BILLETS COLLECTION SYSTEM
TUTORIAL FOR OFFICERS (TEXT VERSION)

Greetings fellow officers of the Commissioned Corps. I am pleased to provide this tutorial for officers who will be initiating the creation of new billets as part of the transformation of the USPHS Commissioned Corps billets system, and I thank you for your interest.

By now, you have probably heard about the transformation of the Commissioned Corps and, more specifically, about the transformation of our billets system. The billets transformation process will result in the creation of unique billets for all non-flag positions in the Corps. This will be a monumental effort to create over 6,000 billets.

The goals of billets transformation are twofold. In the short-term, we will create unique, position-specific billets for all positions currently encumbered by Commissioned Officers. In the long-term, we will create unique, position-specific billets for all positions that could *possibly* be encumbered by Commissioned Officers.

The benefits of billets transformation are numerous. Overall, the result will be enhanced force management of the Corps. More specifically, for officers, there will be clarity and specificity of responsibilities, creation of objectively graded billets, provision of real-time vacancy monitoring, with the overall result of enhanced career development. For agencies, the new billets will allow real-time identification of officers for positions and electronic referral of qualified candidates.

I will new describe some of the attributes of the new billets that will be created under billets transformation:

- Billets will now reflect positions, and not officer capabilities. This is probably the greatest departure from the current billets system. Officer capabilities will be captured in the new electronic officer profiles;
- The new billets will be electronically linked to these officer profiles;
- Billets will contain standard components (developed by professional category leadership) which generically describe essential duties;
- They will also contain position-specific components (described by you, the officer) which will provide precise duty station information;
- New billets will describe requirements for the position as well as additional desired qualifications (not necessarily required); and
- Billets have a designated *estimated* length of tour. This designation will not be a requirement, only an estimation.

The only feasible way to create over 6,000 new billets is to request the officers currently encumbering those billets to start the process. We understand that this is not the perfect scenario and that this process can introduce bias. We have integrated several checks and balances into the process, but it is still critical that each officer exercise integrity when initiating the billet which describes his or her position. Remember, you will be initiating

a billet to describe the minimum qualifications for the position you currently encumber. These new billets must not reflect the officer's capabilities but must reflect the minimum qualifications, duties, and responsibilities for the position. The billet should be initiated with the frame of reference that, "if I left this position tomorrow, what minimum qualifications, duties, and responsibilities would be required of the officer who backfilled this position?"

There are several steps in the process to create billets:

1. The first step in this process, which is the subject of this tutorial, is the officer initiation of a new billet. More detailed information will follow on this portion of the process;
2. The second step in the process will be when the supervisor reviews billet and makes edits (in coordination with the officer), as necessary;
3. The third step will be where the reviewing official (or Agency Liaison, in some cases) reviews the billet and makes edits (in coordination with the supervisor), as necessary. These first three steps mimic the process for the current Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report process;
4. The fourth step of the process is where Agency Liaisons and Professional Advisory Committees (PACs) reviews summary reports of all billets (that have been initiated by officers and reviewed by supervisors and reviewing officials) and identify billets which seem to be out of the norm. As stated, Agency Liaisons and PACs will not be reviewing each individual billet. They will review summary reports to identify billet outliers and anomalies. Then, if necessary, edits will be completed in coordination with reviewing officials; and
5. Finally, the final step in the process will be where the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO) will complete a final review of the summary report and make final approvals.

We plan to start the billet initiation process in fall of calendar year 2009. The process will be implemented in phases representing two or more professional categories (e.g. Nurse and Therapist) representing approximately 1,000 to 1,700 officers at a time. Multidisciplinary billets will be the last type of billets to be addressed in this implementation schedule. The entire billets creation process will not be complete until mid calendar year 2010. And, the newly created billets, from the process initiated in calendar year 2009, will not be made official until later in 2010. Until all billets have been created and we are reasonably certain that a quality product has resulted, no billets will made official.

The first step of officer responsibilities for billets initiation is standard billets selection.

In the first step of the billet initiation process, officers identified as belonging to the current implementation phase (for example, nurses in nursing-specific billets) will receive an automated email requesting them to participate in the process. This email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to

a specific officer. The email will provide specific instructions on how to complete this portion of the process, and it will include contact information to request assistance.

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complete this first step in the process, you will receive a second email with an attachment and additional instructions.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Thank you for your participation!

Attached to this initial email will be a document which lists all of the standard billet titles relevant to the position the officer encumbers. ***(Please open the Excel document titled "BCS Sample Standard Billet Selection".)*** In this example, a Nurse in a Nurse billet will receive a listing of all Nurse category standard billet titles. As you scroll down this spreadsheet, you will see that there are 21 standard billet titles. Included with each of these titles is a short description of standard duties associated with the title. The officer will scroll to the top of the page, click on the box beside "Select your standard billet title", then click on the down-arrow to reveal the 21 standard billet title choices. Officers are strongly encouraged to engage their supervisors, in this step of the process, to ensure appropriate standard billet title selection. The officer will then click on the standard billet title, from the dropdown menu, which most closely approximates the duties and responsibilities of the position he/she encumbers. After saving this edited document, the officer will then reply to the email solicitation he/she received and attach the document containing the selected standard billet title selection.

Shortly thereafter, the officer will receive a second email. This email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to a specific officer. Attached to this email will be the standard billet reflecting the title that the officer selected in the previous process, specific instructions on how to complete this part of the process, and contact information to request assistance.

To Originating Officer to Provide Position-Specific Information

Dear Officer:

In response to your completion of the first step of the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project, attached you will find the standard billet that you selected in this first step. Please right click on this document and save it to your desktop, and then open it.

The document contains three tabs. At the bottom of the page, you will see tabs titled "Billet Form", "Instructions", and "FAQ". The "Billet Form" tab is where you will add position-specific information to the standard billet to describe the position you encumber. The "Instructions" will guide you through this process, and the "FAQ" will answer some frequently asked questions regarding the billets collection process. You are strongly encouraged to review and use all of the instructions. Doing so will eliminate most document creation errors.

The white boxes are the only fields in the document which can be changed. The other fields have been fixed by representatives of the professional categories or, in the case of multidisciplinary billets, with the assistance of Agency representatives. Any field that has an asterisk (*) beside it is a required field. You must submit information for that field. If you do not, the document will be returned to you for correction. Fields without asterisks are discretionary. Only enter information in those fields if you believe it is warranted. Except for the field titled "Additional Duties for this Specific Position" (Section 3 of 12, "Descriptions of Duties"), all information is entered into this document via drop-down menus which contain attribute options. When you click on the "down arrow" beside any white box (with the exception of the "Additional Duties…" box previously described), a list of potential selections will appear. Click on the appropriate selection for each row. ***Please keep in mind that you are describing your current position, not your professional capabilities. Complete this document by describing and selecting duties and responsibilities that would be required of your successor if you were to leave your current position tomorrow.***

Once you complete the document, save it, "reply" to the original email that you received, attach the edited document, and send the email. The system administrator will check your document to ensure that it has been properly completed. If not, it will be returned to you for corrections. If so, it will be forwarded to your supervisor for review. If your supervisor disagrees with any of your selections, he/she will contact you to discuss possible changes. If he/she agrees with your selections, the document will then be forwarded to your reviewing official, Agency liaison, and PAC representative for review. If any of those individuals disagree with any of your selections, you will be contacted to discuss possible changes. Following all of these review steps, the document will be forwarded to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations for approval.

It is anticipated that none of the newly created billets, under the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project, will become "official" until CY 2010. All members of the Corps will be clearly notified as to how and when this will occur.

Your assistance in this process is invaluable and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact:

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When the officer opens the standard billet document (that was attached to the second email), he/she will see that this document contains 10 sections. ***(Please open the Excel document titled "BCS Sample Standard Billet – Clinical Nurse Manager".)*** Only the white boxes of these sections can be edited by the officer. The other rows have been pre-populated with information specific to the officer encumbering the position, agency geographic information, and fixed standard billet base requirements which have been pre-determined by professional category leadership (the blue rows).

There is only one "free text" box in the document. This is the "Additional Duties" row in section 3.

All other white boxes contain drop-down selections. When an officer clicks on any one of these rows, a drop-down menu of selections will become visible. If you click on the "Physical Demands" box, in Section 2 of 10, then click on the down arrow beside that box, it will show the three possible attributes that can be associated with the "Physical Demands" topic.

Row titles containing asterisks are required fields. Selections must be made for the attributes reflected by these rows. For example, "Physical Demands" was one of those rows containing an asterisk.

Row titles which do not contain asterisks are optional. It is at the officer's discretion whether to make selections for these attributes. The following is an example of an optional attribute. Scroll down to Section 6 of 10. In this case, the Nurse category has determined, during standard billet development, that all Clinical Nurse Manager positions must have relevant training in Management/Leadership and must have 4 years of Medical-Surgical experience. These items are in blue boxes. For the billet developed for this specific, fictional location, let's also assume that we want to add additional preferred experience of 2 years in Case Management. To make this selection, click in the white box, in Section 6, titled "Experience Preferred", then click on the down arrow and select "Case Management". Next, click on the "Years of experience preferred" box directly below that, then click on the down arrow and select "2 years". Please note two things. The first is that you were not required, as part of the process, to add anything to Section 6 because there was no asterisk beside the boxes in this section. Secondly, you made the "Case Management" selection a preferred attribute for this billet, but not a requirement.

The officer will notice that there are three tabs at the bottom of the document. The first tab is the “Billet Form”; which is the tab in the document that we have been working on to this point. The second tab is “Instructions”; by clicking on this tab, the officer will find section-by-section instructions on how to complete the Billet Form (listed by the same section numbers and titles found on the Billet Form). Click on the “Instructions” tab and scroll down the page. You will see that these are very detailed instructions on how to complete the Billet Form.

The third tab, FAQ or Frequently Asked Questions, contains answers to several FAQs about the billet initiation process. Included in this section are answers to questions regarding grades that will be calculated for these new billets and a Commissioned Corps/Civil Service grades equivalency chart. Click on the FAQ tab to view this information.

Now, click the Billet Form tab. In Section 1, of the Billet Form, you will note that the officer is required to identify his/her supervisor, by name and work email address. There are two boxes for this information.

After the officer completes the Billet Form, he/she will reply to the email that contained the standard billet document (the second email that was received) and attach the document which he/she just completed. This information will be used, by the billet system operator, to forward the officer initiated document to the initiating officer’s supervisor for review. Officers WILL NOT directly forward initiated billets directly to their supervisors. The billet system operator will review documents, first, for completeness, and will then take the action of forwarding them to supervisors for review.

This concludes the action required of officers to initiate billets. The entire process should take no more than one hour of your time. By completing the billet initiation process, you are providing a tremendous service to the Corps as we transform our billets system to support effective and efficient force management. Thank you!