



**VHA Under Secretary for Health
Diversity Advisory Board
Hilton Chicago – Conference Room 4D
720 South Michigan Avenue – Chicago, IL
May 30-31, 2007**

Members Present:

Ms. Joy W. Hunter, VHA Chief Learning Officer, VA Central Office
Ms. Benita Stoddard for Ms. Linda F. Watson, Director, VISN 17 Office of Operational Quality for Clinical & Business Process
Mr. Guy B. Richardson, Director, Dayton VA Medical Center
Mr. Juan Morales for Mr. Gabriel Perez, Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center
Ms. Juanita Mullen for Dr. David K. Lee, Chief of Staff, Boise VA Medical Center
Ms. Lucretia McClenney, Director, Center for Minority Veterans, VA Central Office
Ms. Isabel Duff for Ms. Deborah Thompson, Director, VA Northern Arizona Health Care System
Ms. Rica Lewis-Payton, VISN 16 Deputy Network Director
Mr. Vincent Ng, Director, Providence VA Medical Center
Ms. Rosalyn L. Cole, Associate Director, Fargo VA Medical Center
Chaplain Michael McCoy, Assoc. Director/Diversity Development, VACO Chaplain Service
Mr. Garry Million, Associate Director, Iowa City VA Medical Center
Ms. Francine Frazer Health System Specialist, Director EEO/ADR/MVP

Members Absent:

Ms. Rita L. Reese, EEO Manager, VA Central Office (Excused)

Support Staff:

Mr. David Rabb, Executive Assistant
Ms. Tracy Dudley, Program Assistant

Guests:

Dr. Kennita Carter, DAB Black/African-American Cultural Competency Committee
Dr. Susan McCutcheon, VHA Cultural Competency Co-Chair
Mr. Bryan Matthews (Teleconference) ADHOC Task Force/Committee

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

Topic: Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Discussion: Ms. Hunter opened the meeting and welcomed Board members to Chicago and the conference. Due to new members and Committee Chair representation, a formal roll call including an introduction of board members and representatives were made. Condolences were extended to Ms. Watson on the recent loss of her brother. Mr. Rabb announced that he was called back to active duty for the next year and will be stationed in California. Mr. Rabb expects to depart within the next two weeks.

Action: Ms. Hunter will meet with Nevin Weaver regarding a detail for Mr. Rabb's position.

Topic: Review/Approval of May Conference Call Minutes

Discussion: The conference call minutes from May 11, 2007 were reviewed and ratified by the Board with minor edits.

Action: With the incorporation of minor edits, the minutes will be electronically forwarded to Ms. Hunter and Ms. Watson for final review, signature and dissemination to the Board.

Topic: Budget – 2007

Discussion: In the absence of Ms. Reese, Mr. Rabb provided an update on current budget items, travel and contract spending. Ms. Cole will be requesting additional Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) funding for 12-14 interns.

Action: If projected funds cannot be spent in a timely matter, if at all, the funds should be turned back in to the larger account. If additional Committee spending/funds are needed, requests should be made immediately.

Topic: Diversity Awards

Discussion: The FY06 Diversity Awards were presented at the May 15, 2007 National Leadership Board meeting. Ms. Cole and the Board explored options to increase the number of applicants. This will include an online application process in place by next announcement.

Action: The Diversity website will be updated to reflect current winners; displaying pictures from the award ceremony. Mr. Rabb and Ms. Dudley will finalize the 10N Hotline report announcing the winners.

Topic: Diversity Learning Map

Discussion: Ms. Hunter and Mr. Rabb reported that the Learning Maps are in distribution. Chaplain McCoy, Ms. Cole, Ms. Fraser and Ms. Dudley received facilitator training immediately following the conference.

Action: Learning Map orientation is tentatively scheduled for June 7, 2007, however; due to a major conflict, additional dates will be forthcoming. Mr. Rabb is still conducting Train the Trainer Learning Map sessions and is scheduled to provide Ms. Hunter with a mini-position description so that facilitator sessions can continue during his absence.

Topic: COLLAGE

Discussion: Mr. Richardson provided a brief update regarding the COLLAGE initiative. DAB Committees that are coming on-line with COLLAGE include: Advancement of Women Committee, Native American Committee, Hispanic Committee, and Asian & Pacific Islander Committee.

Action: At the next DAB Monthly Conference Call Committee Chairpersons will report their progress.

Topic: Summer Enrichment Program

Discussion: Ms. Cole identified interns and designated facilities for internship. The Summer Enrichment Program received high praise for its roll-out process and established partnership with VA's Management Support Office.

Action: An e-mail group will be established for the interns with monthly conference calls.



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

Topic: VALuing Diversity Newsletter

Discussion: Ms. Fraser stated the newsletter team is in its final phase of organizing, planning and editing the second edition of the VALuing Diversity Newsletter. The newsletter team was motivated in gathering articles that met an acceptable range of newsworthiness.

Action: With DAB approval, the DAB Newsletter team moved forward in recruiting writers with solid commitments for completion. The team will continue to seek/identify VHA senior leadership interviews.

Topic: Minority Veterans Program Coordinators Conference

Discussion: Ms. McClenney announced the 9th Bi-Annual Minority Veterans Coordinator Conference scheduled for June 5-8, 2007 in St. Louis, MO. One key purpose for the conference is to identify links between patient and employee satisfaction and the advancement of diversity.

Action: Ms. Hunter and Mr. Rabb are scheduled to attend this event as a guest speaker and Learning Map/Diversity display representative respectively.

Topic: DAB/VISN Diversity Conference Calls

Discussion: Mr. Rabb gave highlights from the DAB/VISN Diversity call on May 17, 2007 in which Mr. Richardson was the key DAB Committee Chair spokesperson providing highlights on the Black/African American Committee.

Action: The Board will target and extend an invitation to senior leadership to dial into the next conference call which is scheduled for August 16, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. EST A/C 22768. Further clarification between Diversity and Equal Employee Opportunity is needed.

Topic: Diversity Environmental Scan Review and Discussion

Discussion: Below is a summary of findings and recommendations that came out of the Diversity Environmental Scan Review and Discussion led by Mr. Rica Lewis-Payton.

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS

<p><i>Strategic planning/performance improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 31% of VISNs report having a diversity policy. • Not clear if VISN diversity strategic plans exist and are a part of VISN strategic plans. • VISNs are meeting minimum requirements established by national performance measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark policies from other organizations with strong diversity programs. • Develop VHA national policy that provides clear guidance to VISNs. • DAB provide stronger support to VISN level diversity strategic planning. • Current VISN diversity performance measures need to be revised.
<p><i>Senior Leadership support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement from VAMC, VISN and other Senior Leaders (specifically ECF/SES Members) in VISN diversity councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each VISN diversity council should be chaired by an ECF member • The DAB should develop a diversity data dashboard and provide recurring data reports to VHA senior leaders to increase their awareness of VHA progress and identify



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear what information is being reported from VISN Diversity Councils/Committees to VISN Executive Leadership Councils (ELC). • 91% of VISN diversity councils report no budget. 	<p>areas of improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DAB should work with the VHA Succession and Workforce Development Subcommittee of the NLB HR Committee to identify specific recommended diversity training resources and tools that should be integrated into the VHA leadership curriculum. • Establish a standard diversity reporting tool for VISNs to share with senior leaders/ELC and the USH Diversity Advisory Board (DAB); focus will be on USH Diversity Award categories. • VISN diversity council reports to ELC will be quarterly; annual to DAB. • VISN leadership should ensure adequate resources are available to address identified diversity areas for improvement.
<p><i>Initiatives & Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of VISN council members and activities are focused on EEO and Special Emphasis Programs. • While there is strong evidence of training activities, only X% of VISN councils report having a diversity training plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAB should use quarterly conference calls and communications to heighten differentiation between diversity and EEO. • VISN Councils should assess current membership to ensure a focus on diversity champions. • DAB ensure recommended diversity training resources are available to support VISN-specific diversity training needs.

Action: Ms. Hunter has requested to be on the July 2007 National Leadership Board/Human Resources Committee (NLB/HRC) agenda to highlight purpose, key findings and recommendations. After the NLB/HRC briefing, Ms. Hunter will conduct a briefing with either Dr. Cross or Dr. Kussman.

Topic: ECF Diversity Program Initiatives

Discussion: Mr. Bryan Matthews provided information on the ADHOC Task Force/Committee that reviewed the Executive Career Field (ECF) development program selection process. The Task Force/Committee conducted a “Root Cause Analysis” approach in reviewing the processes and outcomes of the last 3 ECF candidate development programs with the goal of identifying barriers that might have led to lower than expected/acceptable levels of minority acceptance.

Action: The Task Force/Committee’s next steps are to identify expertise and resources to assist Lisa Red, HPDM Program Specialist, in the development of marketing strategies and to reconvene after results of the FY08 selection for further review and discussion. Additional Task Force/Committee recommendations or strategies included education and training, implementing an electronic application process and the development of goals and targets for minority inclusion.



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

Topic: BAA Development Program

Discussion: Ms. Jennifer Magee provided the overview; program objectives; and application process for the one year BAA Development Program. The intent of this program is to compliment existing VHA developmental programs; improve performance and to prepare participants for advancement in leadership positions.

Mr. Richardson provided curriculum requirements and highlighted the virtual BAA graduation ceremony which was held on May 17, 2007.

Action: Upon the completion of the course, all participants were asked to complete a program evaluation to assist in continual program improvement; increase the number of applicants to 15; and submit a budget request to the DAB in support of the FY 07 class.

Topic: VHA Diversity Policy

Discussion: Mr. Million and Mr. Rabb drafted a revised diversity policy and charter for Board members to review, provide comments, and give feedback. Major discussion points were made regarding the policy, its relationship with EEO, diversity, and leadership responsibilities. In the absence of Mr. Rabb, Ms. Stoddard and Mr. Morales have volunteered to assist Mr. Million in the completion of the policy and charter.

Action: Mr. Million, Mr. Morales and Ms. Stoddard will ascertain diversity policies from other agencies, benchmark best practices and develop an approach in creating a diversity policy.

Thursday, May 31, 2007

Topic: Diversity Performance Measure

Discussion:

A. Diversity as a Leadership Imperative*: VISNs will ensure there is a VISN Diversity Committee that meets at least the following requirements:

- Is chaired by an ECF member
- Meets at least quarterly and reports to the VISN Executive Leadership Board/Council (ELB)
- Provides an annual report to the Diversity Advisory Board (DAB) using the approved template
- Develops an annual Diversity Training Plan that is approved by the ELB

Reporting Instructions: By October 15 of each year, the VISNs will submit an annual report to the DAB using the approved template. The template will include certification of quarterly reports to the ELB. The Diversity Training Plan and a list of the members of the Diversity Committee must be attached.

B. Diversity In Leadership* And Succession Planning**: VISNs will take action to ensure the following:

- Leadership (ECF Members) in the VISN reflects the veterans we serve and the people we employ.
- Qualified and high potential applicants in all succession and workforce development initiatives reflect the veterans we serve and the people we employ.

Reporting Instructions: As part of the Network Directors' self assessment they must include at minimum, information regarding the race/ethnicity and gender of the 1) ECF members in the VISN Office and each facility within their VISN and 2) employees selected for the ECF Class during the fiscal year. This information should be compared to KLF report, Table A1: Workforce by Race/Ethnicity and Sex and Unique Patient Count. Where there are gaps, the Network must outline plans to address.



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

C. Diversity Acceptance**: VISNs will develop goals for improvement and implement action plans based on an analysis of relevant All Employee Survey questions related to diversity. VISNs will demonstrate statistically significant improvement over the previous year survey results.

Reporting Instructions: Same as previous

Recommended Achievement Levels

Meets Target - Two (2) of three (3) Diversity Measures met

Exceeds Target – All three (3) Diversity Measures met

*New Diversity Measure

**Revised Diversity Measure

NOTE: It is recommended the measure related to diversity training be deleted and incorporated in the modules of existing system-wide training programs; i.e. Leadership VA, ECF. Training on cultural competence should be incorporated as well.

*Topic: **Organizational Cultural Competency** – Dr. Kennita R. Carter*

Discussion: The objective of this Subcommittee is to define cultural competency, highlight organizational benefits of cultural competency, identify key factors impacting culturally appropriate health care and indicators of organizational cultural competence. Dr. Carter provided a report of findings survey conducted by The Joint Commission entitled “Hospital, Languages, and Culture: A Snapshot of the Nation” which identified challenges in providing services to a diverse population, address these issues and identify best practices.

*Topic: **VHA Cultural Competency** – Dr. Susan McCutcheon*

Discussion: The VHA Cultural Competency Committee had been formed in Spring 2006. A major task was to develop an education curriculum for cultural competency in VHA. The Action Plan has been developed and approved and a framework will be created to evaluate outcomes. Dr. Susan McCutcheon will collaborate with Mental Health Services regarding a detail and or full time hire for this Committee.

*Topic: **Committee Reports/FY08 Initiatives***

Asian American & Pacific Islander Committee:

Discussion: FY 06/07 goals for the Asian American & Pacific Islander Committee are to identify, analyze and prioritize issues of concern to Asian-American leaders, provide a forum for networking, exchange ideas, promote education and training and communicate issues and recommendations to VHA leadership through the DAB. Additionally, Mr. Vincent Ng provided highlights from the VHA Asian Pacific American Committee Newsletter.

Action: Mr. Ng will continue his efforts to increase awareness, increase membership and provide a structured means of communication.

Hispanic American Committee:

Discussion: Mr. Morales stated that the Committee has been inactive due to Mr. Perez’s unavailability. However, a survey has been approved and will be disseminated to HACU interns to determine the level of recruitment and retention.

Action: Re-establish Committee conference calls to further facilitate development, support and communication.



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

Native American Committee:

Discussion: Ms. Juanita Mullen highlighted the REACH video, "Native America: Diversity Within Diversity" and further stated that there are a total of 500 recognized Tribes and, of that total, 200 are government-unrecognized. Ms. Cole shared with Board members a recent best practice outreach initiative that included the Center for Minority Veterans and Veteran Enterprise which attracted over 400 veterans (120 new veterans) that were part of the Red Lake Nation.

Action: Committee will continue to support the REACH video rollout and make progress developing Committee's membership.

Black/African American Committee:

Discussion: Mr. Richardson provided a Committee report highlighting an annual review of African American (AA) representation, potential barriers to AA career development and advancement and recommendations and strategies to address under representation. Other Committee activities have included the development of a networking model to establish local networking groups, linking BAA segments in various leadership and developmental programs, conducted an FY 06 VHA workforce analysis, and the formulation of the Data Collections and Healthcare Disparity Workgroups. Mr. Richardson also provided highlights of the BAA Developmental Program and the virtual graduation ceremony on May 17, 2007.

Action: To develop a plan for ongoing education of VA staff on disparities in healthcare and cultural competence; further development of the BAA Developmental Program; and establish additional networking groups.

Employment & Advancement of Women Committee:

Discussion: In the absence of Ms. Thompson, Ms. Isabel Duff provided a brief Committee report. Ms. Thompson is currently in route to her new assignment at the Madison VAMC. Results from the Women SES Survey have been consolidated. The Committee is in the process of analyzing and categorizing the findings. A report of the survey findings will be sent out shortly.

Action: Due to the transition of Ms. Thompson from Prescott, AZ VAMC to the Madison, WI VAMC, this Committee will not have a conference call until July 2007.

Data Outcomes & Public Affairs Committee:

Discussion: Ms. Fraser discussed collaboration with the Office of Personal Management, Diversity Management and EEO Office, and Management Support Office validating the data in MD-714. In the past, EEOC felt that information coming out of VA was inconsistent and that the analysis of the data was uneven. Ms. Fraser reported that with Board members input, she has developed an outline for the next VAuing Diversity Newsletter. She has also contacted the contributors that will be writing articles.

Action: Ms. Fraser will continue to keep the DAB informed about data analysis challenges and training initiatives that will address the goal of having VA employee database streamlined and validated. She will also continue to coordinate the newsletter editorial and publishing process.

Special Initiatives Committee:

Discussion: Ms. Cole provided the DAB with a brief Committee overview. She has received positive feedback from VHA leader's regarding the Diversity Inc. Magazine. She also noted that Diversity Inc. has a free on-line magazine for VA employees. The next Webinar Series program will explore best diversity practices on the Top 50 Diversity Companies.



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"

Ms. Cole recommended that Board members sign up early by contacting her and Ms. Rita Reese, if they plan to attend. The Committee continues to support the REACH video and EES/Diversity Learning Map rollouts. This year, the Health System Management Training Program has changed their training plan and it does not appear that diversity is on the agenda as it has been in previous years.

Action: Ms. Cole plans to look into seeing what the Committee can do to ensure that diversity is part of the HSMT curriculum for next year.

Disabilities Committee:

Discussion: Mr. Million stated that the Committee has resumed its regularly scheduled conference calls and that current members would like to remain on the Committee. The Committee had been facing membership challenges due to retirements. One of its new members is Edward Safdie, Associate Director at the San Francisco VAMC. The Committee is streamlining and better coordinating information as it relates to Disabilities.

Action: Continue to build committee membership and reestablish monthly conference calls.

Center for Minority Veterans Report:

Discussion: Ms. McClenney announced one of her new hires at the Center for Minority Veterans. Mr. Ron Sagudan, Asian Pacific Islander Veteran Liaison – Mr. Ron Sagudan. Ms. McClenney stated the Center for Minority Veterans is forging a working relationship with the National Urban League and she will be attending upcoming conferences sponsored by the Urban League. Ms. McClenney also stated that the Center is working on an electronic toolkit to increase information sharing and resources for minority veterans.

Action: At the next DAB Monthly Conference Call, Ms. McClenney will provide the Board with an update of the Minority Veterans Program Coordinators, June 5-7, 2006 in St. Louis. MO.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy W. Hunter
Co-Chair, Diversity Advisory Board

Date



"Our Strength is Our Diversity!"