

## A Message from the NTEU National President

Colleen M. Kelley



December 9, 2008

Dear HHS Employee,

I am pleased to inform you that NTEU and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have agreed to implement the Awards article of your contract with the goal that employees from all operating divisions will receive their 2008 awards on time. All along, NTEU has maintained that hard-working, high-performing HHS employees deserve to receive their awards in a timely fashion, and we are extremely pleased that the matter has been settled.

While the Awards article was signed on March 27, NTEU recently pursued the additional step of allowing its implementation for this calendar year. We believe that it is in the best interest of employees to ensure that the awards process moves forward without undue delay and to allow sufficient time to establish the awards committees and enable them to perform their designated functions.

Under the agreement, the pool of awards funding will be divided between performance awards and incentive awards, with no less than 15 percent of the pool reserved for incentive awards. Performance awards will be based on the overall final rating of an employee's record. Employees with exceptional ratings will receive up to 5 percent of their salaries as a lump sum payment. Those rated "Fully Successful" may be eligible for awards of up to 2.4 percent of their salaries at management's discretion. In addition, HHS will distribute non-cash honor awards and incentive awards for special acts or services, and length of service.

Labor-Management Awards Committees will continue to be comprised of an equal number of bargaining unit and management members on each team. The committee will receive the aggregate awards budget by Feb. 15 and make recommendations on awards by March 15. Recommendations will include the percentage payout for each rating level eligible to receive an award. The approving official will make the final decision by March 31.

As for the remainder of the contract, many of the outstanding issues have been resolved since a mediator/arbitrator handed down recommendations in April, but there are still six disputed articles. NTEU has filed a request for assistance with the Federal Service Impasses Panel. We will ask the Panel to accept the written recommendations of the mediator and impose them as the parties' agreement so that the ratification process can begin and you can finally enjoy the new rights and benefits of your contract.

We will continue to keep you updated on the status of your contract. In the meantime, NTEU members can view the entire Awards article, as well as other signed articles, by visiting [www.nteu.org/Members/HHS.aspx](http://www.nteu.org/Members/HHS.aspx).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen M. Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.