

*The First Annual Diversity and  
Inclusion and Alternative Dispute  
Resolution Excellence Awards  
Ceremony*

*Department of Veterans Affairs  
The G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery  
Veterans Conference Center  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC*

*Friday, July 23, 2010  
2:00 o'clock*

*The First Annual Diversity and Inclusion and Alternative  
Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards*

*The First Annual Diversity and Inclusion and Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards are the first awards ceremony of its kind. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Resolution Management have joined together to recognize VA employees who have made exemplary accomplishments in the areas of diversity and inclusion management and in furthering VA's goals in the area of alternative dispute resolution.*

*The criteria for Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards was developed with the underlying mission in mind: "to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education to best serve our Nation's Veterans. The criteria for selection in furthering the goals in the area of Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards are based on individuals and program's demonstrated efforts in effectively managing conflict, thereby preventing disputes from arising and saving time and resources; and encouraging others to use Alternative Dispute Resolution and/or develop creative and innovative ideas and solutions.*

*These awards demonstrate the importance placed on VA's Diversity and Inclusion and Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs. We are proud to honor recipients of this year's first Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards and this year's first Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards.*

***Welcome***

*Ms. Georgia Coffey  
Mistress of Ceremonies*

***The National Anthem***

*Ms. Shelia Gaskins  
Management Analyst, Office of Administration*

***Introduction of the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and  
Administration***

*Georgia Coffey  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion*

***Remarks***

*The Honorable John U. Sepúlveda  
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration*

***Presentation of Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards***

*Ms. Georgia Coffey  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion*

***Presentation of Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards***

*Mr. Ralph Torres  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management*

***Closing Remarks***

*Ms. Georgia Coffey*

***~Reception to Follow ~***

## ***Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awardees***

### ***Category A (Manager)***

***Adam C. Walmus, Director, VA Medical Center  
Muskogee, OK***

*Adam Walmus is currently the Director of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, Texas. At the time of his nomination, Mr. Walmus was the Director of the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma. In that position, Mr. Walmus made diversity a key element of the facility's strategic plans. His focus on cultural diversity awareness helped to ensure that a wide range of perspectives was incorporated when addressing issues and concerns related to the delivery of high-quality care to America's Veterans. In addition, Mr. Walmus made participation in the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) a high priority, increasing the number of students involved in the facility's program from just five in fiscal year 2006 to 25 in fiscal year 2009 (the highest number of SCEP interns among all VA medical centers).*

### ***Category B (Non-Supervisory Employee)***

***Jeanette Goff, Medical Support Assistant  
VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System, Reno, NV***

*Jeanette Goff is a medical support assistant with the centralized communication center at the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System in Reno, Nevada. Her regular duties range from scheduling appointments to initiating life-saving interventions. In 2008, Ms. Goff initiated some very creative ideas on educating and training an employee with a visual impairment to perform the work of a medical support assistant. In addition to working directly with the low-vision employee, Ms. Goff worked with call center team members to identify unspoken assumptions, differing values, and initial resistance related to working with a person with a visual disability. She also helped identify and eliminate barriers to the low-vision employee's ability to fully perform his work. As a direct result of her efforts,*

*the low-vision employee can now perform competently and professionally the functions of his job, and call center team members know that what people can do is much more important than what they can't do.*

### ***Category C (Team)***

***Medical Record Technician Coding Unit, Charles George VA Medical Center,  
Asheville, NC***

*The Coding Unit in the Office of Health Information Management, Medical Record Technician, at the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina, is responsible for translating medical care services provided to Veterans in billable codes recognized by third-party health insurers. Over the past three years, members of the coding unit have overcome individual differences in order to become a unified team, working together efficiently and effectively to focus on their shared goals. In addition to deliberate efforts to build camaraderie, the coding unit has benefitted from increased training and expanded communications, both internal and external. The performance of the coding unit has also improved as a result of increased flexibility in how, when, and where work gets done. Their accuracy rate has climbed from 76 percent to 90 percent, and other facilities are now asking them for assistance with their coding concerns.*

## *Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awardees*

***Susan D. Black, EEO Specialist  
VA Butler Healthcare  
Butler, PA***

*Susan Black is being recognized for her service as a VISN 4 certified mediator and for facilitating the implementation of the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) Program at the Medical Center. She is also being recognized for her role as Chairperson of the EEO Diversity Committee increasing cultural and diversity awareness through employee education and quality Special Emphasis Programs.*

***Sylvia Jordan, EEO Program Manager  
Michael Benning, EEO Assistant  
James A. Haley Veterans Hospital  
Tampa, FL***

*The team efforts of Sylvia Jordan and Michael Benning are being recognized for the facility-wide training provided on the EEO complaint process and the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) early in the process to seek resolution, reduction of cost and increase morale in the workplace. The team also encouraged the use of ADR by developing an EEO/ADR web-based home page that allows employees to access a link to EEO policies, special emphasis programs and other VA web-sites relating to EEO and ADR.*

***Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System, ADR Program  
Tucson, AZ***

*The Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System ADR Program is being recognized for its advanced training and collaboration with the Phoenix, Prescott, and Big Springs VA Medical Centers along with the Indian Health Service to establish a shared neutrals program that provides mediation services to both agencies and allows mediators to improve skills without conflict of interest.*

***VISN 2, ADR Program  
VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York  
Albany, NY***

*The VISN 2 ADR Program is being recognized for improving ADR resolution rates and developing and implementing a performance user satisfaction survey which showed that the VISN 2 ADR Program reached settlement in 53 percent of its cases.*