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Claire Green, Staff Director

October 8, 2020

The Honorable John Larson
Chair
Subcommittee on Social Security
Committee on Ways and Means
US House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Social Security
Committee on Ways and Means
US House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Larson and Ranking Member Reed:

This letter is a response to your request that the Social Security Advisory Board (“Board”):

1. Examine Social Security’s decision to reinstate reconsideration in the ten prototype states.
2. Recommend possible disability determination process improvements at the initial and reconsideration stages.

In April 2020, the Board issued a brief examining Social Security’s reinstatement of reconsideration. Board staff also conducted an extensive literature review of recommendations to change the disability determination process that informed the development of five roundtables. The Board roundtables addressed the following Social Security disability topics:

- Stakeholder ideas to improve the determination process
- The need for evidence and experts in the adult determination process
- Performance metrics and data analytics in the quality review process
- The claimant experience in the application process
- Testing and evaluating potential determination process improvements

All five roundtables revealed three overarching themes related to improving the disability determination process: developing the claim file at the initial and reconsideration levels, the effects of process variation, and use of data and research to inform agency decision-making.

Roundtable discussions focused on several areas of SSA disability program improvement. The Board agreed to respond to your request by providing staff summaries of roundtable discussions as information and documentation of its efforts. We are happy to assist further at your request.

Should you or your staff have any questions or wish to discuss this information further, please contact Claire Green, Staff Director at claire.green@ssab.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim Nadeau".

Two enclosures