrative overhead costs to the Old-Age and Survivors’ Insurance (OASI), Disability Insurance (DI), Hospital Insurance (HI), Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Funds, and to the General Fund (for the SSI program), an issue that has long been a concern of the Board. Grant Thornton recommended that SSA establish a more cause-effect relationship between costs and programs other than just basing them on the relative size of program outlays.



## WHAT IS PLANNED FOR 2013

For 2013, the Board will continue efforts to advise the President, Congress and Commissioner on issues facing SSA – both in the realm of policy and program administration. The following are four specific areas we plan to study in 2013.

- ***Disability Policy and Process*** - A major focus of the Board's work in 2013 will be the sponsorship of a major forum on disability policy. While the forum will attempt to address policy issues on a broad scale, the Board will also develop plans for a technical policy panel that will look at issues with the current processes used by SSA to make disability decisions.
- ***Strategic Planning*** - With a new Commissioner due to begin his/her tenure at SSA in 2013, the Board will develop a transition paper that highlights what we believe to be the major challenges facing SSA and our vision for SSA's future. One of the major vehicles for meeting those challenges will be the agency's development of a strategic plan. To encourage SSA to think about how it will deliver services in the future, the Board expects to devote time in 2013 to expanding on the vision statement we developed in 2011. We plan to conduct a systematic examination of the service channels the agency currently utilizes, outline new channels that could be used and present recommendations as to how we believe the agency should proceed.
- ***Keeping an eye on Technology*** -Technology is a critical element to the agency's future success in serving the American public. As we have in past years, the Board will continue to monitor efforts to bring SSA's aging technology infrastructure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leadership of this effort will be crucial. The Board will be interested in the agency's decision to re-establish the position of Chief Information Officer, separate from and independent of the Office of Systems. We will also continue to monitor the critical systems projects such as the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS).
- ***Position on Issues*** - During 2013, we will be developing position papers on a number of issues that the Board believes they should officially address. Some topics that are being considered are the continuation of the BOND project and issues involving the ALJ hiring process.



## ABOUT THE BOARD

### 2012 AND CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

#### ***Marsha Rose Katz, Acting Chair\****

Marsha Rose Katz is a Project Director at the University of Montana Rural Institute in Missoula, where her work has concentrated on assisting persons with disabilities to utilize Social Security work incentives to start their own businesses or engage in wage employment. Since coming to the Rural Institute in 1999, Ms. Katz has focused on providing training and technical assistance on both employment and SSI/SSDI to rural, frontier and tribal communities across the country. Previously, she worked for nearly 20 years in a disability rights community based organization, the Association for Community Advocacy (ACA), a local Arc in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She served as both Vice President of ACA, and Director of its Family Resource Center. It was at ACA that Ms. Katz began her nearly 30 years of individual and systems advocacy regarding programs administered by SSA, especially the SSI and SSDI programs. Ms. Katz has written numerous articles and created many widely distributed user-friendly general handouts on SSI and SSDI, the majority of which focus on the impact of work on benefits, and utilizing work incentives. She is the author of *Don't Look for Logic; An Advocate's Manual for Negotiating the SSI and SSDI Programs*, published by the Rural Institute. Her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees are from the University of Michigan. Ms. Katz's many years of experience as a trainer, technical advisor, and advocate have been guided and informed by her partnership with people with disabilities, from her husband, Bob Liston, to the people she assisted in her work with ACA and the Arc Michigan, her current work at the Rural Institute, and her longstanding participation in ADAPT, the nation's largest cross-disability, grassroots disability rights organization. Term of office: November 2006 to September 2012.

\*Term ended September 30, 2012

#### ***Jagadeesh Gokhale***

Jagadeesh Gokhale is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. He earlier worked at the American Enterprise Institute as a visiting scholar (2003), the U.S. Treasury Department as a consultant (2002), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland as a senior economic advisor (1990-2003). An economist by training, his main research fields are macro and public economics with a special focus on the effects of fiscal policy on future generations. During 2008, he served as a member of the Task Force on Sustainability Issues for the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board. Dr. Gokhale has written extensively on policy issues including Social Security and Medicare reform, national saving, private insurance, financial planning, wealth inequality, generational accounting, and public intergenerational transfers and he has testified several times before Congress on these topics. He has published several papers in such top-tier journals as the

American Economic Review, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics; in publications of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Cleveland Federal Reserve; in the US Budget report's Analytical Perspectives; and in popular newspapers and online media such as the Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The Washington Post, American Spectator, and Forbes. Dr. Gokhale is a co-author of Fiscal and Generational Imbalances that revealed the US fiscal imbalance to be in the tens of trillions of dollars. In 2010 he published Social Security: A Fresh Look at Policy Alternatives Term of Office: November 2009 - September 2015.

### ***Dorcas R. Hardy***

Dorcas R. Hardy is President of DRHardy & Associates, a government relations and public policy firm serving a diverse portfolio of clients. After her appointment by President Ronald Reagan as Assistant Secretary of Human Development Services, Ms. Hardy was appointed Commissioner of Social Security (1986 to 1989) and was appointed by President George W. Bush to chair the Policy Committee for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Ms. Hardy has launched and hosted her own primetime, weekly television program, "Financing Your Future," on Financial News Network and UPI Broadcasting, and "The Senior American," an NET political program for older Americans. She speaks and writes widely about domestic and international retirement financing issues and entitlement program reforms and is the co-author of Social Insecurity: The Crisis in America's Social Security System and How to Plan Now for Your Own Financial Survival, Random House, 1992. A former CEO of a rehabilitation technology firm, Ms. Hardy promotes redesign and modernization of the Social Security, Medicare, and disability insurance systems. Additionally, she has chaired a Task Force to rebuild vocational rehabilitation services for disabled veterans for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She received her B.A. from Connecticut College, her M.B.A. from Pepperdine University, and completed the Executive Program in Health Policy and Financial Management at Harvard University. Ms. Hardy is a Certified Senior Advisor and serves on the Board of Directors of Wright Investors' Service Managed Funds, and First Coast Service Options of Florida. First term of office: April 2002 to September 2004. Second term of office: October 2004 to September 2010. Current term of office: October 2010 to September 2016.

### ***Barbara B. Kennelly, Acting Chair\****

Barbara B. Kennelly is President of Barbara Kennelly Associates and is a Distinguished Professor at Trinity University. She served as President of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare from 2002-2011. Mrs. Kennelly served 17 years in the United States House of Representatives representing the First District of Connecticut. During her Congressional career, Mrs. Kennelly was the first woman elected to serve as the Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus, the first woman to serve on the House Committee on Intelligence, the first woman to serve as Chief Majority Whip, and the third woman in history to serve on the 200-year-

old Ways and Means Committee. During the 105th Congress, she was the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Social Security. Prior to her election to Congress, Mrs. Kennelly was the Secretary of the State of Connecticut. After serving in Congress, Mrs. Kennelly was appointed to the position of Counselor to the Commissioner at the Social Security Administration (SSA). As Counselor, Mrs. Kennelly worked closely with the Commissioner of Social Security Kenneth S. Apfel, and members of Congress to inform and educate the American people on the choices they face to ensure the future solvency of Social Security. She served on the Policy Committee for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Mrs. Kennelly received a B.A. in Economics from Trinity College, Washington, D.C. She earned a certificate from the Harvard Business School on completion of the Harvard-Radcliffe Program in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Government from Trinity College, Hartford. First term of office: January 2006 to September 2011. Current term of office: March 2012 to September 2017.

\*Term as acting chair began October 1, 2012

### ***Bernadette Franks-Ongoy***

Bernadette Franks-Ongoy is the Executive Director for Disability Rights Montana (DRM), an organization that protects and advocates for the human, legal, and civil rights of Montanans with disabilities. She manages and oversees the day-to-day activities of DRM and sets the tone to ensure that the organization's mission to advance dignity, equality, and self-determination is being accomplished. Ms. Franks-Ongoy says, "I was raised by a mother with a disability and a father who did not realize he was a feminist." She lived in an accessible house before the ADA was the law. Her mother's wheelchair could access every room. "After all mom needed to have access to my brothers and sisters rooms with her wheelchair." Ms. Franks-Ongoy is the youngest of eight siblings to include a brother with a mental illness. Ms. Franks-Ongoy grew up in the sugar plantation town of Waiialua, Hawaii. With the support of Job Corp, Social Security and other financial aid, she attended and graduated from Chaminade University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. She graduated from the University of San Diego, School of Law in 1983. Her past legal experience includes: Law Clerk for the First Judicial Circuit Court in Hawaii, Founding Executive Director of the Hawaii Bar Foundation, Deputy Corporation Counsel for the City and County of Honolulu, and the Attorney and Director of Programs for the Protection and Advocacy system in Hawaii. She is licensed to practice law in Hawaii and with the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Ms. Franks-Ongoy has served as president of the National Disability Rights Network and most recently was a member of Montana's Equal Justice Task Force. Current term of office: January 2013 to September 2018.

### ***Mark J. Warshawsky\****

Mark J. Warshawsky is Director of Retirement Research at Towers Watson, a global human capital consulting firm. He conducts and oversees research on employer-sponsored retirement

programs and policies. A frequent speaker to business and professional groups, Dr. Warshawsky is a recognized thought leader on pensions, social security, insurance and healthcare financing. He has written numerous articles published in leading professional journals, books and working papers, and has testified before Congress on pensions, annuities and other economic issues. A member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term through September 2012, he is also on the Advisory Board of the Pension Research Council of the Wharton School. From 2004 to 2006, Dr. Warshawsky served as assistant secretary for economic policy at the U.S. Treasury Department. During his tenure, he played a key role in the development of the Administration's pension reform proposals, particularly pertaining to single-employer defined benefit plans, which were ultimately included in the Pension Protection Act ("PPA") of 2006. He was also involved extensively in the formulation of Social Security retirement reform proposals, and oversaw the Department's comprehensive 2005 study of the terror risk insurance program. In addition, Dr. Warshawsky led the efforts to update and enhance substantially the measures and disclosures in the Social Security and Medicare Trustees' Reports, as well as the setting of the macroeconomic forecasts, which underlie the administration's budget submissions to Congress. Dr. Warshawsky's research has been influential in the 2001-2002 regulatory reform of minimum distribution requirements for qualified retirement plans, the increasing realization of the importance of financial protection against outliving one's financial resources in retirement, and a product innovation to integrate the immediate life annuity and long-term care insurance. For the latter research, he won a prize from the British Institute of Actuaries in 2001 for a professional article he co-authored. Favorable tax treatment for this integrated product was also included in PPA due to Dr. Warshawsky's advocacy. Dr. Warshawsky has also held senior-level economic research positions at the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C. and TIAA-CREF, where he established the Paul A. Samuelson Prize and organized several research conferences. A native of Chicago, he received a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard University and a B.A. with Highest Distinction from Northwestern University. Term of office: December 2006 to September 2012.

\*Term ended September 30, 2012.

## LEGISLATION THAT ESTABLISHED THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

In 1994, when Congress passed Public Law 103-296 establishing the Social Security Administration as an independent agency, it also created an independent, bipartisan Advisory Board to advise the President, the Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on matters related to the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income programs. Under this legislation, appointments to the Board are made by the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President pro tempore of the Senate.

Advisory Board members are appointed to staggered six year terms, made up as follows: three appointed by the President (no more than two from the same political party); and two each (no

more than one from the same political party) by the Speaker of the House (in consultation with the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Ways and Means) and by the President pro tempore of the Senate (in consultation with the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Finance). Presidential appointments are subject to Senate confirmation. The President designates one member of the Board to serve as Chairman for a four year term, coincident with the term of the President, or until the designation of a successor.

## THE BOARD'S MANDATE

Public Law 103-296 as amended gives the Board the following functions;

1. Analyzing the Nation's retirement and disability systems and making recommendations with respect to how the Old-age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) programs and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, supported by the other public and private systems, can most effectively assure economic security;
2. Studying and making recommendations relating to the coordination of programs that provide health security with programs described in paragraph (1);
3. Making recommendations to the President and to the Congress with respect to policies that will ensure the solvency of the Old-age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Program, both in the short-term and the long-term;
4. Making recommendations with respect to the quality of service that the Administration provides to the public;
5. Making recommendations with respect to policies and regulations regarding the Old-age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Program and the Supplemental Security Income Program;
6. Increasing public understanding of the social security system;
7. Making recommendations with respect to a long-range research and program evaluation plan for the Administration; and
8. Reviewing and assessing any major studies of social security as may come to the attention of the Board; and
9. Making recommendations with respect to such other matters as the Board determines to be appropriate.

## SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD STAFF MEMBERS

### *Deborah Sullivan, Staff Director*

Deborah (Debi) Sullivan joined the Social Security Advisory Board staff in September 2007 as the Deputy Staff Director. Before joining the Board staff, she was a participant in the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) Senior Executive Service Candidate Program and did extensive work on the agency's most recent disability service improvement initiatives. Ms. Sullivan began working for SSA as a claims representative in Columbus, Indiana in 1978 and has held increasingly more

responsible supervisory and managerial positions throughout her career. She worked in a number of SSA field offices and the Regional Offices in both Chicago and Atlanta. In 2002, she relocated to SSA's headquarters in Baltimore to become the Executive Officer of SSA's strategic planning component, which was responsible for the publication of the agency's annual planning documents and periodic strategic plans. During her tenure at the Social Security Administration, Ms. Sullivan was the recipient of many awards including five Commissioner's Citations and a National Performance Award. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in History and Political Science from Ball State University and has completed additional graduate work at Emory University in Atlanta.

***Claire Green, Deputy Staff Director***

Claire Green joined the Social Security Advisory Board staff in October 2012, as the Deputy Staff Director. Before that Ms. Green spent two and a half years as a Congressional Fellow for the Senate Finance Committee Majority. Working on the Social Security/Budget Team Ms. Green researched public and private sector group disability policies (covered under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act) trust fund solvency, federal budget process, debt limit increases, and deficit reduction proposals. Ms. Green worked in the disability component for the Social Security Administration for 18 years earning over a dozen performance and team awards. She started as a decision writer and worked in progressively more responsible positions, most recently as Attorney Advisor to the Chief Judge where she worked on complex policy issues, the electronic business process, bias and misconduct complaints against Administrative Law Judges and employee and labor relation issues. Ms. Green has a Juris Doctorate from Western State University College of Law; she completed the coursework for a Masters of Fine Arts in Professional Writing and Publishing from Emerson College and graduated with honors from Assumption College with a double major in English and Sociology.

***Jacqueline Chapin, Ph.D., Staff Policy Analyst***

Jackie Chapin joined the Advisory Board in September 2011 as a staff policy analyst. She began her career with the Federal Government in 2004 as a Presidential Management Fellow with the Social Security Administration's Office of Disability Policy in Baltimore, Maryland. She transferred to field office operations in the San Francisco region in 2005 and worked in field office management, specializing in Supplemental Security Income. During her time in the field, Dr. Chapin spent a year detailed to Baltimore working on disability policy. Prior to working for the Federal government, she taught Sociology at colleges and universities in both Portland, Oregon and Riverside, California. Dr. Chapin worked as a registered nurse prior to studying sociology. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at Cal State Los Angeles, and both her Master's and Doctoral Degrees in Sociology at the University of California at Riverside. While working for SSA, Dr. Chapin earned several agency awards including an Associate Commissioner's Citation and a Commissioner's Team Award for her work in disability policy.

***Jeremy Elder, Research Assistant***

Jeremy Elder joined the Advisory Board staff as a research assistant in August 2011, after interning with the Board that summer. Prior to joining the Advisory Board, he interned at a Maryland State advocacy group. During his time there he researched and drafted legislative testimony on social policy issues including welfare policy, housing, education, and health care policy. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with a minor in Philosophy from Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

***Joel A. Feinleib, Staff Economist***

Joel Feinleib joined the Advisory Board as Staff Economist in 2005 focusing on long-term financing issues, reform proposals, and empirical research. He previously worked as a research consultant and policy analyst in Washington D.C. and Chicago specializing in the economic, demographic and statistical analysis of social policy issues including welfare policy, drug control policy, environmental health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. He holds a B.S. in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and a Masters in Public Policy Studies from the University of Chicago.

***Robin Walker, Staff Assistant***

Robin Walker joined the Advisory Board staff in December 2009 after spending many years as an Executive Assistant in the public sector. Most recently she supported the work of the President and Vice President of a D.C. construction firm. Ms. Walker has years of experience in managing all aspects of a corporate office.

***David Warner, Staff Policy Analyst***

David Warner began his career with the Federal Government in 1988 as a budget and program analyst for the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. He worked principally on the administrative budget for the Medicare program and the program and administrative budgets for the Medicaid program and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Mr. Warner transferred to SSA in 1995. Until 1998, he served as a senior social insurance specialist for the Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs. In 1998, Mr. Warner completed a developmental assignment as professional staff to the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means. Since joining the staff of the Social Security Advisory Board in 1999, he has served as a policy analyst and Executive Officer for the Board. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in psychology from the University of Wisconsin and a Master's Degree in public sector and non-profit financial management from the University of Maryland.

***Beverly Rollins VanDerhei, Executive Officer***

Beverly Rollins VanDerhei began her career with the Federal government as a claims representative for the Social Security Administration in the Rockville, Maryland field office. She held a number of jobs with SSA, including senior executive analyst for both the Associate Commissioner of Hearings and Appeals and the Deputy Commissioner for Programs. In 1995, she worked with the National Commission on Childhood Disability, serving as an executive assistant to the Staff Director. Prior to working for the Federal government, Ms. Rollins VanDerhei worked as a social worker for the Head Start program and the West Virginia Department of Welfare. Since joining the Board staff in 1996, she has served as Executive Officer. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from West Virginia University and a Master's degree in General Administration from the University of Maryland.

## APPENDICES

### COMPENDIUM OF BOARD REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. *Filing for Social Security Disability Benefits: What Impact Does Professional Representation Have on the Process at the Initial Application Level?*, September 2012.
2. *Aspects of Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), February 2012.
3. *The 2011 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, September 2011.
4. *The Social Security Administration: A Vision of the Future – The First Steps on the Road to 2020*, March 2011.
5. *Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), December 2010.
6. *Keeping the Record Straight – An Overview of How SSA’s Data Exchange Program Works*, December 2010.
7. *Disability Programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series: The Representative Payee Program*, September 2010. This paper also appeared in the Social Security Administration’s *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program* as "Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program, Additional Statement by the Social Security Advisory Board," May 2010.
8. *The Unsustainable Cost of Healthcare*, September 2009.
9. *The Social Security Statement: How It Can Be Improved*, August 2009.
10. *Bridging the Gap: Improving SSA’s Public Service through Technology*, April 2009.
11. *Disability Programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series: Substantial Gainful Activity*, April 2009.
12. *Disability Programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series: Need for Review of the Supplemental Security Income Program’s Benefit Levels, Asset Limits, and Income Exclusions*, March 2009.
13. *Disability Programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series: Interactions between Supplemental Security Income and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*, February 2009.
14. *Challenges Facing the Social Security Administration: Present and Future*, December 2008.
15. *Working for Retirement Security*, September 2008.
16. *The 2007 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, October 2007.
17. *Recruiting SSA Administrative Law Judges: Need for Review of OPM Role and Performance*, April 2007.
18. *A Disability System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, September 2006.
19. *Improving the Social Security Administration’s Hearing Process*, September 2006.
20. *Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), May 2006.
21. *The Impact of Immigration on Social Security and the National Economy*, December 2005.
22. *Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), September 2005.

23. *Retirement Security: The Unfolding of a Predictable Surprise*, March 2005.
24. *The Social Security Definition of Disability*, October 2003.
25. *The 2003 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, October 2003.
26. *Introducing Non-adversarial Government Representatives to Improve the Record for Decision in Social Security Disability Adjudications, a Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, June 2003.
27. *SSA's Obligation to Ensure that the Public's Funds are Responsibly Collected and Expended*, March 2002.
28. *Alternative Approaches to Judicial Review of Social Security Disability Cases: A Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, March 2002.
29. *Challenges Facing the New Commissioner of Social Security, Statement by Stanford G. Ross*, December 2001.
30. *Estimating the Real Rate of Return on Stocks Over the Long Term*, Papers presented to the Social Security Advisory Board, August 2001.
31. *Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon (Revised Edition)*, July 2001.
32. *Agenda for Social Security: Challenges for the New Congress and the New Administration*, February 2001.
33. *Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change*, January 2001.
34. *Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials*, January 2001.
35. *The 1999 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, Report to the Social Security Advisory Board*, November 1999.
36. *How the Social Security Administration Can Improve Its Service to the Public*, September 1999.
37. *Forum on the Implications of Raising the Social Security Retirement Age*, May 1999 (staff document).
38. *How SSA's Disability Programs Can Be Improved*, August 1998.
39. *Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon*, July 1998.
40. *Strengthening Social Security Research: The Responsibilities of the Social Security Administration*, January 1998.
41. *Increasing Public Understanding of Social Security*, September 1997.
42. *Forum on a Long-range Research and Program Evaluation Plan for the Social Security Administration: Proceedings and Additional Comments*, June 24, 1997 (staff document).
43. *Developing Social Security Policy: How the Social Security Administration Can Provide Greater Policy Leadership*, March 1997.

In addition, the Board has published an *Annual Report* each year since 1998 describing the work we completed in the prior year and discussing plans for future studies. We have also published a *Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program* annually. These statements appear in

SSA's *Annual Report to the President and Congress on the Supplemental Security Income Program*.

Most reports are available on the Board's website at [www.ssab.gov](http://www.ssab.gov).

## 2012 BOARD OPERATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

**Meetings** – From February 2012 through December 2012, we met at our offices nine times, held a series of offsite meetings in Atlanta, Georgia, and held one conference call.

**Field Visit** – In May we made a field visit to Atlanta. The Board convened three expert panels to discuss disability policy: a panel of SSA regional and local executives and staff; a panel of community-based advocates for individuals with disabilities; and a panel of academics with a focus on disability. We also met with executives and staff of the Regional Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, the Atlanta Downtown Hearing Office and two suburban Atlanta field offices (the Marietta Field Office and the Gwinnett Field Office).

**Publications** – In February, we published an updated edition of *Aspects of Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials*, that compiles data and other information on disability and the operation of SSA's disability programs that we believe is essential to our continuing efforts to help Congress, the President, SSA, and the American public understand and address important issues of policy and public service. In September, we issued *Filing for Social Security Disability Benefits: What Impact Does Professional Representation Have on the Process at the Initial Application Level?* This report examined the impact of third party assistance on the disability adjudicative process at the initial claims level. In May, we released our annual *Supplemental Security Statement* where we discussed issues related to third party assistance in the SSI program. In July, we published our *Annual Report* for calendar year 2011.

**Board Changes** – The terms of Acting Board Chair Marsha Katz and Board Member Mark Warshawsky expired on September 30, 2012. Board Member Barbara Kennelly became the Acting Chair on October 1, 2012. Debi Sullivan was appointed Staff Director in April 2012 and Claire Green joined the Board staff as Deputy Staff Director in October 2012.

## FEBRUARY

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**Paul R. Verkuil**, Chair of the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS)

**Jeffery S. Lubbers**, Special Counsel and Acting Research Director, ACUS

**Fumni Olorunnipa**, Advising Attorney, ACUS

*Discussed the review ACUS will undertake regarding the disability hearing process.*

**Carolyn Colvin**, Deputy Commissioner of Social Security

**Art Spencer**, Associate Commissioner, SSA Office of Disability Programs

**Leighton, Chan**, MD, MPH, Rehabilitation Medicine Department, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

**Minh Huynh**, PhD, Rehabilitation Department, NIH

**Alan Jette**, PhD, Health and Disability Research Institute, Boston University

Professional staff from SSA and NIH

*Discussed joint efforts between SSA and NIH to: 1) examine existing SSA data with the goal of developing systematic data-driven approaches to improve SSA's decision making process, and 2) assess the feasibility of developing test instruments that could assess patient function quickly and reliably.*

## MARCH

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**Mary Glenn-Croft**, Deputy Commissioner for Operations, SSA

*Discussed the agency's budget and staffing situation and the impact that austerity is having on the processing of SSA's and the Disability Determination Services' (DDS) workloads, as well as the impact that technology is having and will continue to have on agency productivity.*

**Michael Astrue**, Commissioner of Social Security

**Daryl Taylor**, Office of Communications, SSA

*Discussed the future of the Social Security Statement and SSA's efforts to establish an online customer service portal, "My Social Security." Discussed SSA's budget and staffing situation, at the state Disability Determination Service (DDS) and Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR)*

**Dale Glendening**, Administrative Law Judge, SSA

**Jeffrey S. Lubbers**, Professor of Practice in Administrative Law, American University, Washington College of Law

**Richard J. Pierce, Jr.**, Lyle T. Alverson Professor of Law, George Washington University

**Jeffrey S. Wolfe**, Administrative Law Judge, SSA

*Panel discussion about the disability hearing process. Discussed topics such as variations in allowance and denial rates among ALJs, the role of the ALJ in disability hearings, the impact of attorney representation at hearings, the concept of government representation at hearings, the quality of disability case files, and the incidence rate of disability fraud.*

## APRIL

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**Linda Dorn**, Associate Commissioner, Office of Disability Determination, SSA

**Roderick Hairston**, Associate Commissioner, Office of Disability Systems, SSA

*Discussed the development of SSA's new Disability Claims Processing System (DCPS).*

**Michael Gallagher**, Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Facilities, and Management, SSA

**Mike Keegan**, Associate Commissioner for Facilities, SSA

**Jim Bentley**, Associate Commissioner for Security and Emergency Preparedness, SSA

*Discussed SSA's facilities management issues, including SSA's new data center, the disposition of large federal buildings in the wake of increasing automation of workloads, office relocations and consolidations, the increasing cost of maintaining real property, and how the facilities planning at SSA relates to the Agency Strategic Plan.*

**Veronica Mance**, Research and Strategic Planning, Office of Strategic Planning, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB)

**Sophie Dmuchowski**, Communications Division, Office of Strategic Planning, FRTIB

**Alvin Thornton**, Automated Systems, Office of Strategic Planning, FRTIB

*Discussed the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board's development of a new customer service-oriented website and communications strategy.*

**Bilan Stribling**, 2012 Burch Field Research Intern

*Presented her work comparing and contrasting the disability programs in the U.S. and Great Britain.*

## MAY

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**Ollie L. Garmon, III**, Regional Chief Judge, ODAR, Atlanta, Georgia

**Rose Mary Buehler**, Assistant Regional Commissioner, Processing Center Operations, Birmingham, Alabama

**Robert L. Raines**, Director, Atlanta Regional Office of Quality Performance (OQP), SSA

**Nathan Holmes**, Director, Center for Disability, Atlanta Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia

**Norman Ippolito**, Disability Administrator, Alabama DDS

*Panel discussion to hear SSA's perspectives on disability issues in SSA's disability programs.*

**Sally Atwell**, Project Director, Benefits Navigator, The Shepherd Center, Atlanta, Georgia  
**Crystal Beelner, J.D.**, Program Director, Georgia Advocacy, Inc., Decatur, Georgia  
**Christy Dunaway**, Affiliate Liaison and Executive Director, LIFE (Living Independence for Everyone) of Mississippi, Southeast ADA Center, Biloxi, Mississippi  
**Peggy Withrow**, Senior Vice President for Business Services, Nobis Works, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia

*Panel discussion to hear the perspectives of community-based advocates for individuals with disabilities on SSA's disability programs.*

**Robert S. Kistenberg**, MPH, CP, LP, FAAOP, Co-Director and Prosthetics Coordinator, Adjunct Associate Faculty, Georgia Institute of Technology, Rehabilitative Medicine, Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia  
**Quinton L. Nichols**, MSW, HS-BCP, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Social Work/Clinical Facility Supervisor, Wellstar College of Health and Human Services, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia  
**Ani B. Satz, J.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Emory University School of Law, Rollins School of Public Health, Center for Ethics, Atlanta, Georgia.

*Panel discussion to hear academic perspectives on SSA's disability programs.*

**Amy Roberts**, Atlanta Assistant Regional Commissioner for Management Operations, SSA  
**Nathan Holmes**, Center for Disability, Atlanta Regional Office, SSA  
**Barbara Hites**, Disability Program Administrator for Georgia, SSA

*Discussed the status of DDS operations regionally.*

**Ollie L. Garmon, III**, Regional Chief Administrative Law Judge, ODAR, SSA  
**R. Dirk Selland**, Assistant Regional Chief Administrative Law Judge, ODAR, SSA  
**J. Samuel Childs**, Acting Hearing Office Chief ALJ, Covington ODAR, SSA  
**Ushma Narvil**, Hearing Office Director, Covington ODAR, SSA  
**O. Lisa Dabreau**, Hearing Office Chief ALJ, Atlanta Downtown ODAR, SSA  
**Rich Redecker**, Hearing Office Director, Atlanta Downtown ODAR, SSA  
**Larry Auerbach**, Acting Hearing Office Chief ALJ, Atlanta North ODAR, SSA  
**Christopher Craighead**, Hearing Office Director, Atlanta North ODAR, SSA

*Discussed ODAR's challenges and successes in managing backlogs and improving performance. Managers and staff of the Marietta, Georgia Field Office and the Gwinnett, Georgia Field Office and had a tour of both facilities. Discussed local field office perspectives on the disability programs and heard directly from SSA frontline employees about the issues and challenges they face in serving the American public. The Board was*

*also given the opportunity to observe the reception area and sit in on claimant interviews at both locations.*

## JUNE

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**Nicole Maestas**, Director of Disability Research, RAND Corporation

*Presented her research on subjectivity at the initial stage of the disability adjudication process.*

**Michael Astrue**, Commissioner of Social Security, SSA

**Kim Baldwin-Sparks**, Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner for Electronic Services, SSA

*Discussed SSA's new "My Social Security" customer service portal, the future of the Social Security Statement, potential employee furloughs as a result of budget cuts, and the agency's plans for replacing the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.*

**Stephen Goss**, Chief Actuary, SSA

**Karen Glenn**, Executive Officer, Office of the Actuary, SSA

*Discussed the 2012 Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Trustees Report.*

**Sylvia E. Karmen**, Director, Disability Research Consortium

*Discussed the operations and research agenda of the newly established Disability Research Consortium.*

## JULY

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**Richard Foster**, Chief Actuary, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**Clare McFarland**, Deputy Director for the Medicare and Medicaid Cost Estimates Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

*Discussed the 2012 Medicare Trustees Report.*

**Stephanie Hall**, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Performance, SSA

**Dan Zabronsky**, Director, Division of Modeling, Office of Quality Performance, SSA

**Michael Soderman**, Director, Division of Management Analysis, Office of Quality Performance, SSA

*Discussed SSA's methodologies and uses for predictive modeling, including selecting cases for SSI redeterminations, selecting cases for continuing disability reviews, identifying single decision maker workloads, choosing cases for informal remands at the hearings level, and other uses.*

**Steve Clifton**, President, National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)

**Scott Hale**, Vice President, NCSSMA

**Joe Dirago**, Past President, NCSSMA

**Rachel Emmons**, Government Relations Consultant for NCSSMA, Greystone Group

*Discussed SSA's budget, staffing and workload, new online service options, office consolidations, telephone system for field offices, professional representation of claimants at the initial disability claims level, workload quality, improper payments, and program simplification.*

**Pat O'Carroll**, SSA Inspector General

**Jim Kissko**, Deputy Inspector General, SSA

**Gale Stone**, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audit, SSA

**Srikant Sastry**, Global Public Sector Managing Principal, Grant Thornton, LLC

**John Short**, SSA Engagement Partner, Grant Thornton, LLC

**Carlos Ota**, Partner, Grant Thornton, LLC

**Shiva Verma**, Director, Grant Thornton, LLC

**Robert Shea**, Public Sector Practice Principal, Grant Thornton, LLC

*Discussed recent series of audits performed under contract with SSA by the accounting firm, Grant Thornton, LLC, to assess the methodologies and processes employed by SSA's Cost Analysis System (CAS) and SSA's response to the Grant Thornton recommendations.*

## SEPTEMBER

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**Reginald Wells**, Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources, SSA

**Bonnie Doyle**, Associate Commissioner, Office of Personnel, SSA

*Discussed the impact of the ongoing agency hiring freeze, the potential for employee furloughs, attrition rates and the status of SSA's employee retirement wave, the impact of budget cuts on leadership development and other training, workplace diversity, and employee satisfaction at SSA.*

**Dr. Charles Blahous**, Public Trustee for Social Security and Medicare

**Dr. Robert Reischauer**, Public Trustee for Social Security and Medicare

*Discussed long-range financing and solvency of the Social Security and Medicare programs, and the agenda of the next Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods that the Advisory Board will convene in 2014.*

## OCTOBER

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**Bryon MacDonald**, Director, Employment and Disability Benefits Initiative, World Institute on Disability

*Discussion of a new World Institute on Disability website that provides information on federal, state, and private benefits for people with disabilities, emphasizing coordination of benefits for the individual (this initiative is known as DB101)*

**Michael J. Astrue**, Commissioner of Social Security

**Bonnie Kind**, Associate Commissioner for Budget, Facilities and Management, SSA

*Discussed SSA's budget and staffing outlook for FY 2013, the likelihood of sequestration in the spring, office consolidations, and the agency's relationship with the Office of Personnel Management over ALJ testing and selection.*

**David Weaver**, Acting Associate Commissioner, Office of Program Development and Research (OPDR), SSA

**Susan Wilschke**, Deputy Associate Commissioner, OPDR, SSA

Susan Kalasunas, OPDR, SSA

**John Travis Jones**, Economist, OPDR, SSA

**Debra Engler**, Social Science Research Analyst, OPDR, SSA

Michael Dunn, OPDR, SSA

**David Stapleton**, BOND Evaluation Co-Director, Mathematica Policy Research Senior Fellow, Director, Center for Studying Disability Policy

**Michelle Wood**, BOND Project Director, Principal Associate, Abt Associates, Inc.

*Provided a demonstration of the Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) project testing the one-for-two offset of disability benefits.*

## NOVEMBER

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**Winthrop Cashdollar**, Executive Director for Disability Insurance, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIPP)

**Steven Clyburn**, Senior Director and Actuary, American Council of Life Insurers (ACLI)

*Discussed trends in private short-term and long-term disability insurance and best-practices for keep people with disabilities connected to the workforce.*

**Melissa Spencer**, Agency Lead for Service Delivery Plan, SSA

**LeTina Greene**, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Retirement and Disability Programs, SSA

*Discussed the development of SSA's Service Delivery Plan that is expected to be out during the summer of 2013.*

**Allen Jensen**, Director, Work Incentives Project, Center of Health Services Research and Policy, George Washington University

**James Smith**, Budget and Policy Manager, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

*Discussed the concept of gradually reducing benefits when a disability beneficiary works and how SSA could improve on the BOND project.*

**Andrew J. Houtenville**, Associate Professor of Economics, Research Director of the Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire

**Andrew J. Imparato**, Senior Policy Advisor, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

**Byron McDonald**, Director, Employment and Disability Benefits Initiative, World Institute on Disability

**David Podoff**, Adjunct Professor, Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University

*Panel discussion regarding the SSDI definition of disability with respect to the goals of the ADA, and the role of early intervention in possible disability reforms; initiatives designed to increase the labor force participation of individuals with disabilities; public policy education and outreach including multi-media information services on health benefits, paid work and disability.*

## DECEMBER

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**Dr. Bruce Growick**, Associate Professor of Rehabilitation Services, Ohio State University

*Discussed the concept of temporary benefits and vocational issues in SSA's disability programs.*

**Carolyn Colvin**, Deputy Commissioner for Social Security

*Discussed agency staffing, productivity, systems and business process modernization and enhancing data exchanges with other government agencies or outside organizations, workload quality and program integrity, and improving the disability adjudication process.*

**Kelly Buckland**, Executive Director, National Council on Independent Living

*Discussed possible reforms to the Social Security disability programs from the perspective of a program advocate.*

**Mary C. Daly**, Vice President and Associate Director of Research, Microeconomic Research, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

**Melissa J. Davey**, Vice President, Social Security and Managed Disability Services, GENEX Services, Inc.

**Kim Hildred**, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security, House Committee on Ways and Means

*Panel discussion regarding current research on disability reforms in other countries, reform proposals that focus on experience rating as a way of reducing enrollment in the SSDI program and practical insights into what incentives, programs, strategies, etc. get individuals with disabilities back in the workforce.*





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