



---

## Commissioned Corps Application Process Change: Focus on Existing Applicant Pool

Throughout 2011, the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) has received overwhelming interest in career opportunities with the Commissioned Corps. This is positive news following a temporary pause in calls-to-active duty in 2010. We are currently working with over 1,200 applicants in various stages of the application process. For comparison, our calls-to-active duty in any given year have numbered approximately 500.

Even as applications more than doubled, we also underwent an internal reorganization. We have a renewed commitment to improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the application process to streamline functions, optimize performance and improve customer service.

To manage the current volume of applications amidst organizational and process changes, we will focus our efforts on professions, groups and positions of identified need. Beginning Jan 1, 2012 - and until further notice - the Commissioned Corps will only accept new application packets for the following professions and groups:

- Physicians and Dentists.
- CDC EIS candidates forwarded to USPHS from the Agency.
- IHS Pharmacy Residency candidates that have been forwarded from the Agency.
- USUHS candidates forwarded to USPHS from the program.
- DOD Wounded Warrior Initiative applicants (psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners and licensed clinical social workers).  
<http://usphs.gov/Articles/Dod.aspx>
- Student programs (i.e. Jr and Sr COSTEP).

We will continue to accept new application packets from all categories through Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 (postmarked on or prior to Dec 31<sup>st</sup>). As well, all candidates who have already submitted their applications prior to December 31, 2011 will continue to be processed and will be called to active duty if they fulfill the necessary criteria of commissioning.

In order to improve customer service and satisfaction, we will focus our efforts on new calls-to-active duty from our existing applicant pool of all professions and candidates. The intent is to assign existing applicants (and applicants within the groups listed above) as efficiently as possible to our Agencies and other customers. As we continue to call candidates to active duty, we will refine the application process to one that is more efficient and customer-centric.

In the interim, candidates and other customers are encouraged to continue to visit our website for updates on the application process. Additionally, beginning this December, there will be informational sessions (via webinar, conference call, etc.) for those interested to explain the new process. We have shared this information with Agency contacts, liaisons and other key stakeholders. A calendar of these informational sessions will be provided on our website and Facebook page in late November, 2011.

The increased focus on calls-to-active duty from our existing applicant pool and additional emphasis on specific professions and groups will better meet the identified needs of our customers. **Once again, we will continue with calls-to-active duty throughout 2012.** Thank you for your understanding and patience as we work to improve our processes to better meet your needs.

## **“FOCUS ON EXISTING APPLICANT POOL” FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ’S)**

### **Why is there a need to change the current application process?**

From 2010 to present, the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) has received overwhelming interest in career opportunities. As we dealt with an increased amount of applicants, we also underwent an internal reorganization. One of the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) Director’s primary objectives is a commitment to provide an effective and efficient application process and improved customer service. However, to meet the high customer service demands amidst organizational and process changes, we are focusing our efforts on the current applicant pool that exceeds 1,200. In addition, DCCPR is concurrently streamlining the current process to improve effectiveness and efficiencies with a goal of reducing the overall process time. By working thru the existing applicant pool over the next several months and instituting improved business processes, DCCPR will be able to more effectively work thru current applicants and work on accelerating the application process to better meet your needs for the future.

### **Will this focus on existing application pool be temporary?**

Yes. The decision to defer the acceptance of any additional applications is in part due to the need to work thru the current backlog of 1,200 current applicants that have applied and are seeking career opportunities.

### **When does this change go into effect?**

Beginning Jan 1, 2012 - and until further notice - the Commissioned Corps will only accept new application packets from certain professions and groups in need of applicants.

### **Why are only certain professions being accepted after Jan 1, 2012?**

Due to a small number of Physician and Dental applicants along with a standing commitment to certain groups/programs the need to facilitate certain application types was recognized.

### **I recently applied to the Commissioned Corps and am not in a group that is a focus in the short term. Will my application be processed?**

All candidates who have currently submitted a complete application or do so prior to December 31, 2011, will continue to be processed.

### **Can I apply in December 2011?**

Yes, we will continue to accept new application packets from all categories through December 31, 2011 (the application packet must be postmarked on or prior to December 31).

**What if I miss the deadline and I am not in a group that is a focus in the short term. What can I do in the interim?**

Please visit our website ([www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov)) for updates on the application process. Additionally, beginning December 2011, there will be informational sessions (via webinar, conference call, etc.) to further explain the new process. A calendar of these informational sessions will be provided on our website and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/USPHS](http://www.facebook.com/USPHS)) in December 2011.

**Is this application change similar to the pause in 2010?**

**NOT AT ALL!** We will continue calling officers to active duty throughout 2012.

**How will this be for the betterment of the Commissioned Corps, me and the Agency I might work for?**

As the current applicant pool is processed, the Commissioned Corps will be streamlining its application process, providing a less complicated and less time consuming experience. The intent is to assign existing applicants (and applicants within the groups listed above) as efficiently as possible to the agencies we serve and remove the current backlog. While we will not be taking applications for some professions in the short term, in the long term, we foresee that the revamped application process will eliminate a lot of the confusion around the current process.

**Will additional updates about this process be provided?**

Yes. Informational sessions and updates will be held regularly and a calendar of these conference calls will be provided on a monthly basis. (The calendar for January is attached below) Information will be updated on the current website and face book page.

**What if I am an applicant that is included in those professions that are still being accepted after January 1<sup>st</sup> as outlined in the memorandum?**

Those identified applicants will be encouraged to participate in the informational sessions if they choose but will ultimately need to do the online prescreen to initiate an application.

**What if I am a professional who isn't identified in the attached memorandum and I apply anyway?**

Those professionals who are not identified in the memorandum and attempt to apply via the prescreen will ultimately be "rejected". Once the backlog of existing applications is worked thru and the new processes are in place there will be updates to the website and face book page as to when other professional applications will be accepted.