



## Roundtable on Social Security's Medical Evidence Collection

July 29, 2021

### Speaker Bios

**Marjorie Garcia** is the current President of the National Association of Disability Examiners (NADE) (fiscal years 2021-2022) and a Manager at the Oregon DDS. Garcia began a DDS career at the Clarksburg, West Virginia DDS in October 2004 and transferred to the Salem, Oregon DDS in July 2008. While at the West Virginia DDS, Garcia worked as an Examiner, Quick Disability Determination Process Beta Tester, Optical Character Recognition Tool Beta Tester, and Vocational Expert. After joining the Oregon DDS, Garcia continued working as an Examiner and Disability Claims Specialist, before attaining the current position of Unit Manager. Garcia has adjudicated all claim types, and has many years of experience in mentoring and administration of both the prerelease/institutionalized, and Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) caseloads. Garcia helped the Oregon DDS develop their centralized consultative exam monitoring and claim development processes as part of the Operations Team. Garcia is the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS) Supervisory Subject Matter Expert, and represents Oregon in the national DCPS Supervisor Community of Practice. Garcia has been a member of NADE since 2005, serving at the local, regional and/or national levels each year since. Garcia obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from Fairmont State College in 1981. Garcia then attended Capella University, graduating *magna cum laude* with a master's degree in organization and management in 2006. Garcia is also a 2013 graduate of the State of Oregon Leadership Academy and alumni mentor.

**Paul Kreger** began working at the Iowa DDS in 1986. Kreger worked as a Disability Examiner for 12 years and then as the sole Medical Professional Relations Officer (PRO) for the agency since 1998. As the longest serving PRO in the country, Kreger has taken an active role in embracing and implementing the innovations and technologies that have taken SSA disability adjudication from a completely paper process to the modern electronic process that exists today. Kreger has contributed to national committee work on the Electronic

Records Express Medical PRO Assessment Group, Release of Information Workgroup, the National Health Information Technology Cadre, the Telehealth Consultative Examination Workgroup and the Disability Case Processing System Vendor Administration Community of Practice. This year, Kreger received the SSA Commissioner's Honor Award "in recognition of exceptional, sustained performance in public relations, and dedication to optimizing technology in the obtainment of electronic evidence for the citizens of Iowa." Kreger earned a Bachelor of Arts in communications from the University of Northern Iowa.

**Elizabeth (Liz) McLaren** is the National Council of Disability Determination Directors (NCDDD) Past-President and Systems Committee Chairperson, as well as the Administrator for the Iowa DDS. McLaren began working as Administrator in October 2010, but has spent an entire 27-year career at the Iowa DDS, serving as a Disability Examiner, Training Coordinator and business process and policy expert. In addition to directing the operation of the DDS, McLaren has devoted time to national workgroups and committees, including the National Disability Issues Group. McLaren began working at NCDDD in 2010, serving on the Board of Trustees, as Secretary, President-Elect and then President from October 2018 to October 2020. McLaren enjoys networking with colleagues and working collaboratively to solve the challenges facing the DDS community. McLaren holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Simpson College in history and political science and a Certified Public Manager designation from Drake University in Des Moines.

**Jennifer Nottingham** is the current NADE Legislative Director. Nottingham has been actively involved in NADE since 2001, serving in various capacities at the state, regional and national level. Nottingham previously served as the NADE President from 2013-2014. Nottingham began a career at the Ohio DDS in 2001. Nottingham has previously worked as an Adjudicator and a Disability Claims Supervisor. In 2014, Nottingham began working for the Montana DDS. In 2017, Nottingham became an Operations Manager for the Nevada DDS. Nottingham has served on the SOAR National Expert Panel since 2018. Nottingham has assisted in creating reference material and has provided training on disability topics. Nottingham earned a Master of Public Administration from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at the Ohio State University.

**Marjorie Portnoy, Esq.**, is the Owner and Managing Attorney of Portnoy Disability Practice, a boutique law firm dedicated to assisting individuals in obtaining Social Security benefits. Portnoy has handled thousands of disability cases at both the administrative and federal levels. Prior to opening Portnoy Disability Practice in 2010, Portnoy was the Managing Attorney of Social Security and Medicare Services at one of the nation's largest disability representation organizations, overseeing operations in four locations. Portnoy is the past Co-Chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Social Security Committee and an active member of the National Organization of Social Security Claimant's Representatives. Portnoy frequently speaks at support groups and provides trainings for social work interns on Social Security law and procedure. Portnoy earned an undergraduate degree, *cum laude*, from Cornell University and a law degree from Boston College Law School.

**Teresa Sizemore-Hernandez** has served as the Professional Relations Team Leader at the Virginia DDS for the past five years. Before that, Sizemore-Hernandez held Disability Analyst and Case Consultant positions. Sizemore-Hernandez has been with the Virginia DDS for 16 years. Before joining the DDS, Sizemore-Hernandez worked at Social Services processing adult disabled Medicaid claims.

**Melissa Spencer** joined Social Security in 1996 and before retiring, served as the Deputy Associate Commissioner for SSA's Office of Disability Policy. Spencer is a graduate of SSA's Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program. Before entering the SES, Spencer served as the Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner for the Office of Quality Review and led all quality reviews for SSA's programmatic workloads, including disability claims. Spencer redesigned the State DDS quality review processes by instituting virtual review and SSA's targeted denial review. Spencer has served on several national groups, developing expertise in key areas including childhood disability policy. Spencer provided leadership and guidance to states as the federal liaison for the Maryland, Delaware, and West Virginia DDSs. Before joining SSA, Spencer spent 13 years in the Virginia DDS as a Disability Examiner and Manager after beginning a career as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Spencer holds Bachelor of Science degree in rehabilitation services from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Sara Winn** is the Immediate Past President of NADE (fiscal years 2019-2020) and a trainer of Disability Examiners at the Baton Rouge, Louisiana DDS. Winn began a DDS career at the Shreveport, Louisiana DDS in December

2000. Winn has worked at five DDS offices throughout the nation including Lincoln, NE; Fairfax, VA; and Washington, DC. Winn has also worked as an Examiner, Quality Assurance Specialist, and Supervisor. Winn has adjudicated every type of case and has many years of mentoring and training in the disability program. Winn helped to construct standard operating procedures in the DC office and was part of the executive leadership team. Winn was also a coach for the DC government initiative, Person Centered Organization. In addition, Winn was the head of the morale committee while in Shreveport and DC. Winn continues to serve on the Request for Program Consultation cadre and National SOAR expert panel. Winn received a Commissioner's Citation Award in 2011 for a team project while at the Fairfax office. Previously, Winn has served NADE nationally as Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, Communications Director, and President-Elect. Winn attended University of Louisiana at Lafayette and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in 2000. Winn then attended Louisiana Tech University and graduated with a Master of Arts in industrial/organizational psychology in 2003.