Social Security Advisory Board
Minutes
Board Meeting
February 22, 2012

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: Paul Verkuil Chair, Administrative Conference of the United
                            States (ACUS)
                          Jeffrey Lubbers, Acting Research Director, ACUS
                          Fumni Olorunnippa, Attorney Advisor to the Committee on
                            Adjudication, ACUS
                          Art Spencer, Associate Commissioner for Disability Programs,
                            SSA
                          Leighton Chan, M.D., M.P.H., NIH
                          Minh Huynh, Ph.D., NIH
                          Beth Rasch, Ph.D., NIH
                          Alan Jette, Ph.D., Boston University

SSAB Staff: Debi Sullivan, Acting Staff Director
                          Jackie Chapin
                          Jeremy Elder
                          Joel Feinleib
                          Beverly Rollins
                          Bilan Stribling, Staff Intern
                          David Warner

During the February meeting, the Board held two fact-finding sessions and met in executive session. In the morning, Board members discussed the activities of the Administrative Conference of the United States with Paul Verkuil, Jeffrey Lubbers, and Fumni Olorunnippa. Mr. Verkuil was confirmed by the Senate on April 6, 2010 as Chair of ACUS. The organization, which was defunded in the mid-1990s, has been revived in the last few years to improve the administrative process. It has 90 members: 50 are senior public officials while the remaining 40 are private lawyers and other legal professionals. ACUS is a public/private partnership designed to help the government work better; its mandate is to look at government performance in general. It has six standing committees and the Committee on Adjudication is working on issues involving SSA's appeals process. The Board was invited to participate in a working group that will be advising the ACUS study. A first draft of ACUS's report on the appeals process will be complete in August, and the outline is due to SSA in March.
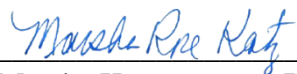
During the afternoon, the Board met with representatives from both SSA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) regarding their collaboration to improve SSA's disability determination process. SSA sought help from NIH in August 2007 to identify new diagnostic tests to expedite case allowances, with the goal of making the disability determination process faster, more

efficient, and more accurate. SSA entered into an agreement with NIH in 2008 with two main objectives: 1) to 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.

The SSA-NIH presentation highlighted two projects: 1) CAL 1 – an analytic project where NIH researchers developed a systematic approach to select conditions for inclusion in SSA's Compassionate Allowance (CAL) list; and 2) Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT) tools – instruments that will help SSA to measure individual function comprehensively, consistently, and quickly. With CAL 1, NIH set out to find a way to get qualified claimants on the disability rolls faster and to lessen SSA's workload. Data is used to identify severe impairments that most consistently meet the disability criteria. The goal of the CAT tool is the systematic collection of information regarding a claimant's functioning which can then be scored as part of the determination process. The studies are ongoing; results are in the process of being analyzed.

During the course of the day the Board members met in executive session to discuss current and future projects, upcoming meeting agendas, a proposed visit to Atlanta in May, and a possible disability forum in September. The members also approved a draft report that will be issued in April.

I certify that the minutes written for the February 22, 2012 meeting of the Social Security Advisory Board are correct.

Marsha Rae Katz
_____
Marsha Katz   Date: 3/23/2012

Acting Chair
Social Security Advisory Board