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Mr. Joe Lopez
Acting Chief Strategic Officer
Office of the Chief Strategic Officer

Mr. Steven Knight, Jr.
Director, Office of Strategic Planning & Innovation
Office of the Chief Strategic Officer

Dear Mr. Lopez and Mr. Knight:

Thank you for meeting with NCSSMA representatives, Monique Theriot and Sarah Arnold on March 7, 2017. NCSSMA greatly appreciates the opportunity to meet and collaborate with you and your staff regarding Vision 2025 and the next Agency Strategic Plan for FY 2018-2022. When former Acting Commissioner Colvin released the Agency Critical Priorities on October 19, 2016, her message contained a quote from Stephen Covey, which is so very appropriate and noteworthy- "*The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.*"

Members of the National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA) could not agree more! It all comes down to **prioritization** and we appreciate the opportunity to continue to work together as we move forward through the fiscal year. We would like to offer our suggestions as the agency prioritizes and we truly believe our advice is essential. Beyond Vision 2025, we look forward to being an active participant in the development of the next Agency Strategic Plan 2018 through 2022. We certainly value the opportunity you provided to begin that dialogue, establish relationships, and build upon our mutual goal of providing the best service to our public.

NCSSMA is currently planning a visit to headquarters in June and we look forward to meeting and working with you if your schedule permits.

As promised to Mr. Knight and his team, the following are some ideas we would like to share with regard to each Critical Priority as we look to align with the three pillars of Vision 2025.

Superior Customer Experience-Critical Priorities I, II, III and IV:

I. Advance Customer Engagement

We support the expansion of services that customers can conduct online, however, we also believe it is imperative that customers continue to be provided choices for the way they transact business with Social Security. Expanding options would then allow technicians more time to provide highly personalized interactions with in-office customers. Online service options could include the ability for our customers to complete Medical CDR forms online, report both T2 and T16 wages, eliminating some erroneous payments and the ability to view or print notices previously mailed out. With the increased use of online services, we do need to offer available click to chat options for those who have questions on the online process. Additionally, we advocate for additional technical training that would facilitate TSC representatives' ability to complete more transactions rather than referring issues to local field offices requiring customer recontact.

II. Advance Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities

We would like to see expanded use of video service delivery that would offer and afford video interviews for routine case reviews such as SSI Redeterminations or initial claims filing. In order to do this, the necessary bandwidth will need to be available in field offices.

III. Enhance Knowledge of Social Security Retirement and Disability Programs

The new brand "Securing Today and Tomorrow" will go a long way in helping educate the public about Social Security and its program. We need to expand outreach to educate third parties on agency programs, including schools/universities, large employers, financial institutions, and tax professionals.

IV. Enhance Quality and Payment Accuracy for our Customers

We support continuing and expanding Quality Review initiatives. We support examining ways to simplify the SSI program and its systems. Systems limitations and complex regulations continue to make SSI a very error prone program. We also recommend developing a platform where employees could submit feedback or training suggestions that could be incorporated into quarterly training broadcasts. Some regions currently use "Mission Possible" emails that are shared with employees to highlight error prone areas. Allowing employees an opportunity to provide feedback might reinforce quality.

Exceptional Employees-Critical Priority V:

V. Invest in Our Employees

We advocate that SSA look at relocating staff from Central Office and Regional Office components in an effort to outsource more opportunities from the traditional method of operations. The large majority of staffs are not mobile. In addition, the lack of change of station funding makes moving even less affordable. We support finding ways for additional positions and details to be held virtually whereby allowing non-mobile employees an avenue for advancement and experience to enhance job knowledge and

skill set. These positions need to be competitively announced. We would like to see the agency continue to look for ways to balance work-life demands to help employees, such as expanding part-time positions and hoteling options to offer greater flexibility and choices.

Innovative Organization- Critical Priorities VI and VII.

VI. Upgrade our Foundational Infrastructure

Continue expanding available bandwidth for offices to decrease system slowness and increase productivity. In addition, increase ASC positions within each region/area as they provide ever-increasing support as we work through systems enhancements.

VII. Modernize Information Technology and Accelerate Data Driven Decisions

NCSSMA is supportive of the agile programming technique used by Systems; however, we strongly urge that field-level employees be involved in the process from the beginning and not just the business owners. Having the end user involved will help identify issues and allow for the inclusion of features that may otherwise not be considered.

We look forward to being an active participant as the agency prepares for the future, through both Vision 2025 and the Agency Strategic plan. Together, we can help the agency realize the vision and the plan.

Sincerely,

Christopher Detzler
NCSSMA President