

# VHA Under Secretary for Health DIVERSITY ADVISORY BOARD

**Date:** February 10, 2006

**Recorder:** David Rabb

**Attendees:** See attached attendance sheet.

1. **Agenda Review/Roll Call:** Ms. Wendy Hepker reviewed the conference call agenda and conducted a roll call of members present.
2. **Welcome:** Ms. Hepker welcomed today's special guest speaker, Ms. Linda Belton. Ms. Belton was invited on the conference call to share information regarding the Civility, Engagement, Respect in the Workforce Initiative. Ms. Hepker also introduced Sharon Ridley. Ms. Ridley will be replacing Ms. Hepker as a staff assistant to the Diversity Advisory Board. Ms. Hepker will soon be completing her ECF assignment with the Diversity Advisory Board.
3. **Approval of minutes:** No minutes to review or approve. There was no DAB conference call held in January due to the NLB Diversity Q&I Forum.
4. **Business Items:**

Date First Identified	Topic	Conclusions/ Recommendations	Action	Responsibility	Target Date	Date/ Follow-up status
January 2006	<b>Civility, Engagement, Respect in the Workforce (CREW)</b>	<p>The CREW Pilot is about to end and a second phase of the pilot is anticipated before a national rollout.</p> <p>The NCOD will incorporate the tenets of CREW as they work with every VISN after the next All Employee Survey.</p> <p>The Organizational Cultural Health Framework ensures that CREW, ATC, REACH for Diversity, and future employee-of-choice initiatives are complementary and in concert.</p>	<p>Ms. Belton will brief the USH on the results of the CREW pilots and will recommend that the USH support the future Organizational Cultural Health actions.</p> <p>The DAB will continue to collaborate and provide diversity consultation services to CREW.</p>	<p>Ms. Belton</p> <p>Mr. Rabb</p>	<p>June 06</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>March 7-8 DAB Face-to Face Meeting</p>

**Discussion:** Ms. Linda Belton provided the DAB an overview and progress of the CREW Pilot. She provided the Board with the operational definitions of civility, respect, and engagement as well as the business case for CREW. The National Center for Organizational Development has supported CREW by quantifying data that shows that high level of civility in workgroups correlates with:

- Fewer EEO complaints
- Less sick leave used
- Better patient satisfaction scores
- Higher employees satisfaction scores
- Better performance measure outcomes

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		<p>Ms. Belton reviewed the CREW pilots (8 sites) that are currently underway. The pilot sites include a mixture of inpatient and outpatient services, small and large groups, administrative and clinical teams, and VACO and field sites. Pilot site locations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of Nursing Service/VACO</li> <li>• Nutrition and Food Service/Hudson Valley VAMC</li> <li>• Ambulatory Care/ Phoenix, AZ VAMC</li> <li>• Human Resources/New Mexico VAMC</li> <li>• HAF- Lebanon VAMC</li> <li>• Inpatient Medicine/Greater Los Angeles VAMC</li> <li>• Primary Care/Augusta VAMC</li> <li>• Surgery/Indianapolis VAMC</li> </ul>				
		<p>Ms. Belton reported that the pilot team leaders have been working and meeting on a regular basis and that Mr. David Rabb has been a solid contributor to the process. The CREW Pilot Teams will be holding its last meeting in Cincinnati, OH, February 24-25. The first phase of the pilot will conclude in March, 2006.</p>				
		<p>Ms. Belton also discussed the concept of “<i>Organizational Cultural Health</i>” as it relates to indicators that suggest that healthy cultural climate. She shared concerns that were raised at the NLB regarding other VHA initiatives (Affirming the Commitment, REACH for Diversity, the All Employee Survey): Should the initiatives be done sequentially or simultaneously? Would one of the programs detract from the other? Is there a lack of coordination between the programs? Would they duplicate one another? How do we avoid the programs being “the flavor of the month”? These questions generated more questions as to where these initiatives are organizationally aligned? Who owned the initiatives? How do we migrate these programs/initiatives overtime into weaving them into everything thing we do by making them part of our work? How do we make sure that Leadership gets on board with all of these programs/initiatives and possibly making them leadership competency? Assuming that these programs will not be the only employee-of-choice related programs in the future, how do we incorporate new start-up initiatives/programs and ensure that they are coordinated well?</p>				
		<p>The <i>Organizational Cultural Health</i> paradigm is a way to connect all the current and future employee of choice initiates together by linking them to indicators, monitors, and initiatives that reflects the wellness of the organization. Similar to cardiac health monitors and targeted interventions used to support <i>clinical health</i> (e.g., blood pressure monitoring, timely EKG, weight loss programs, smoking sensation, rapid response teams, medication administration, 100,000 Lives Campaign, MISQUICK – Surgery Intervention ), employee of choice monitors and targeted interventions should be used to support <i>cultural health</i>. These monitors and targeted interventions includes but are not limited to employees satisfaction and investment surveys, workforce development and succession plans, EEO formal and informal complaint reviews, labor relations activities, workforce safety programs, CREW, ATC, REACH for Diversity, All Employee Survey action plans. Like cardiac health monitors and targeted interventions, cultural health monitors and targeted interventions should be used in concert, not in isolation, to improve the cultural health of the organization. If a new employee-of-choice indicator or initiative is introduced, it should not be consider a “flavor of the month” but rather a supplementary piece of information or activity that supports the lager goal of cultural health.</p>				
		<p>In concluding the <i>Organizational Cultural Health</i> discussion, Ms. Belton touched on the <i>Shaping Cultural Cycle Wheel Model</i> proposal that was recently developed to provide a uniform way of introducing cultural health initiatives into the VHA system. The <i>Shaping Cultural Cycle Wheel Model</i> provides a template for integration of future initiatives. The model includes the following steps:</p>				
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Executive kickoff or sponsorship (e.g., sponsored by the HR Committee or Communication Committee)</li> <li>2. VHA Senior Leadership endorsement (Explains why this is initiative is a value to us)</li> <li>3. Identify what the problem and issue is</li> <li>4. Gather data</li> </ol>				

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<p>5. Assess what the current situation is and what are the current programs available to address the problem and issue</p> <p>6. Determine what the National target is (What are the goals? Where do we want to be?)</p> <p>7. Develop facility level and program office action plans</p> <p>8. Incorporate the action plans into the Executive Career Field and Senior Executive Performance Outcomes</p> <p>9. Evaluate results</p> <p>All new VHA cultural health initiatives would be subject to using the <i>Shaping Cultural Cycle Wheel Model</i> to avoid duplication of efforts and program misalignment. It would also ensure that Leaders are held responsible in providing organization cultural health as the are now in ensuring clinical health.</p> <p>Ms. Linda Watson thanked Ms. Belton for leading this initiative and for taking the time to speak on the DAB Conference Call. As the Co-Chair of the NLB Communication Committee, Ms. Watson said that she and Ms. Louanne Atkins wanted to ensure that AFT, CREW, and REACH for Diversity were firmly linked. Similarly, Leaders of the DAB wanted to ensure that there was no duplication of services, and that all work was complementary. Ms. Watson reported that the VHA ACHE Regents Advisory Council was looking for informative agenda items to present at the VA Symposium and have asked Ms. Belton to present on CREW this year.</p>						
January 2006	<b>Follow-up Actions Items from Diversity Q&amp;I Forum</b>	The majority of follow-up actions items from the Diversity Q&I Forum are completed. Need to continue to work of items that have not been completed.	Mr. Rabb will follow-up with those areas that are still pending.	Mr. Rabb/Persons who are assigned task(s) to complete.	March 06	March 7-8 Face-to-Face Meeting
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Mr. Rabb provided a brief overview of the status of the Diversity Q&amp;I Forum follow-up action items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mailing of two awards (Vashtie Reedy) – done</li> <li>2. Letters to non-winning award submissions (Ms. Roslyn Cole) – done</li> <li>3. Consolidation of roundtable feedback from scribes (Ms. Hunter, Ms. Ridley, Ms.Dudley, Mr. Rabb) – pending</li> <li>4. Review of roundtable and participation evaluations forms (Nathan Clayton) – done</li> <li>5. Plan use for video footage from Forum (Ms. Hunter, Mr. Clayton) – pending</li> <li>6. Collect speaker information, i.e., slides, email address as appropriate for posting on DAB website (speaker coordinators provide to Mr. Rabb) – done</li> <li>7. Follow-up mailing to VISN directors, chief officers and other forum participants, including newsletter book, info on forum video, etc) – done</li> <li>8. Follow-up on Luke Visconti's communication/donation (Ev Chasen) – pending</li> </ol>						
November 2005	<b>Salt Lake City Face-to-Face Meeting</b>	The Next DAB Board Meeting will take place on March 8-9, 2006 at the Salt Lake City Employee Exchange Center. Board members were asked to review the draft meeting agenda and to provide input. Hotel accommodations need to be	Board members need to review draft meeting agenda and offer input as to discussion items and the amount of time that they need to make their Committee.  Mr. Rabb will check with the	Committee Chairpersons  Mr. Rabb	February 06	March 7-8, Face-to-Face meeting

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		completed by February 17, 2006.	Travel Office and find out if Board members needing rooms on the night of March 9 <sup>th</sup> need to move to another hotel or continue with the same hotel at a higher rate.			
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Mr. Rabb reported that the March DAB Face-to-Face Meeting at the Salt Lake City Learning Xchange Center was rescheduled. The new dates meeting dates are March 8-9, 2006. Members that are attending the meeting need to make their reservations at the University Park Marriott Hotel by February 17<sup>th</sup> to reserve the room at the government rate of \$78.00 plus local taxes and fees of 12.46%.</p> <p>Mr. Rabb reported that he was recently contacted by Kristine Palazzolo, Healthcare Education Specialist at the Salt Lake City Employee Education Resource Center and learned that the hotel will be unable to reserve the room rate at the government rate for the night of March 8<sup>th</sup> because of a large conference that will be held that weekend. If Board members wish to stay at the hotel, they will have to pay \$149.00, plus taxes and fees of 12.46% or have to be moved to another hotel (one mile away) and pay the government rate. Ms. Watson requested that Mr. Rabb asked the Travel Office for an opinion as to whether Board members have to move to another hotel or pay the higher rate.</p> <p>Ms. Watson reminded Board members that if they cannot make it to the meeting, they can have someone attend the meeting to represent them and report on their Committee's activities. Due to time conflicts with the Mr. Feeley's Cluster Meeting, a couple of Board members have expressed a need to send a representative to the DAB Face-to-Face Meeting.</p> <p>A draft agenda for the meeting was forwarded to Board members for their review and input. The meeting will conclude on March 8<sup>th</sup> by 2:00 p.m. to allow for Board members to catch a return flight home.</p>						

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October 2005	<b>DAB Annual Report to NLB HRC</b>	The DAB Annual Report has been prepared and Ms. Hunter, who is on the NLB HRC, will give the report to HRC.	After Board members have reviewed the annual report and have questions or comments, please contact Ms. Hunter.	Ms. Hunter	February 2006	March 7-8, DAB Face-to-Face Meeting
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Ms. Linda Watson provided an update on the DAB Annual Report to NLB that will be briefed on February, 14, 2006. Ms. Watson reported that the time allotted for the report has been condensed to 15 minutes. Ms. Watson said that Mr. Rabb, Ms. Dudley, and other staff in Ms. Hunter's office did a superb job in pulling the DAB Annual Report Summary together. The DAB will be requesting the HRC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the DAB involvement in the Senior Management Conference that will be held in Las Vegas, August 06</li> <li>• Support the goal of increasing diversity awareness by ensuring that diversity education and training tools are included in VHA Career Development Programs and support the recruitment of women and minorities into the Technical Career Field</li> <li>• Continue to work with the DAB on diversity metrics (Ms. Watson commented on the great job that Ms. Michelle Blakely did with leading efforts in developing the 06 Performance Measures)</li> <li>• Continue to support DAB's partnership with the AHA Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program (Ms. Watson praised Ms. Rosalyn Cole for the excellent work she has done in coordinating and developing linkage with the AHA Institute for Diversity)</li> <li>• Support partnership with NCOD to complete projects to assess status of diversity in top leadership and key network positions, and to develop strategies to enhance it</li> <li>• Explore strategies to recruit and retain diverse workforce at the highest levels</li> <li>• Facilitate the rollout of best practices nationally, such as the networking and mentoring program that is in the Washington, DC area that was initiated by Mr. Guy Richardson and the Black/African American Committee</li> <li>• Support Women Forums and other face-to-face meetings of ethnic groups.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Watson also reported that part of the Annual Report to the NLB would identify the next steps. Ms. Watson commented that Ms. Hunter wanted to get some ideas as to which areas to emphasize because of the limited time for the briefing. Ms. Watson recommended that Ms. Hunter discuss the accomplishments of the DAB, areas requiring HR support, and the future directions of the Board. Once Board members review the final version of the Annual Report and have questions or comments, please contact Ms. Hunter and she will take your suggestions and recommendations under advisement.</p>						
October 2005	<b>Senior Management Conference</b>	The Senior Management Conference is scheduled for August 06 in Las Vegas. The Diversity Advisory Board is in the process of linking with the Senior Management Conference Planning Committee to ensure participation and that diversity education and awareness is part on the Conference objectives.	<p>Ms. Hepker will discuss with Ms. Hunter the DAB representation to the Senior Management Planning Committee.</p> <p>Ms. Hepker will look into seeing if the Employment &amp; Advancement of Women Committee plans will be incorporated into the Senior Management Conference</p> <p>Ms. Hepker will also provide</p>	<p>Ms. Hunter/Ms. Hepker</p> <p>Ms. Hepker</p> <p>Ms. Hepker</p>	February 2006	March 7- 8 DAB Face-to-Face Meeting

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			Board members with an update as to what the Board exactly proposed to do at the Senior Management Conference			
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Ms. Wendy Hepker reported that the Senior Management Conference has been announced. It will be held in Las Vegas at the MGM Grande, August 29 – 31, 2006. The theme is “VHA, A World of Excellence.” Conference focus sessions will be around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Centered Safe Care</li> <li>• Effective and Compassionate Care</li> <li>• Eight for Excellence</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Hepker believes that diversity and cultural competency are central this year’s Senior Management Conference theme and to the conference focus sessions. She informed the Board members that Juan Morale’s has been identified as liaison from the Board to the Senior Management Conference Planning Committee. He will also be coordinating the Lunch and Learn Session at the conference. At the March Face-to-Face Meeting, we will be doing some very clear strategizing and planning for the Senior Management Conference.</p> <p>Ms. Deborah Thompson inquired about the plans from the Employment &amp; Advancement of Women Committee for the Senior Management Conference and whether those plans have been finalized and space allocated for the conference. Ms. Hepker thought those plans are still current and that they have been given to Mr. Morales to work on. Ms. Watson suggested that Ms. Hepker consult with Ms. Joy Hunter and provide the Board with an update as to what the Board exactly proposed and what is the current status. Ms. Hepker will also consult with Ms. Hunter regarding Mr. Morales role in representing the DAB on the Senior Management Conference Planning Committee.</p> <p>Ms. Thompson reported that the Women’s Committee is working closely with the NCOD to develop a targeted survey for June 2006 to discover women employee issues.</p>						
October 2005	<b>Update: AHA Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program</b>	The Summer Enrichment Program is starting up again and the DAB is in the process of considering how much financial support it will provide this year. The numbers of students that will have their field placement with the VHA is undetermined at this time.	Ms. Cole and the DAB Special Initiative Committee will continue to work with the Institute for Diversity to attract SEP students to the VHA. The Committee will also publicize the SEP program within the VHA to secure field placements for SEP students.  A decision regarding the amount of financial support for the SEP will be determine and approved at the next DAB Face-to-Face Meeting.	Ms. Cole Special Initiative Committee	February thru May 2006  SEP begins in June 2006 for 12 weeks	March 7-8, DAB Face-to-Face Meeting

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<p><b>Discussion:</b> Ms. Rosalyn Cole provided a brief update regarding the Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). Ms. Cole reported that she has been in contact with Ms. Anderson at the Institute for Diversity (IFD) regarding DAB involvement. February 11<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for students to apply for the program. Currently, 41 students have applied for the SEP. There are four VA facilities that have completed the application process to have a SEP student. The deadline for Preceptor applications to be completed is March 1<sup>st</sup>; however, because the DAB has a good working relationship with the IFD this deadline can be extended. The IFD is looking forward to the VHA's continued participation in the program. Ms. Cole thanked Ms. Hepker and Mr. Rabb in getting the announcement of the VHA Hotline Conference Call, while she was on vacation.</p> <p>A discussion regarding the DAB participation (i.e. financial support for the SEP) and relationship with the Healthcare Staff Development &amp; Retention Office (HSD&amp;RO) followed. It was agreed that the Board should hold on contributing to the SEP until it is determined how many students applied for placements in VHA. Ms. Cole indicated we should have better information regarding the numbers of students that applied for the SEP in May 2006. Ms. Palkulti, Director of HSD&amp;RO, approved \$10,000 to support the SEP.</p> <p>In future announcements of the SEP, Ms. Cole plans to include past SEP students success stories with VHA and information regarding housing support, which is a critical barrier for students to participate in the program.</p>						
February 2006	<b>Announcement: VA Obesity Initiatives Rollout</b>	Ms. McClenney raised concerns regarding possible health care disparities in the VA/HHS Obesity Initiative Rollout. She plans to share demographic information with the VA/HHS Obesity Initiative Task Force that she collected on African Americans and Hispanic veteran populations. Three of the four original rollout sites due not appear to have a large concentration of African American and Hispanic veterans over 10,000.	Ms. McClenney wanted to share this information with the Board and plan to provide the Board with the information that she collected that shows the health care disparities. She also will keep the Board abreast of the work of the VA/HHS Obesity Initiatives Rollout.	Ms. McClenney and the Office of Minority Veterans	March 2006	March 7-8, DAB Face-to-Face Meeting
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Ms. Lucretia McClenney shared with Board members information regarding the VA/HHS Obesity Initiatives Rollout, which is a partnership with HHS. Ms. McClenney is a member of the VA Obesity Initiative Task Force. Four sites have been selected for to begin this rollout: Seattle VAMC, Grand Junction VAMC, Tampa VAMC, and Boston VAMC. Ms. McClenney questioned how these sites were selected. She is concerned that Obesity affects minority disproportionately and think that as this initiative is rolled out it needs to look at the demographics. From the 2000 Census, Ms. McClenney had her old office, VA Policy, Planning and Preparedness map out the demographics on all minorities from each state. Looking at the four states that the rollout is intended, Florida is only the state that has a significant minority veteran population for African Americans and Hispanics (numbers greater than 100, 000). The other three state have less than 10,000 minority veterans. Ms. McClenney is going to provide this mapping information and information from the Office of Minority Health/HHS that speaks to health care disparities.</p>						
February 2006	<b>Announcement: Religious Diversity Committee Proposal</b>	Chaplain McCoy recommended that the DAB consider having a Religious Diversity Committee or Ad Hoc Group.	Chaplain McCoy plans to follow-up with a written proposal for the Board to consider.	Chaplain McCoy	February 2006	March 7- 8, DAB Face-to-Face Meeting

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<p><b>Discussion:</b> Chaplain Michael McCoy raised for consideration the possibility of having a DAB Religious Diversity Committee or Ad Hoc Group. One of the objectives of the Committee, Chaplain McCoy explained, would be to raise the awareness of religious diversity in VHA. Chaplain McCoy reported that he is getting a lot of inquires in this area. Ms. Watson suggested that Chaplain McCoy write up a proposal to the Board regarding his recommendation.</p>						

**5. Next Meetings/Conference calls:** the next meeting will be held on March 7- 8, 2006 at the Salt Lake City Learning Xchange Center.

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**Joy W. Hunter, Co-Chair Diversity Advisory Board**

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**Guy B. Richardson, Acting Co-Chair, Diversity Advisory Board**

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**Date**

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**Date**

**MEETING ATTENDANCE**

<b>Name, Title</b>	<b>Oct 05</b>	<b>Dec 05</b>	<b>Feb 06</b>
<b>Board Members</b>			
Linda F. Watson, Co-Chairperson	X	X	X
Joy W. Hunter, Co-Chairperson	X	X	Ex
Rosalyn Cole, Special Initiatives	X	X	X
Dr. David Lee, Native American Committee Chair	X	X	X
Francine Fraser, Data Outcomes, Public Affairs Committee Chair	X	Ex	Ex
Vincent Ng, Pacific Islander & Asian American Committee Chair	X	Ex	Ex
Gabriel Perez, Hispanic Committee Chair	X	Ex	Ex
Rita Reese, Logistics and Budget Committee Chair	X	X	X
Guy Richardson, Black/African American Committee Chair	X	X	Ex
Lawrence Sandler, DisAbilities Committee Chair	X	X	X
Deborah Thompson, Employment & Advancement of Women Committee Chair	X	Ex	X
Michelle Blakely, Performance Measures Workgroup	X	Ex	Ex
Lucretia McClenney, Minority Veterans Program	X	X	X
<b>Others in Attendance:</b>			
Chaplain Mike McCoy	Ex	X	X
David Rabb, Staff Support, Recorder	X	X	X
Tracy Hugee, Staff Support	X	Ex	Ex
Wendy Hepker, Staff Support	X	X	X
Sharon Ridley, Staff Support	N/A	N/A	X

X – Present, Ex – Excused, N/A – Not Applicable