

## Positive Outcomes

The last two fiscal years have had their share of difficulties and challenges. Each of us has learned or been forced to become more resilient during the pandemic. Each step of the way, management jumped into action to cover the things that needed to remain constant and continued to move our staff and agency forward.

As we begin a new fiscal year, it is important to take stock of the positive outcomes the agency has experienced during this time.

The agency has made significant automation advances over the past 18 months. The pandemic forced SSA to quickly shift focus and implement changes that directly impacted service delivery:

- We can now scan documents into the electronic folder with the click of a few buttons.
- The public can now fax items directly into WorkTrack and enroll in Medicare Part B online.
- We can offer mobile check-in for the public with appointments. Time-saving processes were implemented for non-medical hearings and we can now send folders to OHO electronically with the click of a button.
- Hearing decisions are returned to the office via email so paper folders are not overlooked and actions are completed timelier.
- We can print benefit verifications and publications centrally using PIRS, emailer, and WAC Express forms.

Pre-pandemic, managers were often unaware of the volume and age of paperwork sitting on technicians' desks. Not anymore! Now, at the touch of a button, managers have access to all the work pending in their office. In the last year, SSA has really made strides in moving towards a completely paperless process.

One of the most significant changes is the way we now all use WorkTrack to store and assign work. Employees are now able to telework while processing work that would have previously been considered "non-portable". With electronic faxing, WorkTrack, MS Teams meetings, and development of video conferencing for enumeration as a possible future business practice, SSA has put automation into practice that benefits the agency and our customers.

The challenges we have faced have served to build stronger bonds and relationships. Our management team is more cohesive—having weathered this storm together, pitching in where we could support one another, and working through our many challenges together. As we continue fiscal year 2022, my hope is that as we shift our thinking from surviving to thriving, each of us continues to be resilient.

As I look back on fiscal years 2020 and 2021, I will choose to focus on the positive outcomes that occurred, despite all the challenges SSA faced, and continue moving forward together.

Amy Evenson

Vancouver, WA