

AFRH STAFF TIMES

The AFRH Employee Newsletter is an official publication for all AFRH staff from your Chief, Human Capital Officer

CHCO's Corner

Thanks to all of you who participated in the Federal Employee Viewpoint survey last summer. This required survey administered by Office of Personnel Management (OPM) seeks to elicit information from all Federal employees as to how satisfied they are with their work and their workplace. The FY2015 budget pass-back from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires all agencies to analyze the results of the FEVS and create actions to address issues their employees cited needing attention.

Training is being developed especially for moving forward with person-centered care and the FEVS action plan.

Results of the **Nurse Scheduling Surveys** were distributed in the fall and are posted on page 2 in this newsletter. The results of the **DEOMI Climate Survey** will be posted during this quarter.

As you know, my goal in this newsletter is to provide you important information that will help you at AFRH. Please send your thoughts and ideas to Donna.Smith@afrh.gov. Thanks!



Donna Smith
Chief Human Capital Officer
(CHCO)

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

*Fiscal Year 2015
2nd Quarter
January 1–March 31*
IN THIS ISSUE

Ethics Reminder
Employee Information
Important Dates
Phone Numbers
Training Information



Key Phone Numbers

***Bureau of the Fiscal Service (BFS) Human Resources**

Phone: See the AFRH Desk Guide for full listing

*** Inspector General
Robert DuFour**
Phone: 202-541-0667

***CHCO Donna Smith**
Phone: 202-541-7531

***EEO Counselors**
Phone: 202-433-2330

USE **INSIDE AFRH** FOR
ALL EMPLOYEE
INFORMATION
Go to
<https://insideAFRH.afrh.gov/inside/index.html>
Directives
AFRH-SOPs
Employee Information
Employee Directory

COO Salute

Happy new year to all of you and welcome to the second quarter of FY2015.

Congratulations are in order for all AFRH employees for achieving The Joint Commission accreditation at both campuses. This remarkable success reflects the dedication and effort that managers and staff alike displayed throughout the year culminating in receiving the Gold Seal of Approval. Both campuses have celebrated and recognized their staff for a job well done. Thank you all very much!

I want to congratulate the AFRH Employee of the Year, AFRH-W's Greg Wilson. He is a dedicated AFRH employee whose efforts stand out. Congratulations are also in order for runner-up, Monica Fragello at AFRH-G. Thanks to them for their exemplary work!

I encourage you to make suggestions for your working at AFRH by communicating with Campus Administrators or myself at (COO.office@afrh.gov). Thank you.

Steven G. McManus
Chief Operating Officer
(COO)

NEWS!

**AFRH Employees Achieved
The Joint Commission
Accreditation!**

*Kudos to all
AFRH staff for achieving an
AFRH milestone!*



**AFRH EMPLOYEE OF THE
YEAR**



*COO Mr. McManus congratulates
GREGORY WILSON, the AFRH 2014
Employee of the Year.*

Mr. Gregory Wilson, AFRH-W Food Service Contracting Officer Representative, has been working in that capacity for 7 years. Over the years, Greg has shown professional leadership in the management of the Dining Facility and all tasks associated with his responsibilities.

His pleasant manner and willingness to work with everyone he encounters has been exceptional. He sets a high standard of achievement for all employees to follow. When you see Greg, please congratulate him!



WELCOME!

Mr. Robert DuFour AFRH Inspector General



The new AFRH Inspector General, Mr. Robert DuFour, started in November 2014. A

retired Air Force Inspector General, Mr. DuFour has worked in several government agencies.

Anyone wishing to talk to Mr. DuFour may call his office at 202-541-0667 or visit Room 302, Sherman Building, AFRH-W.

The IG Hotline number is 866-769-2068.

NURSING STAFF SCHEDULING

Maintaining round-the-clock nursing staff schedules is critical. Adjusting schedules to nurses' working preferences must be balanced with the need for nursing coverage. Nurses (e.g. CNAs, LPNs, and RNs) across the agency over the past few years have expressed an interest in more flexible scheduling.

During October, nurses filled out a survey about their opinions on alternatives for scheduling flexibility to include web-based scheduling. The final results of the overall survey were as follows:

	Total AFRH Nurses	Submitted	Response Rate
Gulfport	41	30	73%
Washington	84	53	63%
Total:	125	83	66%

Overall results and comparison for the question:

Are you interested in working two 12 hour weekend shifts each pay period?

	YES	Response Rate	NO	Response Rate
Gulfport	14	48.28%	15	51.72%
Washington	29	59.18%	20	40.82%
Total:	43	55.13%	35	44.87%

With the results so close in both campuses, alternatives are being considered to meet the needs of all nurses.

CHANGES IN TAKE HOME PAY DURING 2015

MANY EMPLOYEES WILL EXPERIENCE A VARIETY OF CHANGES IN TAKE HOME PAY OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

Please note that this is a good time to thoroughly review Statements of Earnings and Leave to be sure these and any other changes made have been processed correctly. It is the employee's responsibility to verify that all elections and deductions have applied correctly to avoid any under deduction or overpayment.

The pay received during the week of January 5, 2015, will reflect changes effective December 14, 2014 (the beginning of pay period 25-2014). These changes may include:

- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and/or TSP Catch-Up Election(s).
- Flexible Spending Account Open Season Enrollment(s).

The pay received during the week of January 20, 2015, will reflect changes effective December 28, 2014 (the beginning of pay period 26-2014). These changes may include:

- TSP and/or TSP Catch-Up Election(s).

The pay received during the week of February 2, 2015, will reflect changes effective January 11, 2015 (the beginning of pay period 01-2015). These changes may include:

- TSP and/or TSP Catch-Up Election(s).
- General Schedule Pay Adjustment Incorporating a 1% Base Pay Increase: New pay charts are available on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>.
- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season Election or Premium Adjustment: The new 2015 premium will generally be higher than the 2014 premium.
- Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) Open Season Election or Premium Adjustment: The new 2015 premium will generally be higher than the 2014 premium.
- 2015 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Election(s).

Other changes that may affect pay during the year:

- OASDI (Social Security Tax): The maximum taxable wage base for Social Security increased to \$118,500 for 2015. This means employees will pay Social Security tax on the first \$118,500 of wages received in 2015.
- Federal and State Income Taxes: New income tax withholding rates may increase or decrease take home pay by a few dollars. Employees should contact the Benefits Service Center at 304-480-8275, toll free at 1-866-868-4357, or send an email to Benefits@fiscal.treasury.gov if they have questions or to report an error.

PERSONNEL COMINGS AND GOINGS

ACCESSIONS

AFRH-G

Lynn Blank, Supervisory Clinical Nurse
Shaneika Brinkley, Clinical Nurse
Corinn Burton, Supervisory Clinical Nurse
Katherine Celino, Dental Hygienist
Dawn Hansen, Chief Medical Officer
Olympia Horne, Licensed Practical Nurse
Savanah Ladner, Clinical Nurse

AFRH-W

Jasmine Gable, Nursing Assistant
Marlina Moses, Administrative Assistant
Shaun Servais, Administrator

Agency

Antar Ali, Computer Assistant
Robert DuFour, Inspector General
Keith Rosipko, Computer Assistant

SEPARATIONS

AFRH-G

Emma Chapman, Administrative Assistant
Adelina Hay-Sowell, Actv & Vol Coord
Melissa Mantooth, LPN
Brian Mastin, Recreation Asst
Adrian Payton, Contract Surveillance Rep
Bo Tiffanie Swan, LPN
Pamela Veselinovic, LPN

AFRH-W

Pamela Crews, Nursing Assistant
Janice Jones, Nursing Assistant
Angela Karabatsos, Admin Assistant
Stanley Ogbewi-Osadiaye, LPN
Shirley Washington, Suprvy Clinical Nurse
Henry Young, Chief, Healthcare Services

IMPORTANT DATES

AFRH Monthly Observances – Please attend activities in honor of the Special Observances each month.

January: Martin Luther King's Birthday

February: Black History Month

March: Women's History Month

January 1	NEW YEAR'S DAY holiday	January 19	MARTIN LUTHER KING BIRTHDAY holiday
January 15	Employee Recognition Breakfast (AFRH-W)	February TBD	Performance Management Training
January 18	Employee Recognition Breakfast (AFRH-G)	February 16	PRESIDENT'S DAY holiday

Pay period 1 - January 11-24, 2015 is the start of the new 1% pay raise.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

-Annual required courses in the FY15 Performance Cycle are listed below. Talk to your contact about dates and locations.

*EEO, No Fear Act, Workers' Compensation

*Ethics

*IT Security

*Performance Management

*Person-centered Care

-The CHCO is piloting video/webinar courses this year to see how effective these can be for AFRH employees.

Gulfport: Please contact Shelly Thompson.

Washington: Please contact David Lentz.

New training, focus groups, and town halls for employees are planned to improve our results on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The activities begin this quarter!



ETHICS REMINDER

Avoiding Taxes is an Ethical Issue

Individuals are expected to pay their taxes in accordance with the law.

Paying taxes becomes an ethical issue because individuals have a choice about his or her approach to interpreting the law and therefore paying taxes. Tax avoidance is considered an unethical practice that undermines the integrity of the tax system. Please ensure you pay your personal taxes as directed by law!

Managers: be sure this information is made available to all employees.

Pebbles Young
Office of the General Counsel
Armed Forces Retirement Home Paralegal
[202-541-7554](tel:202-541-7554)



COO Mr. McManus congratulates Monica Fragello, AFRH-G, as runner-up Employee of the Year 2014.

HR FAST FACTS ARE YOU AWARE THAT.....

COVERT RECORDING OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS, MEETINGS, AND/OR FACE TO FACE CONVERSATIONS WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE OTHER PARTY IS NOT AUTHORIZED AT AFRH? **TO DO SO COULD RESULT IN A TEN DAY SUSPENSION TO REMOVAL FROM YOUR POSITION.**



A Message from AFRH IT

The Employee phone directories have been updated on the "Inside" Intranet page.

<https://insideAFRH.afrh.gov/inside/index.html>

AFRH CASUAL FRIDAY DRESS POLICY

The “casual Friday dress policy” needs to be clarified. The original intent of this benefit has become stretched beyond recognition.



On Fridays only staff members who are not required to wear uniforms may come to work dressed “business casual”. That does not mean shorts, capri pants or worn out jeans with holes. Our Safety Officers would also like me to remind you that flip flops are unacceptable footwear in the work place.

If you are attending meetings outside the Agency or you and/or someone in your work area is expecting important visitors casual attire **is not** permitted, Friday or not. You must request permission from your Service Chief to wear jeans on any other work day to do a special cleaning project. The Administrator should be made aware of these requests. If these guidelines are unclear please contact me or the Administrator’s office for clarification. **Managers:** Please be sure everyone is made aware of this information.

Donna Smith, CHCO

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

Every taxpayer has a set of fundamental rights. You should be aware of these rights when you interact with the Internal Revenue Service. The “Taxpayer Bill of Rights” takes the many existing rights in the tax code and groups them into 10 broad categories. That makes them easier to find and to understand. You can find a list of your rights and the IRS’s obligations to protect them in [Publication 1, Your Rights as a Taxpayer](#). It includes the following:

1. The Right to Be Informed.

Taxpayers have the right to know what they need to do to comply with the tax laws. They are entitled to clear explanations of the laws and IRS procedures in all tax forms, instructions, publications, notices and correspondence. They have the right to be informed of IRS decisions about their tax accounts and to receive clear explanations of the outcomes.

2. The Right to Quality Service.

Taxpayers have the right to receive prompt, courteous, and professional assistance in their dealings with the IRS, to be spoken to in a way they can easily understand, to receive clear and easily understandable communications from the IRS and to speak to a supervisor about inadequate service.

3. The Right to Pay No More than the Correct Amount of Tax.

Taxpayers have the right to pay only the amount of tax legally due, including interest and penalties, and to have the IRS apply all tax payments properly.

4. The Right to Challenge the IRS’s Position and Be Heard.

Taxpayers have the right to raise objections and provide additional documentation in response to formal IRS actions or proposed actions, to expect that the IRS will consider their timely objections and documentation promptly and fairly, and to receive a response if the IRS does not agree with their position.

5. The Right to Appeal an IRS Decision in an Independent Forum.

Taxpayers are entitled to a fair and impartial administrative appeal of most IRS decisions, including many penalties, and have the right to receive a written response regarding the Office of Appeals’ decision. Taxpayers generally have the right to take their cases to court.

6. The Right to Finality.

Taxpayers have the right to know the maximum amount of time they have to challenge the IRS’s position as well as the maximum amount of time the IRS has to audit a particular tax year or collect a tax debt. Taxpayers have the right to know when the IRS has finished an audit.

7. The Right to Privacy.

Taxpayers have the right to expect that any IRS inquiry, examination, or enforcement action will comply with the law and be no more intrusive than necessary, and will respect all due process rights, including search and seizure protections, and will provide, where applicable, a collection due process hearing.

8. The Right to Confidentiality.

Taxpayers have the right to expect that any information they provide to the IRS will not be disclosed unless authorized by the taxpayer or by law. Taxpayers have the right to expect appropriate action will be taken against employees, return preparers, and others who wrongfully use or disclose taxpayer return information.

9. The Right to Retain Representation.

Taxpayers have the right to retain an authorized representative of their choice to represent them in their dealings with the IRS. Taxpayers have the right to seek assistance from a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic if they cannot afford representation.

10. The Right to a Fair and Just Tax System.

Taxpayers have the right to expect the tax system to consider facts and circumstances that might affect their underlying liabilities, ability to pay, or ability to provide information timely. Taxpayers have the right to receive assistance from the Taxpayer Advocate Service if they are experiencing financial difficulty or if the IRS has not resolved their tax issues properly and timely through its normal channels.

The IRS will include Publication 1 when sending notices to taxpayers on a range of issues, such as an audit or collection matter. The IRS released the Taxpayer Bill of Rights following extensive discussions with the Taxpayer Advocate Service. TAS is an independent office inside the IRS that represents the interests of U.S. taxpayers.