

Health and Recovery Services Administration

Addressing Employee Concerns

Action Plan Progress Report

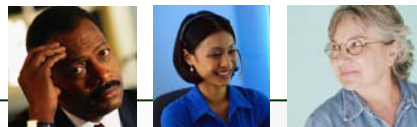
February 28, 2007

FOCUS AREAS:

- **Building confidence in senior leadership and their decisions**
- **Enhancing communication across the administration and finding new avenues of feedback for the staff**
- **Rebuilding the employee recognition system to stress local accomplishments and interdivisional appreciation**

1. The HRSA Executive Committee has:

- Reformed the Extended Management Team as “HRSA’s Senior Leadership” -- underscoring the need for all managers to participate in decision-making. The group’s meetings were restructured to include key management topics and to encourage responsibility for decision-making responsibility up and down the chain of command.
- Created a Decision Log to quickly inform managers about Executive Committee decisions; Office Chiefs are encouraged to share this information with their staffs
- Distributed a report to employees outlining HRSA strategies to address the top employee concerns in 2006 and 2007.
- Sponsored two full sets of focus groups (in September and February) in Cherry Street Plaza and HRSA’s remote office locations to give staff an opportunity to talk about concerns, what the administration should do about them, and whether they see progress on that front. The focus groups were structured so the Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Directors could join the last half of each meeting to hear from employees firsthand and to respond directly to questions.
- Restarted the EC Reports – a monthly or bimonthly iHRSA posting that summarizes EC meetings and decisions in everyday language.
- Opened new training opportunities, including a series of popular classes called “Crucial Conversations” for both line staff and managers. “Crucial Conversations” are aimed at identifying difficult but important discussions that may not occur if participants are not ready to handle them. Feedback from the first round of classes has been excellent.



HRSA Divisions

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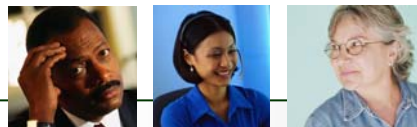
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2. Examples of steps implemented by individual Divisions of HRSA:

FOCUS AREAS:

- **Bringing basic performance issues down to the level of a line supervisor telling employees they have done a good job.**
 - **Capturing the enthusiasm of teams working together and crossing boundaries to accomplish their mission.**
 - **Focusing on the key issues that need attention: Results, Colleagues, Safety, Planning, Training and Effective Leadership.**
- Developed new employee recognition plans for the coming year. Plans are divided into formal and informal recognition events and systems. A key element of both is the encouragement to look for good performance and teamwork outside the division as well as within. Some examples include:
 - **Traveling trophy:** In the Division of Systems and Monitoring, recipients of these awards are also given the responsibility for passing the award on to a new winner, and the faster the better.
 - In the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, the “Staff Respecting Staff” committee bought Starbucks gift cards for line managers to use to recognize good performances. The division also is holding monthly birthday potlucks.
 - In the Division of Eligibility and Service Delivery, new award categories ranged from “The Rock” (for employees who provide a steadying influence on others in times of change and stress) to “Risk Takers” (employees willing to take risks – in particular, risks that lie outside normal work duties).
 - At Western State Hospital, managers and staff put together a visibly energized workgroup (the “SAFE team”) aimed at improving safety conditions for employees and patients. Safety plans and action items are posted on the WSH Intranet; a 24/7 toll-free “Safety Line” has been established, all-staff meetings were arranged with local police and prosecutors to explain how charging decisions are made after assaults occur, and WSH implemented a hospital-wide non-violence initiative.



HRSA: Looking ahead to the future

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3. Short-term action plans in development now:

FOCUS AREAS:

- **Finding effective ways to conduct the ongoing conversation between managers and staff in a way that promotes a HRSA vision of excellence and quality.**
- **Bringing staff together in a new organization that was retooled to take advantage of shared services, aligned productivity and enhanced accountability.**
- **Encouraging staff enterprise and energy in the search for service improvements and quality controls.**

- Regular volunteer Intranet surveys of employee concerns began in February, offering employees a new channel for feedback and an easy way to share ideas. The next survey will be held in May or June, accompanying a third round of focus groups.
- An HRSA Wellness Committee was created and sponsored a very popular health fair in November as well as periodic fitness activities during lunch hours. The committee is currently surveying staff to see what kind of programs they would like to see this year.
- The February focus groups were full of praise for the way HRSA featured its Human Resources staff on an iHRSA page that included their pictures, contact numbers, assigned divisions and their backups. (Similar pages are planned on other units that cross organizational boundaries – computer repair technicians, directors' executive assistants, facilities staff.) HR also will implement an automated request-work order system (the "HR EXPRESS") on iHRSA later this spring. Access to HR has been a longstanding issue for many staff.
- Each HRSA division is compiling business plans – giving employees a solid connection between their workday and the organization's overall mission. The plans also will become the foundation for resuming an annual HRSA report later this year.
- In the fall of 2006, HRSA used a unique "diagonal slice" of the administration – selecting employees at each rung of the ladder -- for the biannual self-assessment project. The workgroup's report to EC was insightful and included practical observations that informed managers' thinking and planning. This spring, the group will be reconvened and asked to give EC and Senior Leadership an update on its earlier report and observations.