EASTER SEALS DIXON CENTER AND SHRM SIGN PACT TO BOOST VET EMPLOYMENT

August 5, 2014, Washington, D.C. – The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Easter Seals Dixon Center today announced a historic agreement that provides hiring professionals with the training necessary to dramatically increase veteran employment across U.S. industries.

A memorandum of understanding represents the first formal agreement from the largest association for HR professionals in the United States aimed at enhancing the understanding of the needs of veteran job seekers and employers in an effort to connect veterans with meaningful employment, identify community resources, and generate new knowledge for the HR profession and community leaders.

As part of the agreement, Easter Seals Dixon Center and SHRM will launch a pilot program in Southern California to recruit, integrate, train and retain veterans and military family members.

The partnership with SHRM comes at a time when veterans and their family members are having tremendous difficulty finding jobs. Veterans between the ages of 18 and 24 have an unemployment rate of 20.4 percent in 2012, approximately three times the national average. The unemployment rate for military spouses is even worse at 26 percent.

“This collaboration is an opportunity to educate people who are critical to veteran employment,” said retired Army Col. David W. Sutherland, chairman of Easter Seals Dixon Center. “We need to do our part to explain to HR leaders that veterans possess the skills to help organizations thrive.”

“For example, we need to educate them about the commercially viable skills of non-commissioned officers,” Sutherland continued. “NCOs know how to problem-solve, operate under deadlines, often in the throes of crises, and manage large teams of varying ages and skills while ensuring that multi-million dollar equipment is in fighting order. That skill set is directly applicable to the civilian world.”

Easter Seals Southern California, the California State Council of SHRM (CalSHRM) and the San Diego SHRM chapter will work together to enact hiring pledges made by senior leaders and officials across the country to hire more veterans and military family members. But the SHRM-
Easter Seals Dixon Center program goes beyond pledges and actually trains those doing the hiring to understand the most effective hiring and retention strategies for veterans.

HR managers and hiring supervisors will be trained in specific tasks such as how to read military resumes, including correlations between skills and education or in-field expertise, and how to set up mentorship programs and flexible scheduling for veterans. HR managers will also be introduced to networking and referral organizations with strong reach into the veteran community.

“We believe that partnership between SHRM and Easter Seals Dixon Center has the potential to dramatically change the employment picture for veterans,” said J. Robert (Bob) Carr, senior vice president of membership, marketing and external affairs at SHRM. “We serve hundreds of thousands of HR professionals who are eager to fill their skill needs from the veteran talent pool. By linking HR professionals with veterans and the organizations serving them at the community level, we can more successfully connect veterans with jobs.”

Michael Aitken, vice president of government affairs at SHRM, and Mike Letizia, president of CalSHRM signed the agreement during the 2014 CalSHRM State Legislative and HR Conference, which was attended by staff and volunteer leaders. Retired Navy Capt. John Funk, who leads Easter Seals Southern California’s WorkFirst Military and Veterans Services unit, Sutherland, and Kim Mitchell, president of Easter Seals Dixon Center, attended the CalSHRM annual conference in Sacramento, and participated in the agreement signing ceremony.

The agreement with SHRM and its pilot project focusing in Southern California, helps address unemployment among veterans by combining national vision and leadership with local expertise and guidance.

This partnership coincides with the release of the second public service announcement from Easter Seals Dixon Center. The new PSA, titled “The Bank,” is part of a series created to use light humor to reinforce subtle but positive attributes of returning veterans and offers Easter Seals Dixon Center services to those who need support in transitioning back to civilian life.

### About Easter Seals Dixon Center

Easter Seals Dixon Center believes that communities play a key role in the reintegration of veterans, military families and families of the fallen. To this end, it works to strengthen communities by building partnerships, sharing innovative approaches, and connecting those who have served by harnessing existing community based services. Simply put, Easter Seals Dixon Center is part of a continuum of like-minded organizations working together for the greater good within their local communities. Find out more at [www.eastersealsdixoncenter.org](http://www.eastersealsdixoncenter.org).
**About Easter Seals**

For nearly 100 years, Easter Seals has provided life-changing solutions to the people of our country. From children and adults living with disabilities, to military families looking to serve their communities, Easter Seals is committed to creating a world of inclusion, dignity, empowerment and independence. We personalize solutions for individuals with autism, and intellectual and physical disabilities through innovative therapy, training, education, and support services. Find out more at [www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com).