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FROM: Ruben J. King-Shaw, Jr.
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TO: All CMS Employees

SUBJECT: Diversity in CMS

America is a rich blend of people with different backgrounds, beliefs, and talents. Like our Nation, the Federal work force is a mosaic of individuals. The unique and valuable perspective of every single person greatly enhances our work.

Strengthening diversity at CMS is among the most important objectives of our Administration. The purpose of diversity and inclusion is to broaden our insight into the needs of the people we serve and the implications of our decisions - implications, which given the complexity of our programs, are not always obvious.

Increasing diversity does not involve lowering standards. It does not compete with "core" functions. In fact, achieving diversity and inclusion improves performance. Administrator Scully and I firmly believe that the advantages diversity provides are essential to the success of CMS. We hold ourselves and each of you accountable for incorporating these principles into our daily decisions regarding the design of our programs and the staffing of our Agency.

Commemorative Programs

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) are part of the Agency's overall EEO and Affirmative Employment Program which was established to ensure a workplace free from discrimination and harassment, and foster a work environment that fully utilizes the capabilities of every employee at all organizational levels. At CMS, pursuant to EEO regulations and relevant Agency delegations of authority, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Director has the overall responsibility for CMS's SEP/activities. The SEP/activities include: (1) designating specific SEPs and SEP managers; (2) conducting outreach and recruitment activities; (3) recognizing and supporting established advisory committees; and (4) in response to Presidential Proclamations, sponsoring SEP commemorative programs/events. These Presidential Proclamations are issued in an effort to acknowledge various cultures in our society and the workplace. Federal officials are called upon to commemorate these groups with ceremonies, activities and programs.

At CMS, we observe the following Commemorative Programs/Activities:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January)
- African American History Month (February)
- Women's History Month (March)
- Holocaust Memorial (April)
- Asian/Pacific Islander Month (May)
- Diversity Day (June)
- Women's Equality Day (August)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (September)
- Disability Awareness Month (October)
- Native American Heritage Month (November)

Additionally, CMS annually observes *Take Our Children To Work Day* the last Thursday in April. I encourage each of you to participate in these activities and to reflect on ways to incorporate the principles presented in these events into your day-to-day activities, such as program development, evaluation, administration, hiring, and communication.

Diversity Open Door Forum

Another important piece of our strategy for diversity and inclusion is our "Open Door" Group for Diversity Issues. Administrator Scully, Kevin Nash, and I have begun to meet regularly with organizations and individuals across the country to raise awareness of and be more responsive to our diverse beneficiary population. The response so far has been great, and I look forward to the insights and program improvements that will result from our Diversity Open Door meetings.

There are many other activities underway in our Agency that contribute to the cause of diversity which are too numerous to list here. We are strengthening, evaluating, re-aligning and changing where necessary. I am encouraged by our recent progress, and I look forward to all of us working together to use the principles of diversity and inclusion to help us serve the millions of people who rely on us.