

**Statement by Martin J. Virgilio, Director  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards**

**Attachment 2**

## EEO PROGRAM POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE IN NMSS

**Martin J. Virgilio, Director**

### I. Introduction

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the Commission an overview of NMSS's approach and activities regarding EEO and Diversity. First, I want to underscore that NMSS is fully committed to the Agency's EEO and Diversity policies and the associated goals of maintaining a healthy work environment free of discrimination, promoting inclusiveness and teamwork. I would like to acknowledge the NMSS management and staff efforts in this area, in particular those members of the NMSS Diversity Panel. I would also like to acknowledge SBCR management and staff who have been supportive of our diversity initiative, including those aspects that go beyond traditional EEO.

We believe managing diversity requires organizational and cultural changes, and that the keys to making successful cultural change are: a) alignment of the change with organizational goals and values; b) a committed leadership that is willing and able to model the desired change, that provides clear expectations, and provides the requisite resources; c) staff input; d) establishment of an infrastructure of policies, procedures and practices that reinforce the change, including personal accountability; e) effective and ongoing communication; and f) formal measurement/assessment of the effectiveness of the change.

For this presentation, I will briefly delineate the evolution of the diversity concept in NMSS, and I will describe components of our diversity initiative, and accomplishments to date.

The current focus of 'diversity' in NMSS has evolved from emphasizing workforce demographics, to understanding and appreciating employee differences, to managing diversity. Managing diversity places emphasis on creating and maintaining a positive work environment that fully supports the potential of all employees within the scope of our mission, thereby enhancing regulatory excellence within the agency.

The specific goals we expect to achieve include the following:

- ! Enhanced recruitment, development and retention of a high quality diverse workforce
- ! Healthier work environment and relationships among the staff
- ! Improved quality (including innovativeness), quantity and timeliness of our organizational products, rendering us more responsive and competitive.
- ! Enhanced public confidence through effective management of a diverse workforce.

The operating framework of NMSS' diversity initiative and accomplishments are described below:

1. Alignment with Goals and Values

We have established organizational values, visions, and expectations for NMSS consistent with those of the Agency, including an emphasis on the value of successfully managing a diverse workforce. We expect our managers, supervisors, and staff to adopt standards consistent with these goals.

2. NMSS Leadership Commitment

NMSS's Executive and Leadership teams meet weekly to develop and monitor NMSS organizational initiatives, including managing diversity. A senior management contact has been designated for NMSS members of each of EEO Advisory committee. The manager meets, at least quarterly, to exchange views on office-wide concerns, practices or initiatives that require attention. A designated "change agent" monitors our diversity actions and other organizational and human resource management initiatives. A part-time diversity consultant worked with our Diversity Panel, to design, administer and interpret our diversity survey which was used to obtain feedback from the staff regarding their perceptions of the NMSS organization. The consultant also provided diversity training, and group and individual coaching to improve management performance in this area.

3. Staff Input

Staff input was obtained from an NMSS-wide survey conducted in April 2001. Input is continuously obtained from the staff through the Diversity panel, and through management discussions with NMSS members of EEO Advisory Committee members. Based on the survey results we concluded that we need to do the following:

- ! Establish a clear and more inclusive definition of diversity management
- ! Improve communication between management and staff regarding diversity management
- ! Enhance perceived fairness/equity across subgroups in NMSS regarding human resource management policies, procedures and practices (especially those involving development, recognition/awards, and promotion)
- ! Clarify responsibilities and accountability regarding managing diversity--especially pertaining to management
- ! Establish a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of NMSS managing diversity initiatives

The NMSS Diversity Panel serves as a focal point for recommending improvements regarding diversity-related issues. The Panel consists of 12 employees who were randomly selected from NMSS personnel, and is representative of the demographics of the office. SBCR and a union representative have standing invitations to attend Panel meetings. The Panel's charter is to develop recommendations addressing five areas: 1) Definition of diversity; 2) Goals and/or approach(es) to diversity that merit focus; 3) Concepts and techniques for fostering appropriate use of diversity, including accountability; 4) Methods for fostering diversity within NMSS policies, procedures and practices, especially those pertaining to performance management (including succession planning, recruitment, hiring, orientation, development and training, work assignments, appraisals, recognition/awards, retention, promotions, exit), and 5) Method(s) for measuring the effectiveness of diversity.

#### 4. Infrastructure and Accountability

We have made some changes in this area such as the revision of the performance elements for managers to emphasize the importance of managing diversity. The Diversity Panel has made recommendations regarding policies, procedures and practices related to human resource management, including greater emphasis on mutual responsibility of management and staff.

#### 5. Effective and Ongoing Communication

Several communication mechanisms have been established. As previously mentioned, NMSS members of each EEO Advisory Committee have a senior management contact. The diversity panel has established a web page to improve communication within NMSS on diversity issues. The web page includes a Monthly Update and staff are invited to use the web page to provide comments on the Panel's recommendations and other management issues. The Panel has also established "comment boxes" throughout NMSS work areas for staff to provide comments and make recommendations regarding diversity. Further, employee "subgroup" meetings have been encouraged. Thus far, eight meetings have been held. They included a diverse group of staff, and provided constructive staff input.

#### 6. Measuring Effectiveness

Management is considering a three-pronged measurement approach: (1) follow up survey (2) diversity activities and interventions assessment, and (3) review of statistical data regarding workforce subgroups. We believe that the most reasonable point at which measurable results should be assessed is around Summer 2002. At that point, the diversity survey may be re-administered, input assessed, and other measures taken. While we believe that many positive actions are taking place in NMSS, we also believe that employee and management perceptions of those actions is critical.

#### NMSS Workforce Demographics, Hiring and Awards

As of September 30 2001, NMSS had a total of 347 permanent employees. Nineteen percent of the staff are minorities and 34% are female. While these percentages are essentially the same as at the end of FY 2000, NMSS has been able to maintain its diverse staffing levels in light of high attrition. The table below depicts NMSS's workforce by race/ethnicity and gender:

NMSS Staff by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (As of 9/30/01)						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
African American	22	6%	5	1%	27	7%
Asian Pacific American	8	2%	19	6%	27	8%
Hispanic	6	2%	4	1%	10	3%
Native American	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%
White, not of Hispanic origin	82	24%	198	57%	280	81%
Totals	118	34%	229	66%	347	100%

NMSS's recruitment emphasis has been twofold: (1) attracting and maintaining the critical skills needed for our current and future licensing responsibilities, and (2) enhancing NMSS's workforce racial/ethnic and gender diversity. We have fully supported the Agency initiative to establish ongoing and effective relationships with targeted colleges and universities that provide the greatest potential for attracting highly qualified, diverse applicants. Specifically, NMSS managers and staff participated in recruitment at the University of Puerto Rico, North Carolina A&T University, Tuskegee Institute and Florida A&M University to attract highly qualified engineers and scientists needed for current and future licensing responsibilities, and to enhance minority representation, particularly for African American and Hispanic staff.

We have also established cooperative education agreements with nine colleges and universities. Further, we have used the summer hire program to attract both cooperative education students and entry level candidates. Through the use of this three-pronged approach - recruitment efforts at colleges and universities, establishment of cooperative education agreements and an active summer hire program - NMSS has greatly increased its ability to attract and ultimately hire new staff. One example is an Asian American male who was an FY 2000 summer hire employee, and subsequently was hired into the Nuclear Safety Intern Program during FY 2001.

During FY 2001, NMSS filled 31 positions, of which 16 were technical hires. Six (38%) of the technical hires were at the GG-5 through GG-11 entry-level: 1 Asian American male, 1 Hispanic female, 1 Hispanic male, 2 white female and 1 white male. The remaining hires include: 4 minorities, 13 white women, and 8 white men. On-going and aggressive recruitment efforts should result in an increase of entry-level hires during FY 2002.

During FY 2001, we had a total of 5 cooperative education students, 3 from the University of Maryland, 1 from Georgia Tech, and 1 from Pennsylvania State University. Additionally, we had a total of 7 summer hire employees, 2 of whom had also been FY 2000 summer hire employees.

One of the continuing challenges in NMSS is our historically high attrition rate. During FY 2001, NMSS's attrition rate of 12.6% was significantly higher than the Agency's attrition rate of 9%. We are attempting to assess the reason(s) for the high attrition rate and identify appropriate strategies to reduce the attrition rate.

NMSS has implemented an ongoing awards program which recognizes employees for exceptional performance throughout the year, culminating in an annual award ceremony at the end of the appraisal period. In addition, the Employee of the Month Award (EOM) provides another opportunity for staff recognition. During FY 2001, 12 employees received the EOM award: 1 African American female, 1 Hispanic female, 2 Asian males, 4 white females, and 4 white males. Four employees received the Meritorious or Distinguished Service Awards: 1 African American male, 2 white females and 1 white male. In addition, NMSS presented a total of 228 awards, of which 226 were Performance Awards and 2 were High Quality Increases. The chart below shows the race/ethnicity and gender of the staff who received awards during FY 2001:

FY 2001 Performance Awards and High Quality Increases						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	11	5%	4	2%	15	7%
Asian Pacific American	4	2%	12	5%	16	7%
Hispanic	2	1%	3	1%	5	2%
Native American	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%
White, not of Hispanic origin	59	26%	130	57%	189	83%
Totals	76	34%	152	66%	228	100%

Also during FY 2001, NMSS presented 47 Instant Cash awards. The chart below shows the race/ethnicity and gender of the staff who received the Instant Cash awards during FY 2001:

FY 2001 Instant Cash Awards						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	6	13%	1	2%	7	15%
Asian Pacific American	0	0%	2	4%	2	4%
Hispanic	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Native American	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White, not of Hispanic origin	<u>10</u>	21%	27	58%	37	79%
Totals	16	34%	31	66%	47	100%

Summarizing the preceding data, NMSS has maintained a constant level of staff diversity during FY 2000-2001, despite our historically high attrition rate. Additionally, the distribution of awards is closely related to the ethnicity and gender percentages of the on-board staff. Nonetheless, NMSS will strive for continued improvement.

It should be noted that the preceding data reflects on the traditional (sub)groups that have been examined as part of the affirmative action/EEO focus of diversity. In the future, we may also provide other data and relevant information that would provide additional insights on progress made in managing diversity.

## 7. Conclusion

We are proud of the course that we have undertaken regarding managing diversity. We acknowledge that anticipated (e.g., resistance) and unanticipated events (e.g., resource cutbacks) may provide temporary stumbling blocks to full completion of our course. But we remain steadfast in our belief that because of the importance of managing diversity, such stumbling blocks will not deter us from reaching our final destination: to recruit and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce whose diversity is increasingly valued and utilized to achieve our organizational goals. We welcome your support and feedback.