



Office *of the* Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Audit Report

Deceased Beneficiaries Who Had
Different Dates of Death on the
Social Security Administration's
Numident and Payment Records

A-09-17-50259 / March 2018

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 26, 2018

Refer To:

To: The Commissioner

From: Acting Inspector General

Subject: Deceased Beneficiaries Who Had Different Dates of Death on the Social Security Administration's Numident and Payment Records (A-09-17-50259)

The attached final report presents the results of the Office of Audit's review. The objective was to determine whether the Social Security Administration had adequate controls to resolve different dates of death recorded on the Numident and either the Master Beneficiary or Supplemental Security Record.

If you wish to discuss the final report, please call me or have your staff contact Rona Lawson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, 410-965-9700.



Gale Stallworth Stone

Attachment

cc:
General Counsel

Deceased Beneficiaries Who Had Different Dates of Death on the Social Security Administration's Numident and Payment Records

A-09-17-50259



March 2018

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) had adequate controls to resolve different dates of death recorded on the Numident and either the Master Beneficiary (MBR) or Supplemental Security Record (SSR).

Background

When SSA receives a death report, it terminates the decedent's benefits, records the date of death on the Numident and payment records, and initiates recovery for any payments issued after death.

SSA uses the Death Information Processing System (DIPS) to add death information to the Numident, change death information already on the Numident, or remove erroneous death information from the Numident. Generally, a DIPS entry will automatically record the death information to a beneficiary's MBR or a recipient's SSR if they exist. SSA employees must control and monitor the individual's record to ensure correct posting to the Numident and payment records.

In a 2012 audit, we found inconsistencies in dates of death among SSA's systems. For our current review, we identified 7,882 deceased beneficiaries who had a date of death month and/or year that was discrepant between the Numident and MBR/SSR.

Findings

We continue to find that SSA needs to improve controls to ensure it resolves date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Based on our random sample, we estimate 7,094 beneficiaries had unresolved date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Of these, we estimate the Numident was correct for 2,838 beneficiaries, and the MBR/SSR was correct for 4,256 beneficiaries. We also estimate 697 deceased beneficiaries had about \$1.4 million in undetected improper payments. SSA stated it produced alerts for the date-of-death discrepancies we identified; however, it had not taken action to resolve them.

Finally, SSA did not correct the date-of-death discrepancies for 9,500 (88 percent) of the 10,764 deceased beneficiaries identified during our 2012 audit.

Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. Determine whether it can efficiently resolve the population of beneficiaries identified by our audit in a cost-effective manner.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of resolving future date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DATS	Death Alert Tracking System
DIPS	Death Information Processing System
DMF	Death Master File
MBR	Master Beneficiary Record
NTIS	National Technical Information Service
OASDI	Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
Pub. L. No.	Public Law Number
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSR	Supplemental Security Record
Stat.	Statutes at Large
U.S.C.	United States Code

OBJECTIVE

Our objective was to determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) had adequate controls to resolve different dates of death recorded on the Numident and either the Master Beneficiary (MBR) or Supplemental Security Record (SSR).

BACKGROUND

SSA pays Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) benefits to retired and disabled workers, including their dependents and survivors.¹ Under OASDI, benefits are not payable for the month of the beneficiary's death or later. The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides benefits to financially needy individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled.² Under SSI, payments are not payable the month after death or later. When SSA receives a death report, it terminates the decedent's benefits, records the date of death on the Numident and payment records, and initiates recovery for any payments issued after death.³

In December 2015, SSA implemented the Death Information Processing System (DIPS) to add death information to the Numident, change death information already on the Numident, or remove erroneous death information from the Numident. Generally, a DIPS entry automatically records the death information to a beneficiary's MBR or SSR if they exist. SSA employees must control and monitor the individual's record to ensure correct posting to the Numident and payment records.⁴ Finally, SSA uses death information from the Numident to create a record of death information called the Death Master File (DMF).

SSA's Death Alert Tracking System (DATS) contains a list of death alerts that employees need to resolve.⁵ SSA's systems generate death alerts for employees to resolve when (1) they must verify a third-party death report for the beneficiary, (2) the decedent's name on the payment record does not match the Numident, (3) DIPS was not used to input death information, or (4) death information is on the Numident but not the MBR/SSR.

¹ *Social Security Act*, 42 U.S.C. §§ 401, 402 (2017).

² *Social Security Act*, 42 U.S.C. § 1382 (2017).

³ SSA *POMS*, *GN-General*, ch. GN 024, subch. GN 02408.610 (December 4, 2015).

⁴ SSA, *POMS*, *GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.050 (October 30, 2017), and SSA, *POMS*, *GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.051 (October 5, 2017).

⁵ SSA, *POMS*, *GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.065 (January 15, 2016).

In a 2012 audit,⁶ we found that SSA needed to improve controls to ensure it resolved date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. We estimated that 9,795 deceased beneficiaries had unresolved date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. This consisted of 1,469 deceased beneficiaries who had about \$6.7 million in undetected improper payments and 8,326 who had an incorrect date of death on the DMF. Our report included recommendations that SSA (1) analyze its death processing systems to ensure death information is consistent between the Numident and MBR/SSR and (2) develop a cost-effective method for identifying and resolving beneficiary records that have a different date of death on the Numident and MBR/SSR. Finally, we recommended that SSA determine whether it can efficiently resolve the population of deceased beneficiaries our audit identified.

For our current review, we identified 7,882 deceased beneficiaries who had a date of death month and/or year that was discrepant between the Numident and MBR/SSR. This represents a new population of beneficiaries since our prior audit. From this population, we selected a random sample of 100 beneficiaries for review (see Appendix B).

RESULTS OF REVIEW

We continue to find that SSA needs to improve controls to ensure it resolves date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Based on our random sample, we estimate 7,094 beneficiaries had unresolved date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Of these, we estimate the Numident was correct for 2,838 beneficiaries, and the MBR/SSR was correct for 4,256 beneficiaries. We also estimate that 697 deceased beneficiaries had about \$1.4 million in undetected improper payments (see Appendix B). SSA stated it produced alerts for the date-of-death discrepancies we identified; however, it had not taken action to resolve them. Finally, SSA did not correct the date-of-death discrepancies for 9,500 (88 percent) of the 10,764 deceased beneficiaries identified during our 2012 audit.

SSA's Procedures for Identifying Payments to Deceased Beneficiaries

When SSA receives a death report for a beneficiary, it initiates action to terminate benefits and recover any payments issued after death. If SSA receives a death report from a first party (for example, a relative or State Bureau of Vital Statistics), it terminates benefits without verification. SSA must verify death reports received from all other sources before it terminates benefits.⁷ When SSA terminates benefits, DIPS processes the death termination action and records the death on the Numident and MBR/SSR.

⁶ SSA, OIG, *Deceased Beneficiaries Who Had Different Dates of Death on the Social Security Administration's Numident and Payment Records*, A-09-12-11220 (December 2012).

⁷ SSA, *POMS, GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.050 (October 30, 2017).

SSA’s DATS contains a list of death alerts that employees need to resolve.⁸ SSA’s systems generate death alerts for employees to resolve when (1) they must verify a third-party death report for the beneficiary, (2) the decedent’s name on the payment record does not match the Numident, (3) SSA did not use DIPS to input death information, or (4) death information is on the Numident but not the MBR/SSR.

Unresolved Date-of-death Discrepancies

SSA did not resolve date-of-death discrepancies for 90 (90 percent) of the 100 deceased beneficiaries in our sample. Of the 90 unresolved discrepancies, 67 occurred before SSA implemented DIPS, and 23 occurred after SSA implemented DIPS in December 2015. For the remaining 10 (10 percent), SSA resolved the date-of-death discrepancies. The date-of-death discrepancies were an average of 14 months⁹ and ranged from 1 to 350 months. Table 1 summarizes the number of months of discrepancy for our sample cases.

Table 1: Number of Months of Discrepancy

Number of Months	Number of Beneficiaries
1	52
2	10
3	3
Between 4 and 6	4
Between 7 and 11	2
12 or More	19
Total	90

Effect of Unresolved Date-of-death Discrepancies

The 90 deceased beneficiaries with unresolved date-of-death discrepancies resulted in an incorrect date of death on either the Numident or MBR/SSR.¹⁰ To determine the accuracy of death information in SSA’s records, we obtained death certificates for 40 beneficiaries from the State Bureaus of Vital Statistics in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Ohio.¹¹ We found SSA had obtained death certificates or verified the date of death for 20 beneficiaries. However, it did not correct the date of death on the Numident or MBR/SSR for these 20 beneficiaries. Our review confirmed that the date of death on the

⁸ SSA, *POMS, GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.065 (January 15, 2016).

⁹ The mean was 14 months. The median was 1 month.

¹⁰ If the Numident date of death was correct, 35 of the 90 deceased beneficiaries had improper payments.

¹¹ We obtained death certificates from the seven States that had the largest number of beneficiaries in our sample (40 percent).

Numident was correct for 24 (40 percent) beneficiaries, and the MBR/SSR was correct for 36 (60 percent) beneficiaries. For 28 of the 60 beneficiaries, an electronic death registration report was the source of the Numident date of death.¹² Table 2 summarizes the results of our review.

Table 2: Confirmed Dates of Death

Source	Number of Death Certificates/Confirmations	Numident Correct		MBR/SSR Correct	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	6	5	83	1	17
Florida	5	3	60	2	40
Georgia	5	1	20	4	80
Illinois	6	2	33	4	67
Minnesota	5	0	0	5	100
North Carolina	8	5	62.5	3	37.5
Ohio	5	2	40	3	60
SSA Records	20	6	30	14	70
Total	60	24	40	36	60

Numident Date of Death Was Correct

When SSA receives a death report for a beneficiary, it initiates action to terminate benefits and recover any payments issued after death. If SSA receives a death report from a first party (for example, a relative or State Bureau of Vital Statistics), it terminates benefits without verification. SSA must verify death reports received from all other sources before it terminates benefits.¹³ An incorrect date of death on the MBR/SSR could result in undetected improper payments to deceased beneficiaries and/or their survivors. Our review of the 60 death certificates and SSA-confirmed deaths found the Numident date of death was correct and MBR/SSR was incorrect for 24 beneficiaries, which resulted in \$13,496 in improper payments to 6 beneficiaries.¹⁴

¹² Of the 28 reports, the date of death on the Numident was correct for 11, and the MBR/SSR date of death was correct for 17.

¹³ SSA, *POMS, GN-General*, ch. GN 026, subch. GN 02602.050 (October 30, 2017).

¹⁴ For 9 of the 24 beneficiaries, the date of death on the Numident was before the incorrect date of death on the MBR/SSR, of which 2 resulted in improper payments after death totaling \$2,206. For the remaining 15 beneficiaries, the date of death on the Numident was after the incorrect date of death on the MBR/SSR, of which 4 had underpayments totaling \$11,290.

For example, the Numident had a beneficiary's date of death as February 2012. However, the date of death on the MBR was March 2012. We obtained the beneficiary's death certificate from Illinois and found the death certificate confirmed the date of death on the Numident was correct. As a result, the deceased beneficiary was improperly paid \$1,198 for February 2012.

MBR/SSR Date of Death Was Correct

Several Federal entities use the DMF to help identify and verify reported deaths and prevent payments to deceased individuals. SSA provides the full DMF, including State death records, to Federal and State agencies that pay federally funded benefits, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, and Internal Revenue Service. SSA also provides the public DMF, which excludes State death records, to the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service (NTIS). The NTIS sells the death records to private industries including banks, hospitals, universities, and insurance companies, to verify identity and prevent fraud.¹⁵ Finally, under the "Do Not Pay Initiative," agencies are required to ensure they thoroughly review databases with relevant information on eligibility before they release any Federal funds. At a minimum, agencies shall, before awarding and paying benefits, check the existing databases to verify eligibility, including SSA's DMF.¹⁶

Any beneficiary death that SSA incorrectly recorded on the Numident is also incorrect on the DMF. As a result, Federal and private entities that use the DMF to identify and verify reported deaths would not know the correct date of death for these deceased individuals. Our review of death certificates and SSA-confirmed deaths for 60 beneficiaries in our sample found that 36 (60 percent)¹⁷ were correctly recorded on the MBR/SSR. Therefore, the death information for these 36 beneficiaries was incorrect on the Numident and DMF. The incorrect death information on the DMF could result in erroneous payments by other Federal benefit-paying agencies that use the DMF to detect inaccurately reported deaths. The incorrect death information may also hinder private industry as well as State and local governments' ability to identify and prevent identity fraud.

For example, the MBR had a beneficiary's date of death as April 11, 2013. However, the Numident had a date of death of April 11, 2012. We obtained the death certificate from Florida and found it agreed with the date of death on the MBR. As a result, the death information for the deceased recipient was incorrect on the Numident and DMF.

¹⁵ SSA is constrained by law from sharing all the death information it collects. *Social Security Act*, 42 U.S.C. § 405(r) (2017) limits the purposes for which SSA may share the death information it receives from the States.

¹⁶ *Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012*, Pub. L. No. 112-248, 126 Stat. 2390, 2392, 2393 (2013). This law emphasizes the need for Federal agencies to address improper payments, including payments after death.

¹⁷ For 9 of the 36 beneficiaries, the date of death on the MBR/SSR was before the incorrect date of death on the Numident. For the remaining 27 beneficiaries, the date of death on the MBR/SSR was after the incorrect date of death on the Numident.

SSA Actions in Response to Our Prior Audit

In our 2012 audit,¹⁸ we estimated that SSA did not resolve date-of-death discrepancies for 1,469 beneficiaries, which resulted in about \$6.7 million in undetected improper payments. Additionally, we estimated that about 8,326 beneficiaries had an incorrect date of death on the DMF. We recommended that SSA analyze its death processing systems to ensure the date of death is consistent between the Numident and MBR/SSR. We also recommended that SSA determine whether it could efficiently resolve the population of deceased beneficiaries identified by our audit. Finally, we recommended that SSA develop a cost-effective method for identifying and resolving beneficiary records that have a different date of death on the Numident and MBR/SSR, such as periodic matches between the Numident and MBR/SSR to detect and correct discrepant dates of death.

To determine whether SSA took corrective actions for the population of 10,764 deceased beneficiaries, we obtained the dates of death for these beneficiaries from the Numident and MBR/SSR as of June 2017. Of the 10,764 beneficiaries, 9,500 (88 percent) still had date-of-death discrepancies that had not been resolved. SSA determined it was not feasible to correct the remaining population of beneficiaries with date-of-death discrepancies because it would require a manual review. In response to our prior audit, SSA stated that, in December 2015, it implemented DIPS to eliminate the causes of the incorrect/incomplete processing of death information. However, our current audit found that date-of-death discrepancies continued to occur and were not resolved. SSA stated it produced alerts for the date-of-death discrepancies we identified; however, it did not include these cases as part of its priority workload. As a result, SSA did not include these cases in DATS for employees to resolve.

CONCLUSIONS

We continue to find that SSA needs to improve controls to ensure it resolves date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Based on our random sample, we estimate that 7,094 beneficiaries had unresolved date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR. Of these, we estimate the Numident was correct for 2,838, and the MBR/SSR was correct for 4,256. We also estimate that 697 deceased beneficiaries had about \$1.4 million in undetected improper payments (see Appendix B). SSA stated it produced alerts for the date-of-death discrepancies we identified; however, it had not taken action to resolve them. Finally, SSA did not correct the date-of-death discrepancies for 9,500 (88 percent) of the 10,764 deceased beneficiaries identified during our 2012 audit.

¹⁸ SSA, OIG, *Deceased Beneficiaries Who Had Different Dates of Death on the Social Security Administration's Numident and Payment Records*, A-09-12-11220 (December 2012).

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that SSA:

1. Determine whether it can efficiently resolve the population of beneficiaries identified by our audit in a cost-effective manner.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of resolving future date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR.

AGENCY COMMENTS

SSA agreed with our recommendations. The Agency's comments are included in Appendix C.



Rona Lawson
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

APPENDICES

Appendix A – SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

From the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Master Beneficiary (MBR) and Supplemental Security Records (SSR), we obtained data extracts of deceased beneficiaries who had a date of death month and/or year on the Numident that differed from the date of death month and/or year on the MBR/SSR. From these extracts, we identified 7,882 deceased beneficiaries who had a date of death on the Numident where the month and/or year differed from the MBR/SSR date of death month and/or year during the period May 2011 through December 2016.

To accomplish our objective, we

- reviewed the applicable sections of the *Social Security Act*, the *Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012*, and SSA's Program Operations Manual System;
- interviewed SSA employees from the Offices of Operations, Systems, and Retirement and Disability Policy;
- reviewed queries from SSA's MBR, SSR, Numident, and Death Alert Tracking System for each sample item; and
- obtained 40 death certificates and reviewed SSA records of 20 confirmed dates of death for 60 beneficiaries.

We determined the computer-processed data from the Numident, MBR, and SSR were sufficiently reliable for our intended purpose. We tested data to determine their completeness and accuracy. These tests allowed us to assess the reliability of the data and achieve our audit objective.

We conducted our audit work in Richmond, California, and Baltimore, Maryland, between April and December 2017. The entities audited were the Offices of Operations and Systems under the Offices of the Deputy Commissioners for Operations and Systems.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

Appendix B – SAMPLING METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

We obtained a data extract from the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Master Beneficiary (MBR) and Supplemental Security Records (SSR) of 7,882 deceased beneficiaries who had a date of death from May 2011 through December 2016 that differed from the date of death month and/or year on the Numident. From this population, we selected a random sample of 100 beneficiaries for review.

We found that SSA did not resolve the date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR for 90 of the 100 deceased beneficiaries. We also found that, of the 100 beneficiaries, 35 had potential improper payments totaling \$345,343 if the Numident date of death is correct. The following tables provide the details of our sample results and statistical projections.

Table B–1: Population and Sample Size

Description	Beneficiaries
Population Size	7,882
Sample Size	100

Table B–2: Beneficiaries with Unresolved Death-of-Death Discrepancies

Description	Number of Beneficiaries
Sample Results	90
Point Estimate	7,094
Projection - Lower Limit	6,595
Projection - Upper Limit	7,444

Note: All statistical projections are at the 90-percent confidence level.

Table B–3: Potential Improper Payments if the Numident Date of Death is Correct

Description	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
Sample Results ¹	34	\$139,783
Point Estimate	2,680	\$11,017,698
Projection - Lower Limit	2,065	\$6,434,857
Projection - Upper Limit	3,351	\$15,600,540

Note: All statistical projections are at the 90-percent confidence level.

¹ One \$205,560 error was a statistical outlier compared to the other errors; therefore, we excluded it from our projections.

Estimated Number of Beneficiaries with a Correct Date of Death on the Numident and MBR/SSR

To determine the accuracy of death information on the Numident and MBR/SSR, we obtained death certificates for 40 beneficiaries from the State Bureaus of Vital Statistics in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Ohio. In addition, we found that SSA had obtained death certificates or verified the date of death for 20 beneficiaries. We confirmed the Numident date of death was correct for 24 (40 percent) of the 60 beneficiaries, and the MBR/SSR date of death was correct for 36 (60 percent) of the 60 beneficiaries. The following table provides the details of our results.

Table B-4: Confirmed Date of Deaths

Source	Number of Death Certificates/Confirmations	Numident Correct		MBR/SSR Correct	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	6	5	83	1	17
Florida	5	3	60	2	40
Georgia	5	1	20	4	80
Illinois	6	2	33	4	67
Minnesota	5	0	0	5	100
North Carolina	8	5	62.5	3	37.5
Ohio	5	2	40	3	60
SSA Records	20	6	30	14	70
Total	60	24	40	36	60

Assuming the above percentages represent the population of beneficiaries with an unresolved date-of-death discrepancy, we estimate the Numident was correct for 2,838 beneficiaries, and the MBR/SSR was correct for 4,256 beneficiaries. The following tables provide the details of our estimate.

Table B-5: Estimated Beneficiaries with Correct Date of Death on the Numident

Number of Beneficiaries (From Table B-2)	Percent Correct (From Table B-4)	Estimated Beneficiaries (Number of Beneficiaries x Percent Incorrect)
7,094	40	2,838

Table B-6: Estimated Beneficiaries with a Correct Date of Death on the MBR/SSR

Number of Beneficiaries (From Table B-2)	Percent Correct (From Table B-4)	Estimated Beneficiaries (Number of Beneficiaries x Percent Incorrect)
7,094	60	4,256

Estimated Improper Payments

Of the 100 beneficiaries in our sample, SSA may have improperly paid 34 deceased beneficiaries a total of \$139,783 if the Numident date of death was correct.² We obtained and reviewed death certificates or SSA records of a verified date of death for 23 of the 34 beneficiaries. The 23 beneficiaries had potential improper payments totaling \$102,893. Our review found the Numident was correct for 6 (26 percent) of the 23 beneficiaries, which resulted in actual improper payments totaling \$13,496 (13.1 percent) of the \$102,893 potential improper payments. The following tables provide the details of our review.

Table B–7: Confirmed Deaths that Resulted in Potential Improper Payments

Number of Death Certificates/Confirmations	Numident Correct		MBR/SSR Correct	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
23	6	26	17	74

Table B–8: Percentage of Actual to Potential Improper Payments

Actual Improper Payments	Potential Improper Payments	Actual Improper Payment Percentage
\$13,496	\$102,893	13.1

Table B–9: Estimated Beneficiaries with Improper Payments

Number of Beneficiaries (From Table B-3)	Percent Correct (From Table B-7)	Estimated Beneficiaries (Number of Beneficiaries x Percent Incorrect)
2,680	26	697

Table B–10: Estimated Improper Payments to Deceased Beneficiaries

Improper Payments (From Table B-3)	Percent Incorrect (From Table B-8)	Estimated Improper Payments (Improper Payments x Percent Incorrect)
\$11,017,698	13.1	\$1,443,318

² We found that SSA may have improperly paid 35 beneficiaries \$345,343. However, one error of \$205,560 was a statistical outlier compared to the other errors; therefore, we excluded it from our calculations.

Appendix C – AGENCY COMMENTS



SOCIAL SECURITY

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 20, 2018

Refer To: S1J-3

To: Gale S. Stone
Acting Inspector General

Stephanie Hall

From: Stephanie Hall
Acting Deputy Chief of Staff

Subject: Office of the Inspector General Draft Report, “Deceased Beneficiaries Who Have Different Dates of Death on the Social Security Administration's Numident and Payment Records” (A-09-17-50259) - INFORMATION

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report. Please see our attached comments.

Please let me know if we can be of further assistance. You may direct staff inquiries to Gary S. Hatcher at (410) 965-0680.

Attachment

**COMMENTS ON THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL DRAFT REPORT,
“DECEASED BENEFICIARIES WHO HAVE DIFFERENT DATES OF DEATH ON
THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S NUMIDENT AND PAYMENT
RECORDS” (A-09-17-50259)**

As good stewards of taxpayer funds, and to preserve the public’s trust in our programs, we remain focused on preventing improper payments. As OIG stated in its report, SSA produces alerts for date-of-death (DOD) discrepancies, and we actively address alerts for records in current pay and deferred pay that may result in improper payments. We have also made significant improvements over the years in the Death Information Processing System to ensure we input accurate DOD information into our systems. We will continue to look for additional ways to modernize existing systems. Below are our responses to recommendations.

Recommendation 1

Determine whether it can efficiently resolve the population of beneficiaries identified by our audit in a cost-effective manner.

Response

We agree.

Recommendation 2

Evaluate the feasibility of resolving future date-of-death discrepancies between the Numident and MBR/SSR.

Response

We agree.

MISSION

By conducting independent and objective audits, evaluations, and investigations, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) inspires public confidence in the integrity and security of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) programs and operations and protects them against fraud, waste, and abuse. We provide timely, useful, and reliable information and advice to Administration officials, Congress, and the public.

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