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FEDERAL MEDIATION &  
CONCILIATION SERVICE

## NEWS RELEASE

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**Web site: [www.fmcs.gov](http://www.fmcs.gov)**

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### **Labor and Management at St. Cloud VA Facility Issue Progress Report on Joint Training**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** —Led by FMCS mediators, representatives from the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and managers at the St. Cloud Veterans Hospital have jointly participated in intensive training exercises, classroom-style instruction and facilitated discussions with the joint goal of delivering quality care to veterans at the facility through collaborative and cooperative efforts and joint problem solving.

Known as relationship-by-objective (RBO) training, the specialized instruction provided by FMCS is designed to reduce labor-management conflict and to improve cooperation through increased levels of trust, respect and understanding among the parties involved. RBO training is one of the services provided by FMCS to unionized workplaces nationwide in response to a joint request from labor and management.

Labor and management representatives issued the following joint statement at the conclusion of the training:

St. Cloud VA union and management officials have jointly developed several objectives to help rekindle a productive and cooperative working relationship.

“Relationship by Objective was beneficial to the organization, and we’ve seen real and positive change,” said Darlene Voltin, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service commissioner.

During two focused sessions, the AFGE Local 390 and VA management team developed and agreed on a set of objectives focused on returning trust and respect to the labor-management relationship, said Voltin.

The objectives developed include increased labor-management training, enhanced employee recognition, a focused effort to jointly assess and utilize employee feedback, improved communication throughout the organization, and an emphasis on pre-decisional collaboration.

For each objective area, action plans have been established and will be pursued over the coming year. Periodic assessments are planned to ensure the agreed upon actions are achieved. FMCS will continue to advise and mentor the St. Cloud VA team.

“Everyone at the St. Cloud VA is tremendously proud of the care and service provided to our Veterans, and a good working relationship is important to achieving our mission,” said AFGE Local 390 President Shirley Parker Blommel.

“Ensuring a quality work environment for our employees is critical to taking care of Veterans,” said St. Cloud VA Director Barry Bahl.

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*The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, created in 1947, is an independent U.S. government agency whose mission is to preserve and promote labor-management peace and cooperation. Headquartered in Washington, DC, with 10 district offices and more than 60 field offices, the agency provides mediation and conflict resolution services to industry, government agencies and communities.*

