

The Spring 2003 "CMS Voice" Newsletter

Region VIII's Deputy Regional Administrator Retires

By Alex Trujillo, Denver RO

Spencer Ericson began his career with the Social Security Administration (SSA) as a Claims Representative in Great Falls, Montana in 1970. In 1972 he was selected as an SSA Management Intern. Spencer began a series of rotational assignments within SSA, including one in the Bureau of Health Insurance, the predecessor of CMS.

In 1979 he joined HCFA as the Branch Chief for District Offices and Professional Groups in the Denver Regional Office (RO). One notable accomplishment was the development and implementation of a senior counseling training program with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. This was, if not the first, certainly one of the early efforts to train senior volunteers to assist other seniors with Medicare questions. In 1987 Spencer became the Branch Chief for the Survey and Certification Operations Branch; in 1994 he became the Associate Regional Administrator of the Division of Health Standards and Quality. In 2000 Spencer became the Deputy Regional Administrator.

Throughout his career he was the individual chosen to take on the tough assignments. During his career with SSA, he was detailed to various locations to help the organization deal with issues or implement new programs such as the Supplemental Security Income. With HCFA, Spencer lead the way in establishing networks in every RO State with key partners and stakeholders.

Spencer was also very involved in civic and community affairs, serving for a number of years on various city commissions for the city of Longmont, Colorado. He has long been very supportive of the schools in Longmont, donating the resources needed to ensure that disadvantaged kids had the items they couldn't afford. Under his leadership, an annual all-night astronomy lab was established for elementary age children. Spencer invited special guest speakers including former astronauts, and built simulations so the kids could experience what it would be like to work with tools in space. Sarah Jane, Spencer's wife, was a schoolteacher, so when summer vacation came, it wasn't unusual for the Ericson home to become the temporary home for classroom critters such as hedgehogs.

Spencer has had a very full career and has been a tremendous contributor to HCFA and CMS's success. However, he never lost sight of the most important part of his life—his family. Spencer was always available to coach his three sons in basketball, football, and baseball, and to be at all of their games when they played high school sports. And now as a granddad, new grandson Lucas will be, most assuredly, the recipient of a lot of attention.

A farewell celebration, recently held at the Denver RO, was a true testimonial to the love, respect and admiration that the staff felt for Spencer. There was a lot of fun, at his expense, but there wasn't a dry eye in the house during the final standing ovation.

[Spencer was a member of the "CMS Voice" Board of Directors. His knowledge and participation were greatly respected and appreciated. – Ed.]

Memorial Day Observed

By Bev Mohr, OOM

On May 22, CMS's veterans commemorated Memorial Day beginning with a breakfast and followed by a program in the Central Office cafeteria, narrated by Joe Cortea, CMSO. This marked the 19th year that the CMS veterans' group has gathered to mark the occasion of Memorial Day.

The guest speaker was Dallas (Rob) Sweezy, Director, Public Affairs Office. He spoke of the history of the observance—how it was once called Decoration Day, celebrated as a tradition in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War when people began to decorate the graves of the country's fallen fighters from both the North and the South. Memorial Day has evolved to include all wars and military conflicts where our Armed Forces have given their lives in pursuit of obedience to duty.

The underlying theme of Rob's address was that "sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance." "[Memorial Day] is a sacred day if you are a war veteran," he said. "No veteran ever needs to be reminded of the reason why Memorial Day must be commemorated to honor those, who in Abraham Lincoln's words 'gave the last full measure of devotion'." Rob spoke with pride of the 350 CMS veterans who have answered their Nation's call to serve.

The CMS Choir, under the leadership of Brenda Streets, OOM, performed a medley of songs throughout the program: *Festival of Freedom; God Bless the U.S.A.; and Let There be Peace on Earth.*

Near the program's conclusion, Patricia Murphy and Jimmy Curtis, friends of Ian Wagner and Floyd McDaniels of OOM, respectively,

placed service flags on a memorial wreath in remembrance of the two veterans, followed by a moment of silence, and the CMS Choir singing "Amazing Grace."

The playing of "Taps" by Jethro Hooper, OOM, provided a poignant conclusion to the observance.

Region III Regional Administrator Celebrates First Anniversary

By Kevin Berna and Kathy Motto, Philadelphia RO

On March 11, Sonia A. Madison celebrated her first anniversary as the Regional Administrator of Region III. An all-staff reception was held to mark the occasion.

Madison came to CMS with more than 30 years of executive experience in health care. Shortly after joining CMS, she was named the Consortium Administrator and assumed additional responsibilities extending throughout the Northeast Consortium. Madison is the lead Regional Administrator for HIGLAS (Healthcare Integrated General Ledger Accounting System), Communications, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act) and Dual Eligibles.

Under her leadership, Region III has celebrated many accomplishments during the last year, including:

- The creation of a new approach to building infrastructure within the Regional Office (RO) which capitalized on long-standing CMS staff talents;
- The establishment of a reinvigorated Congressional Outreach and Response team that included staff representation from all functional areas. The goals of this initiative were to provide timely and accurate responses to all Congressional inquiries, designate a single point of contact in Region III for Congressional staff inquiries and coordinate proactive visits by Region III staff to Congressional offices within the region;
- The establishment of workgroups, comprised of staff volunteers, to develop recommendations as to how the RO could best meet the Administrator's priorities, such as increasing beneficiary access to services, improving customer service, and enhancing outreach and partnership opportunities. Over the past few months, these recommendations have been further developed into projects such as profile development for each State in the Region and reinvigorated partnership, marketing, education and outreach efforts;

- The reorganization of the Division of Medicaid and State Operations, which resulted in two new divisions: a Northeast Consortium-level Division of Survey and Certification (DSC), and the Region III Division of Medicaid and Children's Health (DMCH);
- The enhancement of its work in Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) debt referral, which has been used as a national model. They developed desktop procedures for reviewing a contractor's debt referral work; and
- The setting up of a series of meetings with professional associations and other partners, including Region III State Medicaid Directors, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Directors, representatives from nursing home associations, home health associations and managed care plans.

Region III hopes to maintain the momentum of Madison's successes over the past year by continuing to focus its efforts on the above work areas. At the same time, the RO plans to address additional program areas that can be enhanced through further development.

For additional information, please contact Kevin Berna at (215) 861-4331.

Region III Supports United Steelworkers of America's Town Hall Meetings for Bethlehem Steel Retirees

By David Santana, Philadelphia RO

On March 24, representatives from Bethlehem Steel Corporation, the nation's second-largest integrated steel manufacturer, announced that a bankruptcy court in New York approved their request to terminate retiree health benefits by March 31. This decision resulted in the loss of health insurance coverage for some 95,000 retirees, more than half of whom are Medicare-eligible.

In anticipation of this decision, the president of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), the union representing the retirees, asked CMS Administrator Tom Scully in early March 2003 for assistance in counseling the retirees on their health insurance options. In response, CMS agreed to participate in a series of 25 informational town hall meetings to be conducted at seven locations in Pennsylvania, and one site each in Maryland, New York and Indiana.

Region III Beneficiary Services Branch (BSB) staff attended each of the sessions in Pennsylvania and Maryland and offered assistance to the more than 25,000 attendees. The town hall meetings provided retirees with an explanation of the benefit options available to them,

described the union's plans to secure additional relief, and offered individual counseling sessions for retirees to help them evaluate their options. In addition, BSB staff arranged for representatives from the Social Security Administration, the Department for Aging, and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program to attend the meetings as well. These groups offered additional information regarding entitlement for benefits, rights and protections, and health care options.

Region III participation in these meetings was greatly appreciated by both USWA and the affected retirees. In addition, the CMS Administrator has recognized the Philadelphia RO's work in supporting these events by sending the participants a written acknowledgement of thanks for their dedication and hard work.

For additional information, please contact David Santana at (215) 861-4165.

CMS Helps Caregivers Make Medicare Decisions

By Spencer Schron, CBC

The average caregiver is a 46-year old female, full-time employee who provides an average of 18 hours of care per week for her 77-year-old chronically ill mother who lives nearby. Caregivers for people on Medicare make or influence many Medicare-related decisions. But most of America's 24 million caregivers don't think about Medicare-related decisions until a health crisis occurs.

Since 64 percent of caregivers work, CMS is striving to provide Medicare information through employee assistance or work-life programs as a continual, low cost opportunity to ease the burden of decision-making for caregivers during a health crisis.

CBC's Division of Partnership Development (DPD) partnered with the National Alliance for Caregiving, under a contract with OgilvyPR, to develop the tools and information a caregiver needs when helping an individual with Medicare anticipate, plan for, and act on crucial Medicare decisions.

DPD also partnered with the Work Family Network of Maryland (WFN), a group of 15 employers concerned with work life issues including caregiving. The WFN includes McCormick Spice, Johns Hopkins University, Social Security Administration, Northrop Grumman, and Catholic Charities. The WFN helped conceptualize, develop, and test the materials. The products have a unique appearance and format

that tested well with employed caregivers and employers.

“Medicare and Eldercare Essentials: A Toolkit for Employers and Employees” has three components:

- “Medicare Basics” is a publication that focuses on eight identifiable moments that drive a caregiver’s involvement in Medicare decision-making. This framework supports timely and personalized decision-making so that the beneficiary and caregiver make the best use of Medicare services and benefits. Each section has Web sites and toll-free numbers for additional information.
- “When Employees Become Caregivers: A Manager’s Workbook” helps employers better understand and assist in employee caregiver issues. This material describes no- and low-cost programs that provide information on eldercare services for caregivers. This resource will be especially important to small and mid-sized employers who may lack funds and expertise to develop their own worklife quality programs.
- Poster highlighting www.medicare.gov and 1-800-MEDICARE.

The prepublication demand has been overwhelming. “Medicare Basics” has already received a Caregiver Friendly award from *Today’s Caregiver Magazine*. The award was highlighted on their Web site, which gets 1 million visitors per month. It will also be featured in the April 2003 issue of the magazine.

DPD sought endorsements and logos from key organizations representing caregivers including the National Alliance for Caregiving, Small Business Administration, Administration on Aging, Work Family Network of Maryland, Society for Human Resource Management, National Council on the Aging, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and Alzheimer’s Association. These organizations and others actively promoted the new caregiver products to their members and audiences of over 60 million.

You can review and download the “Medicare and Eldercare Essentials: A Toolkit for Employers and Employees” materials at: www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/materials/caregiversresources/default.asp.

Continuity of Operations Plan

By Linda Schmidt, OOM

Do you know CMS has plans for continuing essential functions during an emergency or disruptive event or what is included in CMS’s

Occupant Emergency Plan (OEP)? Do you understand CMS's Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for Information Technology (IT)?

In April, the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Workgroup held awareness sessions for employees at CMS Headquarters. Employees in Washington, DC, and the Regional Offices were invited to attend via videoconference. These sessions provided an overview of CMS activities to prepare and plan for emergencies and to ensure continuity of critical functions. The sessions provided a description of how the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Threat Levels integrate with CMS and the CMS COOP.

In 2001, CMS had different components working on updating its business continuity plans, the COOP for physical facilities, the OEP, and the IT DRP. In 2002, these efforts culminated into a workgroup staffed by the Office of Information Services, Office of Financial Management, and Office of Operations Management. The COOP Executive Group, consisting of Brenda Sykes, Ellen Gochnauer, Tim Love, Tim Hill, and Linda Ruiz provides management direction. The Risk and Project Management Group in OOM leads the coordination of the COOP Workgroup's activities.

The overarching purpose of the COOP is the protection of CMS personnel and assets, and the ability to maintain continuity of essential functions. Every Federal agency needs a COOP to respond to potential disruptive events such as inclement weather, flood, fire, acts of terrorism or war, information systems failures and loss of leadership.

To be viable, the CMS COOP must:

- Be maintained at a high level of readiness;
- Be capable of being implemented both with and without warning, during duty hours and non-duty hours; and
- Include plans to maintain essential functions for up to 30 days, even if the headquarters facilities are not available.

CMS has identified minimum essential business functions and developed business continuity plans for implementation during a disruptive event.

OIS continues to refine and test its DRP to ensure a comprehensive process is used to determine the impact of a disaster on the Data Center and to establish alternative computer resources.

The updated OEP handbook can be found on the CMSNet at the Emergency Preparedness Site. This site contains the OEP for the

Headquarters' buildings, the HHH Building in DC, the DHS Threat Level chart—including how CMS implements security changes in threat levels—and a variety of other information on emergency preparedness. The slides from the COOP awareness sessions will also be added to this site.

Finally, what is it that you, as an employee, must do?

- Become familiar with the OEP and the Occupant Emergency Handbook;
- Participate in CMS COOP training and testing if you are a designated person;
- Be aware of DHHS' Threat Levels, as communicated by CMS Designated Officials, and what they mean;
- Participate in disaster recovery testing if you are a business function owner of a system that supports a CMS essential function;
- Know your chain of command; and
- Consider giving your manager contact numbers where you could be reached if an emergency occurred.

Region VI Appears on Dallas Community Television

By Susan McLaughlin, Dallas RO

On May 7, Region VI aired its first live cable television program, called *Medicare Matters*, on Dallas Community Television (DCTV). Connected to about 85 percent of the households in Dallas, DCTV provides an opportunity for approximately 1 million viewers to see *Medicare Matters*.

What made this effort somewhat unique is that Region VI staff made up the entire production crew—staging, directing, filming and producing the program from start to finish. DCTV provided the CMS crew with extensive training in pre-production planning; in the use of the studio's all new digital, in-house video production equipment; and in the use of its new \$300,000 mobile production truck. Class topics for the crew included lighting, set direction, camera, graphics, audio, directing and engineering. Individuals and organizations who wish to air programming through DCTV must be certified as having successfully completed this in-house training program, and must produce their own shows. Once training is complete, DCTV provides trouble-shooting assistance only.

The first production of *Medicare Matters* addressed eligibility and entitlement to Medicare via a live, call-in broadcast. Health Insurance Specialists Rod Clark, Charna Pettaway and Jerry Taylor provided

answers to the called in questions about insured status, residency requirements, replacing a lost Medicare card, and more. Throughout the cable program, the on-air personalities promoted 1-800 MEDICARE, the [Medicare Web site](#), and the "2003 Medicare & You" handbook as CMS's primary information channels. CMS employees Vilma Acosta, Mark Holly, Susan McLaughlin and Anna Swetman controlled the cameras, lights, sound and graphics, while Dom Fernandez and Linda Horsch provided floor and technical direction.

Future *Medicare Matters* call-in programs will address other topics covered by the Train-the-Trainer Modules, in English and in Spanish. DCTV will assist Region VI in having tapes of these programs distributed to select cable stations within Region VI, where the intent will be to provide this additional means of communication to those individuals who may not be reached by the National Promotion and Publicity Campaign due to location, literacy level, language or cultural barriers.

DCTV is a private nonprofit corporation established to provide educational and informational services to the City of Dallas via five local channels. If you have any questions about DCTV or the production of *Medicare Matters*, contact Dom Fernandez, Linda Horsch or Charna Pettaway of the Region VI Division of Medicare at 214-767-6401.

Annual Holistic Health Fair and Health Conference

By Linda Orem, OOM

The Human Resources Management Group within the Office of Operations Management sponsored the eighth Annual Quality of Work Life Holistic Health Fair on Wednesday, May 14, in the Multi-Purpose Room and Auditorium in Central Office. Some of the participating organizations were:

- United Cerebral Palsy
- Transplant Resource Center
- American Heart Association
- Maryland Poison Center
- American Diabetes Association
- National Mental Health Association

Information was available on acupuncture, asthma and allergy, colon cancer prevention, epilepsy, leukemia and lymphoma, prescription medications, minority health, and breast cancer. In addition, free upper-body massages, body fat composition calculations, and foot

zone therapy were provided. Free screenings for vision, hearing, skin cancer, blood pressure, cholesterol, and depression were also offered.

A representative from each organization was present to answer questions and provide subject matter materials.

You may direct any questions or suggestions regarding topics for the fair or seminars to Linda L. Orem at (410) 786-5523.

CMS Employees Receive Excellence in Federal Career Awards

By Equilla Allen, OOM

Three of CMS's outstanding Central Office employees received Baltimore Federal Executive Board (BFEB) awards. Helen Herlich, Office of Information Services, received a bronze award in the Outstanding Professional (Non-Supervisory) Category. Carter Warfield, Office of the Actuary, received a bronze award in the Outstanding Supervisor Category; and Clara Carter, Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights, received a bronze award in the Community Service Category. All three awardees were honored on May 2, at a luncheon ceremony held at Martin's West in Baltimore, MD.

The purpose of the Excellence in Federal Career Awards Program is to honor outstanding men and women in the Federal Government who have performed exceptional and meritorious work, and to encourage high standards of performance in the Federal Government.

Congratulations on a job well done!

CMS Atlanta Employees Receive FEB Awards

By Larry Jones, Atlanta Regional Office

In conjunction with Public Service Recognition week, the Atlanta Federal Executive Board (FEB) held its 30th Annual Employee of the Year awards luncheon on May 7, at the Georgia International Convention Center in Atlanta, GA.

The CMS Atlanta Regional Office had several nominees who were finalists. We are extremely proud of how strongly they competed. The 3-E Team was one of three finalists out of a field of 19 Teams! Our 3-E Program was developed to **educate** Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) about CMS and its programs; to **enhance** current partnerships with HBCUs and formulate new ones, primarily in the Atlanta area; and to **exchange** ideas, knowledge, and staff with HBCUs. Now in its third year, the 3-E Program focuses not only on

fostering these relationships with HBCUs, but also on expanding them to include students from all ethnic backgrounds, on implementing a staff exchange program, and on identifying partnership opportunities with external health care organizations.

Brenda Sims was one of four finalists out of 16 nominated for the Outstanding Customer Service award. She is responsible for providing oversight, including technical assistance and evaluation, for our regional call centers, which cover contractors in the eight southeastern States, and our national call centers. She has an exceptional background in this area, which has allowed her to ensure customer satisfaction for more than 3 million Medicare beneficiaries, their family members, and caregivers. Excellent customer service is what it's all about!

Rhonda Hunter competed as an "individual" against three teams! She took it upon herself to develop a partnership between the CMS Atlanta Region and the 200 American Red Cross Chapters in the Southeast Region, providing caregiving packets, tip sheets, and Medicare mailings for distribution to our target audience. This is a fantastic partnership as CMS and the Red Cross serve the same audiences—seniors, people with disabilities, caregivers, and health professionals—and we have similar missions of helping people become healthier, safer, and more self-reliant.

Finally, Cindy Johnson, as part of the 2002 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Team, won in the Outstanding Partnership (Interagency) category. It was clear that this team did an outstanding job with the 2002 CFC. It surpassed the 2002 goal of \$3,478,785 by 8 percent, raising a total of \$3,771,778 for the Metropolitan Atlanta CFC.

We had more finalists this year than ever before. We expect to have even more next year; we're already gearing up. In our eyes, all of our nominees are winners because they have done, and continue to do, an outstanding job of delivering CMS services to those in need.

HIGLAS Update

By Ilene London, OIS

The HIGLAS (Healthcare Integrated General Ledger Accounting System) program is making good progress toward reaching the project's first major milestone in October 2003. HIGLAS testing should begin on October 1, at the pilot contractors, Palmetto Government Benefit Administrators (GBA) (Part A Pilot) and Empire HealthChoice, Inc. (Part B Pilot).

IBM acquired PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the original HIGLAS Systems Integration contractor, in the fall of 2002. CMS signed a new contract with the systems integrator, IBM Global Services, in early March 2003. Major Milestone #1 in October 2003 will test the pilot contractors' ability to execute the claims payment processing cycle. This cycle includes the inbound claim (837), the outbound notification (835), and payment generation with Accounts Receivable/Accounts Payable Netting. Milestone #1 will also prove the business flow in the pilot contractor setting and provide the technical and functional foundation for Major Milestone #2. In April 2004, Milestone #2 will add functionality to complete the full business "footprint" of the claims payment process at Palmetto and Empire, and prove the ability of HIGLAS to handle volumes for an initial set of Medicare contractors. In September 2004, Major Milestone #3 will add history and deliver audit functionality.

HIGLAS Project Teams are developing functional and technical specifications for each component of the HIGLAS system to tie business requirements to technical subsystems. A series of Technical Requirements Pilots are being conducted that address and confirm the specific technical system requirements for the HIGLAS solution.

A significant achievement during the past few months is the implementation of an Earned Value Management (EVM) System. With this system in place, the IBM Program Management Office reports that the April Cost Performance Reports were successfully submitted in early May. May 2003 EVM data was provided in early June 2003. In addition, CMS and IBM conducted an Integrated Baseline Review on June 5 and June 6.

Many people at CMS are working to make the HIGLAS project a success. In particular, the HIGLAS project would like to extend special recognition to Lisa Rehanek of the Atlanta Regional Office, and Jim Throne of the Philadelphia Regional Office, for their outstanding support in the areas of data conversion, training, and job mapping. Empire HealthChoice, Inc., and Palmetto GBA also deserve special thanks for their efforts as pilot contractors since the Concept of Operations began in October 2000. They have fully supported the HIGLAS project and are true team players, for which their efforts are greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, or would like more information on HIGLAS, please contact Ted Doyle, Director, HIGLAS Program Office, Project Management & Contractor Liaison Staff at 410-786-0773.

Personal Training for Leadership – “*The Leadership Workout*”

By Anna Johnson, OOM

Just as you can make physical gains when your muscles are encouraged to perform by a personal trainer, so too, can you make progress on your Leadership skills by being personally assessed and evaluated in the new CMS Leadership Workout.

The Leadership Workout is a 1-day simulation in which you experience a hectic “day in the life” of a manager in a fictitious government agency. During the day you will have to deal with irate customers, staff performance issues, tight deadlines, unexpected crises and a barrage of reports and e-mails. Trained assessors will observe you as you tackle the competing demands of a manager's day. At the end of the day you receive detailed feedback from a Management Assessor, letting you know your personal best in the five CMS Leadership Competencies, and identifying areas of management and leadership you might want to improve. You will also receive an in-depth written assessment of your performance during the workout. With this information in hand you can target improvements in the knowledge and skills that will help reach your leadership goals.

For someone who is interested in management as a career path, the Leadership Workout is a challenging way to test your readiness and identify strengths and weaknesses in your potential management style. If you are already a manager, the Leadership Workout is an educational and enjoyable way to assess where you are strong and where you can improve.

Dan Waldo, an Office of Research, Development, and Information manager, is a recent Leadership Workout participant. He notes, “For an existing manager, this experience is the equivalent of having a coach tag along in your work for a week. The assessors are able to compress their observations into a single day and provide immediate feedback on how you exhibit the behaviors associated with leadership.” Dan added, “Even if you disagree with the assessment you receive in a particular area, the process of talking it through with a coach can cause you to reevaluate what you do and how you do it.”

The Leadership Workout is open to CMS Staff at the GS-12 level and above, by appointment. You must be a graduate of either the Proactive Leadership Skills or the Leadership in Context courses to request an assessment.

If you want more information about the CMS Leadership Workout, you may call Dia Gonsalves in the Learning Resources Group at

410-786-6007. Staff in the Regional Offices should also contact Dia for more information on this initiative.

"MDS Hoops" a Hit--Recipient of Telly Award

By Bryan Drenning, PAO

The 24th annual Telly Awards recently honored "MDS Hoops", a production of the CMS Television Studio (Broadcast, Video & Production Group, Public Affairs Office), as a finalist in the "Training for Corporate Use" category. Founded in 1980, the Telly Awards is a national competition designed to recognize outstanding non-network and cable commercials, film, and video productions.

"MDS Hoops" debuted on December 13, 2002, as part of a live satellite broadcast and Web cast presented by the Center for Beneficiary Choices (CBC) in conjunction with the Center for Medicaid and State Operations. The broadcast dealt with MDS (Minimum Data Set) coding and publicly reported quality measures which provide the public with information about the quality of resident care in nursing homes. It featured several pre-produced segments that were "rolled in" to the live production, including a basketball-themed quiz show called "MDS Hoops". Andrea Pratt, an MDS and case-mix consultant for Thomas Healthcare Consulting, based in Indianapolis, IN, developed the concept for this quiz show which is designed to educate providers about the importance of accurately coding the MDS items used in calculating the quality measures. Robert Connolly, CBC, recruited Andrea to write and host this segment due to her experience in speaking to national audiences about MDS. Andrea has been involved with MDS since 1990 and is credentialed as a Master MDS Trainer.

In addition to Andrea's energetic writing and hosting duties, several other individuals contributed to the success of the "MDS Hoops" program. Benita Purohit, Public Affairs Office, is a CMS producer who oversaw the production of the entire broadcast, including "MDS Hoops." Michael (Mike) Bogasky, a freelance Director/Technical Director who frequently works with the studio staff on productions, directed the program. Bryan Drenning spent countless hours creatively editing the program material. Compared to other programs produced by the studio, "MDS Hoops" required extensive post-production editing due to the graphic-intensive demands of the quiz show format.

If you would like to work with, or find out more information about, the studio, please contact Karen Parker at (410) 786-5542.

The Next Generation Desktop

By Stephanie Bojanowski, Philadelphia RO

Over the next year, a new desktop application will be implemented at all Medicare contractor locations and at the 1-800-Medicare call center. The Next Generation Desktop (NGD), which will provide call centers with the latest in call center technology, will help to standardize processes for customer service representatives (CSRs) and improve the service given to our Medicare beneficiaries and providers. Some of the benefits NGD will bring to the contractor community include:

- A CMS-maintained, Web-based application that will minimize the need for each contractor to acquire and support licenses, hardware and software at each location;
- User-friendly access to multiple CMS and contractor databases that will reduce training time for CSRs and increase one-stop service for Medicare beneficiaries and providers;
- Scripted answers and responses to a broad range of Medicare topics, as well as translations of complicated procedure codes to ensure consistent responses to call center questions;
- Standardized, CMS-approved correspondence and templates to assist in CSR response to written inquiries;
- Access to on-line reference material and publications updated and maintained by CMS;
- Automated and manual logging of multiple call topics and call details to enhance reporting and management information for the Medicare contractor; and the
- Potential to redirect calls to other NGD sites in the event of a disaster situation or mechanical failure.

Today, Medicare contractors use a variety of ways to access information for inquiry response. Most use the claims processing system/mainframe or a locally developed workaround to the mainframe. In addition, some contractors have acquired specific desktop applications to support the Medicare inquiries workload. The NGD will replace these existing Medicare provider and beneficiary desktop applications and bring CMS one step closer to more efficient and effective customer service.

HIPAA Privacy Rule Takes Effect

By the Privacy Rights and Protection Staff, CBC

When you went to the doctor or pharmacy recently, did you get a privacy notice "because of HIPAA?" You received a privacy notice

because April 14 was the compliance date for the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

The HIPAA Privacy Rule provides the first national privacy standards that protect and guard against the misuse of patients' medical records and other health information held by "covered entities" (such as health plans and providers) subject to HIPAA. These privacy standards extend privacy protections like those for Federal agencies from the Privacy Act of 1974 to the private sector.

The Department of Health and Human Services issued the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for technical assistance to covered entities and their compliance. CMS is directly responsible for ensuring compliance by the Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) program. For the past 2 years, CMS has worked to fully implement the HIPAA Privacy Rule under the executive leadership and oversight of the CMS Beneficiary Confidentiality Board.

As part of Medicare's FFS implementation activities, CMS developed a centralized process to respond to written requests for access, filing complaints, and other individual rights. CMS also published a Notice of Medicare Privacy Practices in the 2003 *Medicare & You* handbook. This plain language notice describes how Medicare uses and discloses beneficiary personal health information to pay for health care and to operate the Medicare program. It also describes individual rights, like getting access to personal medical information and filing a complaint. For more information, the handbook refers beneficiaries to 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and <http://www.medicare.gov>.

For the Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance programs, the appropriate State agency is responsible for ensuring compliance with privacy requirements. Medicare+Choice plans and other Medicare health plans are covered entities subject to the Privacy Rule in their own right and are responsible for their own compliance. Other CMS partners, like Quality Improvement Organizations and State Survey Agencies, also must understand how the Privacy Rule applies to their programs.

For more information, visit the CMSNet or the Department of Health & Human Services' Office for Civil Rights' Web site (<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>).

CMS Named Administrative Services Customer of the Year

By Juanita Wilson, OOM

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act (amended from the Wagner-O'Day Act of 1938) was enacted in 1971 to provide employment and training for people who are blind or severely handicapped. In 1999, Juanita Wilson, a contract specialist in the Acquisition and Grants Group, Office of Operations Management, attended a NISH National Training Conference to learn more about the JWOD program and how it could benefit CMS. NISH (National Industries for the Severely Handicapped) is a liaison agency established to facilitate the JWOD program between the Federal government and the community rehabilitation programs.

Juanita invited NISH representatives to speak about the services offered through this program. She also provided internal training and awareness sessions. In April 2001, CMS awarded its first JWOD contract to ServiceSource to provide mailroom services, copy center support, shuttle/courier services, and document processing services.

On May 1, 2003, ServiceSource presented CMS with its Administrative Services Customer of the Year Award at its Annual Customer Appreciation Reception held at Morton's of Chicago in Washington, DC. This award, an engraved plaque honoring the Agency, was presented to CMS for its ardent support, commitment, and dedication to providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities. The plaque reads, "Administrative Services Customer of the Year Award presented to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in Recognition of Outstanding Contributions to the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities."

CMS Supports Small Businesses

By Andy Mummert, OOM

To fortify the small business sector, the Bush Administration initiated a policy to bolster small business participation in Federal procurements. One of the facets of the administration's policy requires Federal agencies to maximize their prime contract opportunities for small businesses. CMS recently awarded two agency-wide contracts to support the President's agenda. These contracts establish specific and significant contracting opportunities for small businesses potentially totaling hundreds of millions of dollars over the 5-year performance period.

Every component in CMS may use the Professional Business Services (PBS) or the Professional Information Technology Services (PITS) contracts for contractor support to help meet their mission-critical program goals, while helping CMS address, and hopefully satisfy, the Agency's small business contracting goals.

The PBS contract provides a wide range of consulting services for the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The PBS contract includes the following work areas specifically reserved for small businesses:

- Human Resources and Personnel Consulting provides expert consulting services for CMS Human Resources function.
- Health Care Industry Statistics Support collects, organizes, and interprets health care data, as it pertains to CMS programs.
- Public Relations Support provides consulting services to help CMS promote its interests and image as related to CMS's mission and programs.
- Personnel Development Training Support provides short duration training and seminars to help CMS personnel develop new skills to improve CMS's ability to meet its mission goals and support its programs.

The PBS small business contract holders are Casals and Associates, Klemm Analysis Group, and Z-Tech Inc.

On the other hand, the PITS contract can provide any IT service required by CMS. The PITS contract includes the following work areas specifically reserved for small businesses:

- Software Development—Any custom software development, (i.e., writing, modifying, testing, and supporting software) to meet the needs of a single CMS component.
- Software and Systems Documentation—Includes developing systems documentation (i.e., design, user's guide, etc.) for systems in production.
- Project Management—Includes assisting CMS in developing and maintaining project plans, which is comprised of three component parts: Project Management Plan, Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), and Project Schedule. IT Training—Includes providing CMS with technical IT training, such as Web Theory, DB2, Visual Basic, HTML, software design methodologies, etc.

The PITS small business awardees are Alta Systems, Inc., Douglas Computer Consulting, Inc., Data Computer Corporation of America, IQ Solutions, Maricom Systems, Inc., and Ventera Corporation.

For more information, contact your AGG contracting officer or Andy Mummert at 410-786-0403.

Surgeon General Joins CMS Outreach Initiative

By Glenn Smith, OEOCR

On April 8, U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, announced his goal to visit at least one school in each of the 50 States to talk about the importance of making healthy choices. As a coup for the *Student Career Academy Youth Initiative (Academy)*, Dr. Carmona kicked off his tour with a visit to Patterson High School in Baltimore, MD, on April 9.

The CMS initiated the *Academy* in partnership with Patterson High School and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the spirit of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The purpose of this Act is to stimulate high school students to continue their academic studies and to help them acquire the knowledge and skills they'll need for future success in either the workplace or post secondary education.

The *Academy* works to increase educational and employment opportunities for minority youth by enabling them to work in Federal facilities, attend workshops, meet with knowledgeable mentors, and learn about Federal careers. Program participants meet twice a month off school grounds; once at CMS headquarters with their mentors, and once at the Baltimore VA Medical Center or Regional Office with their job coaches.

Additionally, introducing the students to Medicare and Medicaid programs and Veterans benefits programs increases the opportunities for their families and communities to learn more about these Federal benefits.

The CMS invitation to Dr. Carmona to visit Patterson High School and meet the *Academy* participants, including CMS mentors and VA job coaches, was a great accomplishment for the *Academy*, as well as for Patterson High School. The Surgeon General spoke with *Academy* students and approximately 400 other Patterson High School students about his life and the tough decisions that teens face. "Sometimes the best decisions you can make are the least popular," Surgeon General Carmona said, "but in the end you'll find that the healthy choice, the best choice, will lead down a road to success."

Dr. Carmona's message, delivered with his trademark sense of humor, was well received by the Patterson students. He spoke of overcoming his personal challenges as a high school dropout, and making the right choices that eventually led to his success. The Surgeon General also acknowledged the adults who are a major influence on the students' lives, including their CMS mentors. "I want to thank parents, teachers, and community leaders who are the role models to our next generation 365 days a year," he said.

If you have any questions, please contact Glenn Smith at 410-786-6570.

Employees Receive USPS Special Achievement Awards

By Marla Cosby, OOM

In April 2003, Ray Wajbel and Marla Cosby of the Administrative Services Group, Office of Operations Management, received Special Achievement Awards presented by the United States Postal Service (USPS). The awards recognized Ray and Marla for demonstrating a high degree of innovation, leadership and influence within the mailing industry. Under strong economic pressures, they regularly work with Agency program staff, GPO contracted print/mail industry contacts and USPS employees to develop and design economical but effective strategies to meet CMS outreach challenges. By staying on top of new postal programs, technology changes and mail classification rulings, they have become reliable and knowledgeable contacts and information sources for Agency staff and other government and private individuals working in the mailing industry.

The awards were presented at the National Postal Forum in New Orleans, LA, where more than 5,000 mailing professionals were in attendance.

IN MEMORIAM

Alice Heiferman

01/03/38 - 05/09/03

Alice Heiferman passed away on May 9, at the age of 65. Her funeral mass was celebrated on May 21, at her parish church in lower Manhattan (New York City, NY).

She had worked for CMS for 28 years, most recently in the Division of Medicaid and Children's Health in the New York Regional Office (RO).

Alice was a well-known RO figure who pursued many interests and hobbies. Born in Boston, MA, she was a life-long Red Sox fan and rooted for the Celtics and the Patriots. Alice had strong opinions—she loved all things Irish; the U.S. Navy; Tom Clancy novels; Gerald Ford; Ted Williams; and Gene Autrey. Conversely, she had an extreme dislike for the New York Knicks and the Yankees. Alice collected Navy memorabilia, and successfully ventured solo to Philadelphia for an Army-Navy game to root for her beloved midshipmen. An animal lover, she had a rabbit named Kelly and two parrots, Barbara Ann and Teddy (named for Ted Williams, of course!), who mimic her laugh and share her love of Fifties' music on the radio. Alice learned to play the organ as therapy after hand surgery. In past years, on St. Patrick's Day, everyone looked forward to her appearance—a vision in green with a “Tam O'Shanter” jauntily perched on her red hair.

Like the twin towers, Alice was a fixture of New York life, whose presence will be missed. Arrangements are being made with the U.S. Navy to sprinkle her ashes at the bow of the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Enterprise, docked in the Hudson River.

Alice is survived by her husband of 43 years, Eugene, who works for Region II Office of Homeland Security (INS).

[We wish to thank Joel Truman and Jean Stone, NYRO, for this tribute. – Ed.]

Floyd McDaniels
12/09/51 – 05/17/03

Floyd McDaniels, age 51, passed away suddenly of a heart attack, on Saturday, May 17.

In 1969, after graduating from Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore, MD, Floyd enlisted in the Marine Corps and fought in Vietnam, where he received the Purple Heart. He later earned an associate's degree from what is now Baltimore City Community College.

Floyd was a civil servant for 33 years. At the time of his death, he worked as a Reprographics Specialist in the Division of Publications Management Services, Administrative Services Group, Office of Operations Management, Central Office. Floyd managed the Copy Center in the Central Building, and was responsible for all the copier machines throughout the complex, Washington, DC, and the Regional Offices. He was currently upgrading the copier machines to digital

technology, and was in the process of electronically connecting the machines so that customers could send files directly to the copiers.

He served on the CMS Veteran's Committee, and helped to plan the Veteran's Memorial. He became active in AFGE Local 1923 in early 1980, volunteered to be a Union Steward, and was later elected to Vice President.

Floyd's biggest contribution would have to be his incredible caring and compassion—not only for his friends and co-workers, but also anyone else in need of his help. He had a heart of gold and a really good sense of humor. It was a privilege to have known him.

He is survived by his wife, Brenda; four children, Kevin, Marlon, LaVette and Kellie; and three grandchildren.

[This tribute was submitted by Jimmie Curtis, Floyd's friend and manager. – Ed.]

James B. Edwards
(Retiree)

James (Jim) Edwards of Bel Air, MD, died of a torn aorta on May 19, at the University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore, MD. He was 70 years old.

Jim started his Federal career in the Social Security Administration's Bureau of Health Insurance in 1970, which became CMS, where he remained until he retired in 1999. His entire career was spent as a Computer System Analyst in the Office of Financial Management. Jim was proficient in a variety of system languages, which included COBOL, CICS, SAS and M204. He spent the last 10 years of his career as a programmer for the Contractor Administrative-Budget and Financial Management system. A quiet and unassuming man, he worked well as a team member, contributing to many major releases.

Jim attended Oak Grove Baptist Church, where he had been an active member since 1972. One of his favorite volunteer duties was to assist in the construction of the stage set used by his church for their annual Christmas pageant. Jim was a passionate golfer and enthusiastic bowler. He was a member of the Harford Carvers and made decorative decoys. Jim served in the Army during the Korean War and earned the rank of corporal. He was assigned to Company G of the 7th Calvary Regiment, part of the Honor Guard.

Jim is survived by his wife of 46 years, Eleanor; his son, Jerry; daughter-in-law, Elizabeth; two brothers; and a sister.

[We gratefully acknowledge this tribute provided by Michael O'Leary and Ray Schatz of OFM. – Ed.]

Mary Joanne Lanahan

03/04/43 – 04/11/03

On April 11, longtime Federal Government employee and friend, Mary Joanne Lanahan, passed away at the age of 60.

Joanne's career with the Federal government began in the 1960s, at the Social Security Administration (SSA). She was part of the task force that started the Medicare program, which later grew into the Bureau of Health Insurance (BHI), and eventually became CMS. In 1983, she transferred to the Office of Inspector General. At the time of her death, Joanne was a Reviewing Official, working for the Office of Counsel to the Inspector General on the second floor of the North Building, Central Office.

Joanne was an avid reader who also enjoyed music, old movies, shopping, the beach and traveling the world. She was a wonderful, giving individual, who could often be found working at a homeless shelter serving food.

She leaves behind many loving friends and cousins.

[Kathy Benton, OOM, submitted this article in loving memory of her dear friend. – Ed.]

Karen Sullivan

03/30/55 – 05/22/03

Karen Sullivan, age 48, passed away on May 22, after a lengthy illness.

She was employed with the Federal government for 26 years, first with the Office of Personnel Management and then with CMS. Karen worked as a Human Resources Specialist in the Human Resources Management Group, Office of Operations Management. She was responsible for leading, developing, and advising fellow specialists on all matters related to hiring and filling vacancies. She often served as a mentor to new members of the staff. At the time of her death,

Karen was largely involved in servicing the Office of the Administrator and all of the Senior Executive Service members.

Karen was always willing to go the extra mile; the word “no” was not part of her vocabulary. She was a dedicated employee, respected colleague and good friend, not only to those who worked with her in HRMG, but throughout the Agency. Karen was always regarded as an outstanding employee—a consummate professional who could be counted on to perform any task with the knowledge that it would be done extremely well.

She was always ready to lend comfort and support to any of her colleagues and friends, which is particularly significant given the level of challenge she personally faced over the past few years. Karen was an inspiration to everyone who came to know her. She will be remembered for her beautiful smiling face and wisdom.

Karen was predeceased by her son, T.C. She is survived by her husband, Tully, and her two daughters, Jasmine and Heather.

[Long-time friends and colleagues, Pam Mernaugh and Linda Bell of OOM, contributed this article. – Ed.]

Timothy Keating
08/09/46 – 06/19/03

Timothy Keating passed away from complications of diabetes on June 19, at the age of 56.

He grew up in Baltimore, MD, where he graduated from Johns Hopkins University.

Tim began his Federal career at the Social Security Administration, in Baltimore, 35 years ago, and has worked for CMS since it’s formation. Because of his long tenure with the Agency and his wonderful skills as a writer, he was recruited to be the archivist/historian for the 25th anniversary of the Medicare Program. At the time of his death, Tim worked as a Public Affairs Specialist in the Division of Partnership Development, Beneficiary Services & Partnership Group, CBC.

He was a voracious reader. Tim loved a good discussion, particularly political; many knew him as the guy who made smoking breaks intellectual. He enjoyed playing bridge.

Tim had lost a foot and was a dialysis patient due to diabetes. Nevertheless, he set an example for those around him by facing ever-increasing challenges with spirit and a smile. Because Tim could no longer drive a car and he wished to continue to work at CMS, he rented an apartment a short distance away, and purchased a powerful electric scooter to transport himself to and from work.

He is survived by his daughter, Eileen; sons, Michael and Andrew; granddaughter, Lily; and brother, Dan.

[We wish to thank Paul Mendelsohn, recent retiree from CBC, for contributing this article. – Ed.]

Peggy L. Parks
04/07/47 – 04/25/03

Peggy Parks, age 56, died unexpectedly from cancer on April 25, at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD.

Peggy worked in the Division of Post Acute and Ambulatory Care, Quality Measurement and Health Assessment Group, Center for Beneficiary Choices since February 2, 1998.

Peggy most recently served as the Quality Improvement Organization's government task leader for the Nursing Home Quality Initiative (NHQI). She led one of the four main prongs of this initiative, and helped to lead the NHQI team as it 'put the pedal to the metal' to achieve a very successful launch and program. It was Peggy's personal experiences, both with her own illness and with her mother's life in a Missouri nursing home, that fueled her passion for publicly reported measures of quality, culture change and quality improvement activities to assist nursing homes to improve their care. To her coworkers, she was a friend, teacher, source of inspiration and mentor, and they will miss her wisdom and joy for life.

She was born in Trenton, N.J., and reared in Olathe, KS, where she graduated from high school. Peggy was a magna cum laude graduate of Park College in Parkville, MO, where she earned a bachelor's degree in 1969 in elementary education.

She later earned a master's degree, in 1974, and a doctorate in psychology, in 1976, from the George Peabody College for Teachers, now part of Vanderbilt University.

Peggy moved to Baltimore in 1977 as a post-doctoral fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health.

A developmental psychologist who specialized in infancy and parenting, she joined the faculty of the maternal and child health department at the University of Maryland School of Nursing in 1978. Later, she became an associate professor at the school.

In 1998 she joined CMS.

Her husband, Thomas Maser; a son, Andrew Maser; her mother, Fern Parks; and a brother, Robert Parks, survive her.

EMPLOYEES

Recent Hires:

CMM—Gregory Carson; Loretta Conyers; Tracey Hemphill; Tamar Spolter; and Cindy Yen.

CMSO—Dovid Chaifetz; Angela Garner; Penny Mattingly; and Herbert Thomas.

OCSQ—Rana Hogarth; Marc Stone; William Sullivan.

OFM—Douglas Brown; Susan Harrison; Louis Jacques; and Beverly Lofton.

OL—Wanda Belle and William Kelley.

OOM—Adele Adams; Marie Dodge; and Elaine Powell.

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Region III (Philadelphia)—Linda Huesken; Herrick Lord; and Anne Servantez.

Region V (Chicago)—Jackie Garner.

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Retirees:

CBC—Paul Mendelsohn and Vittorio Santoro.

CMM—Elizabeth Cusick; Michael Deal; and Al Kemezys.

CMSO—Judith Allison and Richard Chambers.

OCSQ—Martha Newby.

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OOM—Jane Eagan; Terry Rapp; Dianne Rose; and Henry "Bud" Wessman.

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Region X (Seattle)—William Collins and Billie Sergeant.

The "CMS Voice" Newsletter

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