



SOCIAL SECURITY
The Commissioner

March 7, 2013

Dear Colleague,

I am committed to keeping you informed on important agency issues. I know sequestration is on all of our minds. As advocates for the Social Security Administration, I wanted to provide you with timely information about how these unfortunate budget cuts affect us.

As you are aware, due to the failure of Congress to reach a deal on balanced deficit reduction to avoid sequestration, on March 1 the President was required by law to issue a sequestration order canceling approximately \$85 billion in budgetary resources across the Federal Government for the remainder of the Federal fiscal year.

As a result of sequestration, visitors in our field offices will wait significantly longer, and callers to our 800-number will wait almost 10 minutes for us to answer. We also estimate that pending levels of initial disability claims will rise by over 140,000, and, on average, applicants will have to wait about two weeks longer for a decision on an initial disability claim and nearly a month longer for a disability hearing decision. At this time, we are taking every step to mitigate the effects of these cuts on our service delivery to the American public. We will try to prioritize our reductions to avoid furloughs that would further harm services and program integrity efforts; however, the possibility of furloughs remains uncertain at this time.

I hope this information is helpful to you as you assist your clients in accessing services. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work to manage these unfortunate circumstances and do our best to serve the public.

Sincerely,

Carolyn W. Colvin
Acting Commissioner