

***The American Association of  
Social Security Disability Consultants***

1121 Stoneridge Drive  
Lawrence, Kansas 66049-4772  
(785) 764-5978  
[www.aassdc.org](http://www.aassdc.org)

March 23, 2009

Mr. Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

Dear Commissioner Astrue,

I have realized recently that many administrators within the Social Security Administration will no longer communicate with members of our Association. Also, late last week, I learned that two persons who had planned to speak at our April conference had been pressured by a well-placed person in your Operations branch to cancel their intended appearances. The speakers had planned to discuss topics which would help consultants perform their jobs as consultants.

Considering that the Social Security Administration commonly sends speakers to other organizations, at the Administration's expense, to discuss similar topics, it seems inappropriate for the Administration to try to prevent disability consultants from trying, at their own expense, to improve the quality of their work as consultants. Surely a very different relationship between a professional organization and the Social Security Administration should prevail. Therefore we ask your assistance in restoring good communication between our Association and the Administration and in our carrying out the educational part of our mission.

Sincerely yours,

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