



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20420

# DIVERSITY@WORK

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## Q&A

### Meet Susan McHugh, New DAS for DM&EEO

*Susan C. McHugh was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity in February 2004. In this issue, she talks about her new leadership role at VA.*



**Q: What's your role as Deputy Assistant Secretary for DM&EEO?**

**Ms. McHugh:** I lead initiatives that promote the employment of women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities at VA.

In that capacity, I serve as advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration on diversity and EEO policy and program issues. My office is responsible for supporting affirmative employment at VA, helping to prevent EEO complaints by fostering work environments that embrace diversity, and providing program guidance and support to the Administrations.

**Q: What new initiatives are on the horizon for DM&EEO this year?**

**Ms. McHugh:** DM&EEO supports workforce diversity year-round through special emphasis programs, outreach tools, complaints prevention, and workforce analysis and evaluation, among other programs. This year, the Office is developing new training and policy initiatives that will help EEO staff better respond to changes in the workforce. DM&EEO has also recently been assigned oversight for the implementation of key initiatives recommended by the Secretary's Task Force on the Employment and Advancement of Women. These initiatives will improve opportunities not only for women, but also minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities.

**Q: What's your vision for diversity at VA?**

**Ms. McHugh:** Diversity continues to be about opportunity and inclusion for all employees. We're striving to best serve the Nation's veterans and their families by best serving our diverse workforce. That's what motivates us, and that's why we're here. ■

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## CELEBRATE!

### National Women's History Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Women's History Month during March. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to plan observance activities this month and throughout the year. The 2004 theme is "Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility."

Nearly 58 percent of VA employees are women; take time to honor them for delivering vital health care, benefits, and

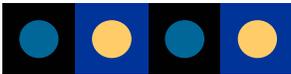
memorials to our Nation's veterans and their families.

For more observance resources, visit [www.va.gov/dmeeeo](http://www.va.gov/dmeeeo). To learn more about the Department's Women's Program, contact National Program Manager Wanda J. Jones at (202) 501-2089 or [wanda.jones@mail.va.gov](mailto:wanda.jones@mail.va.gov). ■



#### Bookmarks

- **Association for Women in Science** [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org)
- **Asian Pacific American Heritage Council** [www.apahcinc.org](http://www.apahcinc.org)
- **FirstGov en Español** [www.firstgov.gov/Espanol](http://www.firstgov.gov/Espanol)
- **Half the Planet Foundation** [www.halftheplanet.org](http://www.halftheplanet.org)
- **American Indian Graduate Center** [www.aigc.com](http://www.aigc.com)
- **Black MBA Magazine** [www.blackmbamagazine.com](http://www.blackmbamagazine.com)
- **Retired Enlisted Association** [www.trea.org](http://www.trea.org)



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- Asian Diversity Magazine
- *Black MBA Magazine*
- Business & Legal Reports
- DiversityCareers.com
- *Federal Employees News*
- FedNews Online
- FindLaw
- *Government Executive*
- *Government Procurement*
- HireDiversity.com
- *Hispanic Business*
- *HR Executive Magazine*
- Indian Country Today
- Journal of Issues in Nursing
- Linkage, Inc.
- National Org. on Disability
- *Newsweek*
- National Public Radio
- Pew Hispanic Center
- SHRM
- The Access Board
- *Training Media Review*
- USAToday.com
- Washingtonpost.com
- *Workforce Magazine*
- Workindex.com

## FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

### New Diversity Listserv Launches

We've launched a new discussion list service for diversity-related networking, so be sure to sign up! Membership is open to all. The listserv enables users to share news, questions, and announcements with other members, which number nearly 200 so far.

To join, visit [www.listserv.va.gov/archives/diversityeeo-l.html](http://www.listserv.va.gov/archives/diversityeeo-l.html). Please call (202) 501-2043 for assistance.

► More info: [www.va.gov/dmeeo](http://www.va.gov/dmeeo)

### Winter Sports Clinic in April

Approximately 350 disabled military veterans will participate in the 18th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village at Aspen, Colorado, April 4 to April 9. This rehabilitation program is open to all U.S. military veterans who receive care at VA facilities for



spinal cord injury or disease, neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, and other disabilities.

For further details about the Sports Clinic, contact Annie Tuttle, VA Public Affairs Coordinator, at (909) 422-3193; or Jim Hall, DAV Communications, at (877) 426-2838, extension 2048.

► More info: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel)

### VA Oncologist Honored

Dr. Hakan Kaya, staff hematologist/oncologist at the Spokane VA Medical Center, has been named one of the recipients of the 2004 Outstanding Achievement in the Arts/Sciences Award by the Assembly of Turkish American Associations. Turkish Ambassador Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu presented the award to Dr. Kaya at the 24th Annual Convention of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations held in Washington, DC, earlier this year.

► More info: [www.ataa.org](http://www.ataa.org)

## WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

The Center for Women Veterans

[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)



For special observance theme information, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.

**Content:** The Center for Women Veterans was established in VA in 1994 under the Office of the Secretary. The Center uses its Web site to help fulfill a key mission to provide women access to VA benefits and services on par with male veterans.

The site offers comprehensive resources for women veterans, including VA health care links; information on counseling programs, insurance, and benefits; and links to state women veterans coordinators.

**Must-see features:** 25 Most Frequently Asked Questions and Responses (also available in Spanish), Center for Women Veterans Fact Sheet, and Summit 2004 information.

**Contact info:** Postal mail, e-mail, phone, and fax contacts are provided. In addition, biographies of Center leaders are posted on the site.

**Accessibility:** An Accessibility Notice link is found at the foot of each page. A useful link for text-only pages is also provided.

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS

### Language Issues in the Workplace

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*The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission publishes numerous fact sheets and guides that support laws and regulations protecting American workers. Here's an excerpt from one that addresses language issues in the workplace, a hot topic for EEO and human resource managers.*

As the U.S. labor force grows more ethnically diverse, the number of workers who are not native English speakers increases dramatically. In 2000, approximately 45 million Americans (17.5 percent of the population) spoke a language other than English in the home. Of those individuals, approximately 10.3 million individuals (4.1 percent of the population) spoke little or no English, an increase from 6.7 million in 1990.

Employers sometimes have legitimate business reasons for basing employment decisions on linguistic characteristics. However, linguistic characteristics are closely associated with national origin. Therefore, employers should ensure that the business reason for reliance on a linguistic characteristic justifies any burdens placed on individuals because of their national origin.

The subsections below are featured on the EEOC Web site, which provides guidance on employment decisions that are based on foreign

accent or fluency and guidance on policies requiring employees to speak only English while in the workplace.



**Accent discrimination.** Because linguistic characteristics are a component of national origin, employers should carefully scrutinize employment decisions that are based on accent to ensure that they do not violate Title VII.

**Fluency requirements.** Generally, a fluency requirement is permissible only if required for the effective performance of the position for which it is imposed. Because the degree of fluency that may be lawfully required varies from one position to the next, employers should avoid fluency requirements that apply uniformly to a broad range of dissimilar positions.

**English-only rules.** Some employers have instituted workplace policies restricting communication in languages other than English, often called "English-only rules." In FY 2002, the Commission received 228 charges challenging such policies.

For more information, visit [www.va.gov/orm/LEP.htm](http://www.va.gov/orm/LEP.htm). Or, contact Tyrone Eddins in the Office of Resolution Management.■

## INSIDE STORY

### The Business Case for Diversity Programs

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*Looking for a business case for diversity in your organization? Check out these facts, courtesy of the DM&EEO Workforce Analysis team.*

▶ Since 1995, the percentage of full- and part-time permanent employees in VA who are White women or minorities increased 1.8 percent. During the same period, diversity increased 3.5 percent in the general workforce, according to Census figures.

▶ The representation of people with targeted disabilities in VA started declining in 1998 and has lost ground each year since.

▶ All minority groups increased their representation in the leadership pipeline (GS-13 to GS-15) in the past eight years, except American Indian men.

▶ Although the representation of Black men and

women in the leadership pipeline is growing at the fastest rate, they still have the largest gaps.

▶ At current growth rates, Hispanic women will reach 1990 RCLF levels in 5 years, and White women will take 202 years. (RCLF refers to Relevant Civilian Labor Force, or all people in America employed in or actively seeking work in a specific occupation.)

▶ The proportion of Hispanic Americans in VA is increasing slightly, but at a much slower rate than their representation in the total population.

For further information, contact Mike Dole at [michael.dole@mail.va.gov](mailto:michael.dole@mail.va.gov). Also, visit the DM&EEO Web site to download the "Business Case" presentation at [www.va.gov/dmeeo/trends.html](http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/trends.html).■

## Diversity@Work

Newsletter published bimonthly by the National Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity. To subscribe or unsubscribe, send an e-mail request to [dmeeo@mail.va.gov](mailto:dmeeo@mail.va.gov).

### CONTACT US

#### Mail:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of DM&EEO (06)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

#### Phone:

(202) 501-1970

#### Fax:

(202) 501-2145

#### E-mail the Editor:

[dmeeo@mail.va.gov](mailto:dmeeo@mail.va.gov)

Visit our Web site for additional staff e-mail addresses.

### OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of Veterans Affairs home  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

Center for Women Veterans  
[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)

Office of Resolution Management  
[www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm)

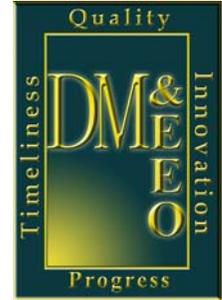
VA Job Opportunities  
[www.va.gov/jobs](http://www.va.gov/jobs)

## DM&EEO ONLINE

The mission of the Office of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:



- ▶ Women's History Month resources
  - ▶ Online Speakers Bureau
  - ▶ Scholarships, grants, and internships
  - ▶ Online diversity discussion group **NEW!**
- Bookmark our site; we're here to serve you.



### MARCH

**National Women's History Month**  
[www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)

**Irish American Heritage Month**

**International Women's Day**  
March 8

**National Hispanic Medical Association Annual Conference**  
March 19-21  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~nhma/>

**Greek Independence Day**  
March 25

**APRIL**  
**National Occupational Therapy Month** [www.promoteot.org/AI\\_OTMonth.html](http://www.promoteot.org/AI_OTMonth.html)

**National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day**  
April 9

**Summit on Leading Diversity**  
Atlanta, GA  
April 26-29  
[www.linkageinc.com/conferences](http://www.linkageinc.com/conferences)



*Coming soon:*

**MAY**  
**Asian Pacific American Heritage Month**

**Memorial Day**  
May 31

**JUNE**  
**Black Music Month**

**Women Veterans Summit 2004**  
Washington, DC  
June 18-20  
[www.va.gov/womenvet/](http://www.va.gov/womenvet/)

*For more events, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.*