



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

JUL 21 2004

Assistant Secretary for Health  
Office of Public Health and Science  
Washington D.C. 20201

**TO:** Surgeon General

**FROM:** Acting Assistant Secretary for Health

**SUBJECT:** **Commissioned Corps Personnel Policy Memorandum 04-002 - Policy Revisions and Clarifications for the Promotion Year 2004**

**1. Exceptional Proficiency Promotions (EPPs)**

Starting in promotion year (PY) 2004, officers who are nominated for EPPs are considered for temporary grade promotions along with other officers who are eligible for competitive temporary grade promotions. However, unlike officers who are considered for competitive promotions, Subchapter CC23.4, INSTRUCTION 2, "Temporary Grade Promotions," does not provide a specific date or guidance as to when EPPs are effective other than to state that the effective date will be no earlier than a date specified by the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH) (See Section L.4). Therefore, to ensure that officers eligible for EPPs during PY 2004 are treated the same as other officers eligible for competitive promotions, EPPs during PY 2004 will be effective as of the officer's date of eligibility or 1 July 2004, whichever is later.

**2. "Holding Period" for Noncompetitive Promotions**

Section E of Subchapter CC23.4, INSTRUCTION 2, states that: "[if] prior to the effective date of the temporary promotion, the SG [Surgeon General] determines that a category or group board should review the qualifications for promotion of an officer listed in Section E.1, above, the officer's records shall be forwarded to the next ATPB [Annual Temporary Promotion Board] for evaluation." However, this section does not currently provide for a "holding period" so that if the SG determines that prior to being referred to an ATPB an officer should receive a noncompetitive promotion, the SG can waive the requirement that an officer's record must be forwarded to an ATPB for evaluation. As a result, I am hereby directing the Program Evaluation and Oversight Division (PEOD) within the Office of Commissioned Corps Force Management (OCCFM) to: (1) review and evaluate the temporary grade promotion process in consultation with the Office of the Surgeon General; and (2) make recommendations to the ASH as to whether a holding should be introduced into policy for future promotion years.

**3. Grace Period for Promotion Eligible Officers to Address Licensure Deficiencies and Notification of Deficiencies**

Section D.1 of Subchapter CC26.1, INSTRUCTION 4, "Licensure Policy," states that

officers who are healthcare providers must possess and maintain current, unrestricted, and valid credentials appropriate for their profession. Officers violate this policy when they fail to provide the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations with a photocopy of their license, certification, or registration prior to the end of a limited tour, or prior to the expiration of the license that is on file (See Section E.1). In addition, unless granted a waiver under Section E.2, there are no exceptions to the licensure policy such as a "promotion year" grace period for officers to correct licensure, certification, or registration deficiencies. (See also Section I.3 of Subchapter CC23.4, INSTRUCTION 2.) Moreover, Subchapter CC26.1, INSTRUCTION 4, does not provide for the individual notification of officers so they can correct such deficiencies even when officers are eligible for competitive or noncompetitive promotions. Therefore, I am requesting that all officers be advised that they have an ongoing responsibility to ensure that they possess and maintain current, unrestricted, and valid credentials appropriate for their profession at all times; and that official individual notification of such deficiencies will not be made.

In addition, I am also directing OCCFM/PEOD to: (1) initiate a review of existing policies regarding professional licensure; and (2) submit a report on this matter through the Office of Executive Secretariat, Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS), to the SG and ASH for review by 30 November 2004.

**4. Grace Period for Promotion Eligible Officers to Address Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER) Deficiencies**

Section I.3.a. of Subchapter CC23.4, INSTRUCTION 2, states that officers who have a missing or unsatisfactory COER will be removed from the final temporary grade promotion list. Section 6 of Manual Circular No. 373, states that officers have an affirmative responsibility to work with their Commissioned Corps Liaison to ensure that issues such as missing COERs are corrected. Neither policy provides for the individual notification of officers to correct COER deficiencies or for a "grace period" to correct such deficiencies even when officers are eligible for competitive or noncompetitive promotions. Therefore, I am requesting that officers be advised that they have an ongoing responsibility to ensure that their COERs are placed in their electronic Official Personnel Folder and that official individual notification of COER deficiencies will not be made.

In addition, I am also directing OCCFM/PEOD to (1) study the COER process; (2) identify areas of possible improvement in the COER process for the upcoming promotion cycle; and (3) submit a report on this matter through the Office of Executive Secretariat, OPHS, to the SG and ASH for review by 30 November 2004.

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