

*The American Association of
Social Security Disability Consultants*

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November 5, 2008

Ms. Linda S. McMahon
Deputy Commissioner for Operations
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

Re: The Destruction and Alteration of Consultant Opinions

Dear Ms. McMahon,

Your October 7, 2008 letter indicated that the Social Security Administration has a “robust records management program” and indicated that the alteration or removal of documents from the electronic folder occurs “rarely, if at all” in the disability determination service (DDS) community.

Therefore I thought you should know that we have become aware of detailed instructions, written by DDS information technology personnel, for the copying, modification and deletion of documents from the electronic folder. While none of these mention the deletion or alteration of consultant opinions specifically, they certainly indicate that this is possible and relatively easily accomplished at the DDS level.

Knowing your interest in having an adjudicatory process which is beyond reproach, I wanted to bring this to your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Alan L. Cowles, M.D., Ph.D.
President

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Astrue