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# The JOAG Journal

A newsletter **for** junior officers **by** junior officers

Issue 10, Spring 2009

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This newsletter has been provided by the JOAG Communications & Publications Committee

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## What's in Store for Junior Officers at the 2009 COF Symposium

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## JOAG General Meeting and "Meet and Greet"

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## JOAG Social Event

Join your fellow Junior Officers and friends for dinner, drinks, and camaraderie...[Continued](#)

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The USPHS core values are leadership, service, integrity, and excellence. Accordingly, leadership "provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty"...[Continued](#)

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### Maintaining Balance During the Economic Crisis

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**As a reminder, our website has moved. The new URL for JOAG's website is:  
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## Junior Officer Spotlight

**Officer:** LT David A. Wheeler, MPA, CBCS, CMAA

**Category:** Health Services

**Education:** MS in Public Administration and Health Service, Walden University, 2006

**Home town:** Akron, Ohio

**Agency:** Federal Bureau of Prisons



**Current Assignment and Duties:** Medical Recruiter, Federal Medical Center Devens. I recruit hard to fill medical positions by developing, implementing, and coordinating FMC Devens' recruitment program, which locates and targets the best qualified candidates. I also coordinate and conduct panel interviews, plan site visits for prospective candidates, and track the application process from start to finish, ensuring quality control and a smooth transition to service.

**Previous Assignment(s):** Before joining the PHS, I worked as an administrator for a health care agency in College Park, Maryland.

**How did you find out about the PHS?** I heard RADM Carol Romano speak and she was a very powerful speaker, who delivered a very important message. With her guidance, I joined shortly after graduation.

**What was the most challenging part of applying for the PHS?** The lack of internal communication within the PHS, and between the PHS and the candidate. My application documents had to be resent on many occasions, but it was worth it in the end.

**What are your goals with the PHS?** Continue recruitment and retention efforts of highly qualified professionals into the PHS; assimilate into the Regular Corps; obtain the rank of Captain; complete my Doctorate in Business and Health Service Administration; and pursue my career in DHHS as a fraud investigator.

**What is your most memorable PHS experience so far?** It was OBC. I had the opportunity to work with other PHS Officers—professionals in their field that were full of knowledge and willing to share their knowledge with other officers. I felt a sense of camaraderie. I entered OBC as an individual, but left with a family.

**What advice would you give to prospective PHS applicants (or other Jr. Officers)?** The best advice I can give to prospective PHS applicants is: (1) Stick with the application process, because becoming a USPHS Commissioned Corps Officer means becoming a part of something great: a dedication and commitment to selfless service, and (2) It is a very rewarding career full of challenges and professional growth

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opportunities.

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## Uniform Corner: Summer Whites

Contributed by LT Leslie Cartmill

- Effective January 1, 2009, The Summer White uniform is one of four uniforms for which all officers (excluding those completing a JRCOSTEP or SRCOSTEP) are required to maintain (See [CC26.3.4](#), Uniforms for Male Officers, and [CC26.3.5](#), Uniforms for Female Officers).
- The summer white uniform is worn in the summer for normal office work and consists of a summer white shirt, white trousers, white dress shoes, white belt with gold buckle, and hard shoulder boards (in addition to the Corps name tag and ribbons). The authorized fabric chosen must be matching for both the shirt and the trousers, and when the CNT version is worn, a matching belt must also be utilized.
- The white combination cap can be worn for both males and females, and the beret is an optional item for females only. The plastic/vinyl cap is optional only when also wearing the all-weather coat.
- The black windbreaker jacket and sweater are also optional items. A more comprehensive list of prescribed and optional uniform components for the summer whites can be found by clicking on the two links above and scrolling down to the appendix under "General Purpose Service Uniforms" and then to "Summer White".



**PHS uniform regulations can be found at:**

<http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/CCISToc.aspx?>

[ShowTOC=N](#)

**See also:**



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Personnel Operations Memorandum: Uniform of the Day -  
Spring and Summer 2009

(Effective Date: 06 April 2009)

[http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/POM09\\_002.pdf](http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/POM09_002.pdf)

*In addition to being the recurring author of the "Uniform Corner", LT Cartmill is also JOAG's voting representative on the Uniform Advisory Committee. Please send any ideas for future "Uniform Corner" features to LT Leslie Cartmill at [leslie.cartmill@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:leslie.cartmill@fda.hhs.gov).*

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## Working Overseas: The Experience

Contributed by LCDR Michael W. Schmoyer, on behalf of Professional Development Committee

*Come join me for this multi-part series of articles as we explore open-air markets, public health infrastructure in the former Soviet Union, and the joys of working with some of the most intriguing people in the world...welcome to Central Asia.*

What do you mean, "Car and Driver magazine costs forty dollars"? I thought that if you lived in an "isolated hardship" post it meant it was hard to *find* a magazine...not that it was going to be hard to *afford* it! Wow. I had a LOT to learn.

Living overseas has presented not only a fantastic opportunity for professional development, but one for personal growth as well. Currently, I am serving as the Interim Director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Central Asia Regional Office in Almaty, Kazakhstan. My permanent change of station occurred almost exactly one year ago and will continue for an additional year. However, my "leadership lab" opportunity really got its start two years ago while I was stationed at CDC in Atlanta, Georgia.

CDC has a fantastic program called the "International Experience and Technical Assistance (IETA) Program" ([www.cdc.gov/cogh/training/IETA](http://www.cdc.gov/cogh/training/IETA)). IETA is open for competition to both civilians and officers from all agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It is a one-year program that culminates with a 3-4 month detail in an overseas CDC office. The intent of this program is to develop a cadre of DHHS employees with international training and experience, who are ready to respond to both short and/or long-term assignments in the international public health sector at a moment's notice. Sounds like it has the USPHS written all over it, doesn't it?

My IETA placement was fortunate enough to be in Central Asia as the Acting Deputy Director of the CDC Regional Office. Others in my cohort had equally fantastic opportunities in places such as Thailand, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. We had a mix of individuals from GS9/O-2 to GS15/O-6, and there were a host of country assignments that could be tailored toward an individual's experience. An IETA program participant serves in a variety of roles, which includes managerial public health advisors, clinicians, and laboratory scientists.

I felt pretty comfortable going to Central Asia. We received plenty of training to prepare us for working and living overseas. The curriculum focused on topic such as:



Fits like a glove! LCDR Schmoyer at the molded handprint of President Nazarbayev (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

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- International public health organizations and programs
- Cross cultural aspects of international work
- Conflict resolution
- Working within the US Embassy
- US representation abroad
- Safety and security
- Personal health management
- Emotional health and wellness
- Official travel
- Trip reports
- International briefings
- Role-plays

Other than some movie entitled *Borat*, I really did not know what to expect about living in Kazakhstan (and no, I never did run into Borat or any of his family). I do know that *Lonely Planet* mentioned Russian being one of the most widely spoken languages in the region. As a result, I modified my Individual Development Plan to include language training. I then put in a request to use my Individual Learning Account funds to purchase, you guessed it, *Rosetta Stone* Russian language software. I'm glad I purchased that software! When I arrived, I had two days all to myself and I felt pretty empowered being able to say:

1. **Can I have my room key, please?** The hotel front desk expected to keep the key when you left the hotel for the day.
2. **Where is the store?** I really didn't care what kind of store. I figured any store would lead me to my own adventure around the corner.
3. **May I?** This was probably the most universally useful question. When I asked the question—no matter what it was for—while raising my eyebrows and shrugging my shoulders upwards, I'd always get a response. I'm not exactly sure what the response was, but hey, I got a response and now I am communicating.

After two days on my own, it was finally time to make an appearance at the CDC office. Pocket Russian Dictionary? Check. Left my room key at the hotel desk? Check. Put the *iPod* in my pocket for walks to and from the office? Double check.

Cue the Indiana Jones music, as I have left the building. Stay tuned for the next article which will feature "Working Overseas: It's not a job, it's an adventure!"

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## JOAG Merchandise for 2009 Symposium

Contributed by (and available from) the Development Committee

### USPHS Blanket

- This polyester anti-pilling fleece blanket folds neatly inside itself.
- It folds up into itself, secures with a Velcro® closure and has an attached handle for easy carry.
- Dimensions: 53" x 48". Blue fleece with yellow USPHS seal.
- **Price: \$15**



### USPHS Coin Rack

- This solid pacific coast maple coin rack measures 7"x9" and has five rows that can hold military and USPHS coins.
- It has the USPHS seal and mission laser engraved on the front: *Protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation*
- **Price: \$20**



### USPHS Microfiber Laptop / Organizer Bag

- Deluxe front organizer opens to reveal storage for multiple business accessories.
- Inside the main compartment: a padded notebook computer pouch (maximum pouch size: 10"x 13" x 2-1/2").
- Size: 12-1/2" x 16-1/2" x 4".
- It has the USPHS seal on the front of the bag.
- **Price: \$30**

### JOAG T-Shirt with Serious or Funny Slogan

- A gray t-shirt with the JOAG seal on the front and the serious or funny slogan on the back.
- **Price: \$15**

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## JOAG Welcomes 116 Newly Commissioned Officers!

Contributed by LCDR Hawyee Yan on behalf of the Welcoming Committee

### **BOP**

LCDR Eric Bradford  
LT Jason Cullop  
LT Daniel Miller  
LT Kendra Bishop  
LT Shawna Lucero  
LT Casey Sumner  
LT Denise Vanmeter  
LT Christy Adams  
LCDR Mary Demby  
LT Avena Jackson  
LT Matthew Pettit  
LTJG Lisa Ellison  
LCDR Miguel Franco  
LT Kellie Guedry  
LTJG Duvinka Jordan  
LTJG Todd Lawrence  
LT Aaron McNeil  
Lt Tiffanie Myers  
LT Jeneen Ratliff  
LTJG Andrew Ratliff  
LT Harold White

### **CDC**

LT Jamar Barnes  
LTJG Adam Goldston-Rumpke  
LCDR Mark Freedman  
LT Tina Bhavsar  
ENS Troy Vaughan  
LT Matthew Weinburke  
LTJG Melinda Frank

### **DHS**

LT Patrick Humphries  
LCDR Sharon Raghobar  
LTJG Blaine Riggleman  
ENS James McLellan  
LCDR Anita Glenn-Reller  
LT Melinda Lyles  
LTJG Tameka Gooding  
LTJG Wilson Nazario  
LT Vaughn Waggoner  
LT Bertholey Eugene

### **DOD TMA**

LT Julie Chodacki  
LT Arlin Hatch  
LCDR William Satterfield  
LCDR Robin Lewis  
LT Donald Mott  
LT Alysa Jackson  
LT Joann Shen  
LT Scott Klimp

### **EPA**

LCDR Mark Clayton

### **FDA**

LT Theodore Garnett  
LT Tara Goen  
LT Hidee Molina  
LT Samuel Skariah  
LTJG Kristen Degenhard  
LTJG Steven Ferrara  
LTJG Jessica Burley  
LTJG Atiq Chowdhury  
LTJG Kathleen Ferguson  
LT Nam Chun  
LT Duong Nhu  
LCDR Scott Reynolds  
LCDR Gustavous Chenwendorf  
LTJG Paul Hardy  
LT Christopher Jones  
LT Juwon Lee

### **HRSA**

LTJG Shaun Chapman  
LT Erica Wilson

### **IHS**

LT Reasol Agustin  
LT Destiny Anderson  
LTJG David Bales  
LT Vickie Caldwell  
LTJG Shawn Gant  
LTJG Jessica Horras  
ENS Angela Johnson  
LT Joyce Oberly

LCDR Luke Schulte  
LTJG Michele Toomey  
LCDR Michael Verdugo  
LT Christy Blissett  
LTJG Marcus Felter  
LT Philip Gorz  
LCDR Kristen Hamlin  
LT Alberta Nez  
LT Tara Randall  
LCDR Kathleen Stanton  
LT Jeanette Ashley  
LTJG John Butler  
LCDR David Doss  
LT Debra Hall  
LCDR Joann Llanaeza  
LT Eric Oduro  
LTJG Steven Tidwell

### **NIH**

LT Charlene Sydnor  
LT James Pitt  
LT Latoya Sewell  
LTJG Brittany Johnson  
LTJG Natasha Kormanik  
LTJG Diamond Zuchlinski

### **OS**

LTJG Alicia Sherrell  
LT Monica Jessup  
LT Samuel Price  
LT Sara Woody

### **PSC**

LT Kate Sawyer  
LCDR James Ebert  
LTJG Justin Perkins  
LTJG Kyle Barrackman

### **SAMHSA**

LT Kelley Smith

### **USDA**

LT Latasha Allen

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LTJG Robert Kopec  
LT Jay Simmon

**DOD**

LTJG Matthew Johns

LT Sandra Redsteer  
LT Larry Demers  
LT Cole Dysinger  
LT Chien-Ying Lee  
LT Stephen Perrine  
LTJG Matthew Mergenthaler  
LT Paul Michaud

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## **The Corps' Transformed Personnel System**

Contributed by LCDR Diem-Kieu H. Ngo, Chair-Elect

As young officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps, you may not realize the many changes that are coming our way with the Corps Transformation. You may also wonder, "why all the changes?" Below is a brief overview of the new personnel system initiatives to help answer your questions and give you a better understanding of how these changes benefit your career in the Corps.

The first Transformation initiative to launch this year was the Officer Profile (OP) collection tool. Its release in March was the first phase in "transforming" the Corps' personnel system. Prior to the implementation of the OP, information regarding officers' education, training, licensure, and certification was entered by OCCO staff or individual officers into the eOPF, which is not a searchable database. Additionally, the eOPF may not contain information on officers' education, training, certification, etc. that are not category specific or required for commissioning unless it was submitted by the officer. Thus, it has been very challenging for the Corps to "match" an officer with a job vacancy. Now, officers may log into their Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) account and directly enter additional education, training, and certification information into the OP collection tool. Although entries into the OP are not mandatory, all officers are highly encouraged to take charge of their career and enter their data into the collection tool. More information on the OP collection tool can be found at: [http://usphs.gov/transformation/op\\_faq.aspx](http://usphs.gov/transformation/op_faq.aspx)

The OP tool will collect data that will be placed in the Corps' new Direct Access Human Resource System, which will launch in a few months. When Direct Access launches, category-specific licenses and certifications will be automatically transferred into Direct Access. Additionally, other education, training, and certification information entered by each officer in the OP collection tool will be verified and then transferred automatically into Direct Access. With the centralization of officers' information in one powerful, searchable database, an eResume will be automatically created for each officer. The eResume will provide the Corps with a "picture" of the whole officer.

Once Direct Access is fully operational, it will allow the Corps to:

- Quickly identify for hiring officials qualified officers for vacancies, allowing for more officers to be hired for positions they are qualified for and interested in (successful "match")
- Quickly identify for OFRD qualified officers for needed response roles
- Provide training and career management for officers by answering the question: "What certifications/skills do our officers currently possess?"

The Corps will also be implementing a transformed billet system later this year. New billets will be tracked and managed within Direct Access. Contrary to other uniformed services, our current billets tend to reflect officer capabilities rather than position responsibilities, leaving the Corps with an ineffective force management system. The current system does not allow the Corps to effectively monitor vacancies by position (identify the best officers for the best positions), monitor skills shortages, or recruit to meet its mission. The transformed billets will reflect positions and not officer capabilities; it will provide officers with clarity and specificity of responsibilities,

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objectively graded billets, real-time vacancy monitoring, and enhanced career development (transparency of positions within the Corps). Additionally, it will provide agencies with real-time identification of officers for positions and electronic referral of qualified candidates.

The new billet system will provide a unique billet for each of the 6,600 planned Corps positions, with the ability to link each billet to the electronic officer profiles. Each billet will consist of two parts: standard components (developed by PACs and generically describe essential duties) and position-specific components (developed at the Agency level and provide more precise information). The transformed billets will describe requirements for the position, additional desired qualifications, and have a designated expected length of tour. Billet grades will be automatically generated based upon duties and responsibilities that are derived from a reviewed and updated set of factors from CCPM Pamphlet 57. All of the key areas from the civil service factors currently in use will be factored into billets grading. When officers are ready for higher levels of duties, they should seek positions of higher grade since billets will not be changed to facilitate increased officer capabilities. Additionally, collateral duties will be linked to officers and not to positions. Throughout the implementation of the transformed billets, efforts will be made to avoid rigidity and preserve flexibility to ensure the best product for officers, agencies, categories, and the Corps.

With the implementation of these personnel system initiatives, the Corps will be able to identify qualified officers to improve and advance critical and longstanding public health missions. Additionally, the Corps will be able to provide the Nation with a cadre of qualified public health professionals who are ready to respond to urgent public health and medical emergencies. As junior officers, we must be engaged in these new initiatives since it is our future and our careers that will ultimately benefit from Corps Transformation.

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## **The Four R's of Social Networking Sites:**

### **Reconnection, Recruitment, Risks, and Responsibilities**

Contributed by LT Romerl Elizes, on behalf of the Communications & Publications Committee

The proliferation of social networking sites has made a profound impact on our professional and social interactions. Sites such as Facebook and MySpace allow us to make meaningful reconnections with old friends and colleagues. Other social networking sites such as LinkedIn allow users to develop their own professional networks and make strategic connections for possible business opportunities. All seven uniformed services have formal and informal groups in LinkedIn and Facebook that allow members to develop professional contacts with other personnel from their respective service. In particular, Facebook, allows fellow officers to interact with other officers on a more social basis. The ability to upload photos and specify hobbies and activities allows officers to see a more personal side of their professional colleagues. Such activities can positively increase the rapport among officers, especially those who have not met face-to-face but have had frequent verbal and e-mail exchanges about PHS-related business.

Social networking sites also provide excellent conduits for recruitment. For example, the seven uniformed services have posted recruitment videos on YouTube, which highlight the benefits of joining their respective services. In particular, the US Public Health Service uses a different angle to recruit by highlighting individual officers' experiences within the Corps. By searching for "US Public Health Service" on the website, a potential recruit might observe the individual officer examples and consider if this meets their career goals. Other federal agencies and private companies such as the CIA and Ernst & Young use Facebook groups in order attract potential recruits<sup>1</sup>.

Social networking sites offer the possibility of incidental recruitment. Facebook and LinkedIn provide the ability for users to upload their profile pictures onto their websites. If an officer uploads a picture of their activities within the Corps, the Facebook application will instantly alert their "friends" of the newly posted picture. Users of Facebook have a natural curiosity about the lives of their friends, portrayed by photos and comments on the site<sup>2</sup>. This type of contact could be a potential resource of recruiting especially when friends start to ask questions about the Commissioned Corps and what it has to offer.

Although social networking sites have become great recruitment tools, they still possess many risks. Once a person places personal information online, there is the potential for someone to use that personal information maliciously<sup>3</sup>. An opportunistic criminal can use photographs or job information uploaded onto an open Facebook or MySpace account to doctor official documents or submit applications to commit illegal activities. Many corporations and websites such as Microsoft and USAJOBS.gov have built-in security mechanisms that require users to follow strict password policies such as changing passwords every 90 days and using passwords that require a combination of numbers, lower-case, and upper-case letters<sup>4</sup>. Many social networking sites do not have these features, making it easier for a hacker to attempt to break into a person's account using a variety of automated tools.

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In addition to security concerns, companies may access social networking sites while conducting background checks on potential job candidates. Currently, the New York Police Department recruitment policies require recruits to grant Applicants Processing Division officers full access to their online profiles in order to weed out questionable applicants<sup>5</sup>. Social networking sites have gained in popularity with hiring managers who must determine if potential candidates are well suited for their job cultures<sup>6</sup>.

Suggestive photographs, politically charged discussions, or racially inappropriate comments have been deciding negative factors against a potential job candidate even if the candidate had excellent skill sets. From Commissioned Corps, divisive comments made by or questionable photographs of an officer during his "personal" time may bring embarrassment to the officer and degrade the Corps' values of leadership and integrity.

Social networking sites come with benefits and risks. From the benefits perspective, we enjoy the opportunities to make new acquaintances and renew old friendships. We also have a very unique opportunity to be able to attract potential recruits through these sites. From the risks perspective, we must be diligent with our personal security and be sure that we present a positive persona to the public that reflects the Commissioned Corps values as well as our own. We are free to do what we wish on our "personal" time when we visit social networking sites, but we must always keep in mind the US Public Health Service Commissioned Officer's Code of Conduct and what it signifies to us<sup>7</sup>.

While all ten rules of the Code of Conduct are relevant to us, I feel three specific rules to our professional and personal presence on social networking sites and should be seriously considered when we participate on them:

- I am a Commissioned Officer, responsible and accountable for my actions by virtue of this special trust accorded to me by the President of the United States of America.
- I represent all other officers – past, present, and future – and they represent me. Together we are the Corps.
- I follow the right path, not the easy path, regardless of personal hardship or discomfort, and will seek selfless motivations for the actions and decisions I render.

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## **Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group helps rebuild New Orleans**

Contributed by LT Lorraine Williams

The [Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group \(BCOAG\)](#) of the U.S. Public Health Service held its 2nd Annual Mission to help rebuild the City of New Orleans under the leadership of CDR Sean-David Waterman. Among the 30 Officers that participated in the five-day mission, 18 were Junior Officers, including 3 New Orleans natives. The activities included renovating homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina, educating elementary school students on healthy lifestyles, sponsoring a community health fair, and recruiting future Commissioned Officers from local colleges and universities.



BCOA officers gather for a photo; LT Williams is pictured on the 2<sup>nd</sup> row from the top, left side

Equipped with carpenter's tools, the Commissioned Officers hammered in and assisted the Lower Nine Organization with rebuilding homes located in the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward. Hurricane Katrina's wrath was most profound in the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward leaving many homes completely devastated and uninhabitable. The Officers also had the opportunity to educate students at Craig, Dilbert, and Wicker Elementary Schools on childhood obesity through a healthy lifestyles presentation. Students participated in a poster contest, which included creative illustrations of the food pyramid and clippings from magazines displaying various forms of physical activity.

A Community Health and Outreach Fair was held at Israel Baptist Church located in the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward. The health fair included: diabetic foot checks, dental screening, blood pressure monitoring, eye exams, and health presentations were held for women and men. The Louisiana Department of Human Services, Office of Public Health and the St. Bernard Parish Office of Public Health were among several agencies that participated in the event. On February 18, 2009, Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis presented all the officers with a Proclamation, on behalf of the New Orleans City Council, for their dedicated health services to the citizens of the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward.

During the mission to help rebuild New Orleans, the officers were able to experience Mardi Gras, New Orleans style. In addition to experiencing Mardi Gras, the officers enjoyed the delectable taste of Cajun cooking, the smooth sounds of street musicians, and the opportunity to meet the great citizens of New Orleans, LA (NOLA). As a native of New Orleans and a Junior Officer in the Commissioned Corps, I was elated to return home and help with the rebuilding of NOLA and honored to receive a Proclamation from the City Council of New Orleans. My entire family was affected by

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the wrath of Hurricane Katrina and to return home and assist with the rebuilding of the City of New Orleans was one of my defining moments as a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service! In conclusion, I was very grateful with the magnitude of support displayed by the officers, especially since they were responsible for their respective lodging, meals, and transportation. Their dedication and commitment to help rebuild NOLA was outstanding. I am glad to be a Junior Officer in the United States Public Health Service and from NOLA!

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## **What's in Store for Junior Officers at the 2009 COF Symposium**

Contributed by LCDR Jessica Feda, JOAG liaison to the COA

The 2009 COF Symposium themed "Leading a Strong Public Health Workforce for a Healthy America" is fast approaching. The conference is the marquis event which unites Public Health Service officers once a year and offers officers (especially junior officers) an opportunity to participate in and observe the many functions and broad scope of activities, research, and job opportunities within the United States Public Health Service. The COF Symposium provides unique opportunities to learn leadership skills, stay current on emerging preparedness challenges, and understand evolving best practices in prevention and response strategies for fundamental public health concerns. If you have not attended in the past, I highly encourage you to attend as it will expand your knowledge of the wealth of Corps operations, offer a unique forum for networking, and develop a further sense of pride within the Corps!

The conference will take place in Atlanta, Georgia at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. It will officially begin Monday morning (June 1<sup>st</sup>) rather than the traditional Monday afternoon and commence on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Rooms at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis are nearly sold out so book your room today. Service khaki's are the authorized uniform for this year's conference. Junior officers (O-3 and below) have a unique opportunity to apply for a Junior Officer Scholarship to cover the cost of registration (application deadline is May 7<sup>th</sup>). Please visit [www.phscofevents.org](http://www.phscofevents.org) for all conference information including registration, booking a room, uniform guidelines, continuing education credit information, conference agenda, and scholarship details. The early bird registration for a discounted conference rate is available until April 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pre-Conference Workshops**

This year's conference will also offer **ten "Critical Needs" pre-conference training workshops** offering advanced training in the areas of professional development, leadership, and deployment skills/management. Full details and registration for the workshops are available at [www.phscofevents.org](http://www.phscofevents.org). The pre-conference events will consist of two day, one day, and half day workshops.

- **Two day workshops** (May 30-31<sup>st</sup>):
  - Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training course \$100 fee
  - Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER) \$100 registration fee
- **One day workshops** (May 31<sup>st</sup>):
  - Fundamentals of Leadership \$100 registration fee
  - Lean Six Sigma Management Technique \$100 registration fee
  - Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency and Response (CASPER) Free to the first 40 pre-registered attendees through the

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generous support of CDC

- The Guts and Glory of Running a Federal Medical Station (FMS) Free
- A Day with OCCO – Managing Your Corps Career: Promotions, COERs, and more. Free, although class size may be capped.
- **Half-Day workshops** (May 31<sup>st</sup> in the morning)
  - Connected for Good: Social Marketing and Social Media for Public Health Preparedness and Response. \$75 registration fee (includes breakfast)
  - American Red Cross Psychological First Aid Course: Helping Others in Times of Crises. \$25 registration fee
  - Disaster Surveillance. \$25 registration fee

### **Opening Ceremonies**

The **Opening Ceremonies** are scheduled for 10 a.m. on Monday June 1<sup>st</sup> followed by the **Luther Terry Lecture** with keynote speaker Dr. Charles Rice, the president of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. The afternoon will kick off with two panel discussions highlighting the obstacles facing returning **“Wounded Warriors.”** Lunch will be on your own that day with plenty of great food options to choose from in the hotel and surrounding area. Acting Surgeon General, RADM Steven Galson will speak at 3 p.m. as a summative keynote speaker. The afternoon’s scientific program will consist of greater than 30 concurrent **late breaker presentations** on key topics and recent developments in public health. The day will culminate with the **Anchor and Caduceus Dinner** featuring a talk by Dr. David Satcher, the 16<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General of the United States. The Anchor and Caduceus Dinner is included in your registration fee and the uniform is Dinner Dress Blues; however, the Service Dress Blue is an acceptable alternative.

### **JOAG Events**

JOAG specific events will start on Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup> with the JOAG meeting at 6-8 p.m. with an informal Meet and Greet. The JOAG social will take place on Tuesday evening, June 2<sup>nd</sup> (see the [JOAG Social announcement](#) for more details). Please stop by or volunteer for the JOAG uniform inspection booth which will operate on Monday 9:00-9:30 a.m and 5:30-6:15 p.m. and Wednesday 9:00-9:30 am. There will be a JOAG booth this year to represent our junior officers, offer information on JOAG, and offer [JOAG/USPHS specific memorabilia](#) for purchase.

### **General Conference Schedule**

The Conference will conclude at 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. There are many activities between Monday and Thursday, including:

- Tuesday (Category Day) - Each of the 11 categories will meet individually covering topics specific to their disciplines.
- Wednesday and Thursday – Will include more than 40 concurrent **track presentations** on four tracks:
  - Leading the Public Health Workforce in America
  - Strategies for Ensuring a Viable and Effective Public Health Workforce
  - Partnerships to Improve Public Health
  - Preparing the Public Health Workforce for All Hazards
- Wednesday will also include a **panel discussion** focusing on public health workforce issues and the annual **Awards Luncheon**. Wednesday evening the **Surgeon General’s 5k Run/Walk** will be held at Piedmont Park.

Atlanta, Georgia has a lot to offer if you have a little time to travel and tour before or after the conference! You will not want to miss the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site, the World of Coca Cola, the Georgia Aquarium (the only known aquarium to have whale sharks on exhibit), Fernbank Museum of Natural History, High Museum of Art, Stone Mountain Park, or Rhodes Hall. I hope you consider attending this year's COF Symposium as it is sure to be an informative and jam-packed conference!

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**WHERE** Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atrium A  
2009 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium

# JOAG General Meeting and “Meet and Greet”

Come and Get to Know Your JOAG Executive Committee,  
Voting Members, and Senior Advisor!

*Light Refreshments Will be Served*

**DATE** Sunday, May 31, 2009

**TIME** 6:00 P.M.

For more information, contact LT Jessica Schwarz at [jessica.schwarz@ihs.gov](mailto:jessica.schwarz@ihs.gov) or LCDR Diem-Kieu Ngo at [diem.ngo@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:diem.ngo@fda.hhs.gov)

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# JOAG Social Event

## 2009 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium

Join your fellow Junior Officers and friends for dinner, drinks & camaraderie

Checks can be paid separately

**When:** Tuesday, June 2, 2009  
9 PM - until....

**Where:** [Hard Rock Café Atlanta](#)  
215 Peachtree Street NE  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 688-ROCK  
[www.hardrock.com](http://www.hardrock.com)

If the B-52's song "Love Shack" were to ever find a permanent home, Atlanta's Hard Rock Cafe would be the place. With its southern charm and renowned hospitality, this location truly gives meaning to our "Love All Serve All" motto. Situated in downtown Atlanta's Cornerstone Building, our restaurant could be considered a cornerstone of southern rock. Packed with memorabilia from rock legends with roots south of the Mason-Dixon Line, this cafe serves up delicious delicacies everyday.

Walking Directions (from the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel)  
0.3 miles, approximately 5 minutes

- Take a left (west) onto Baker St.

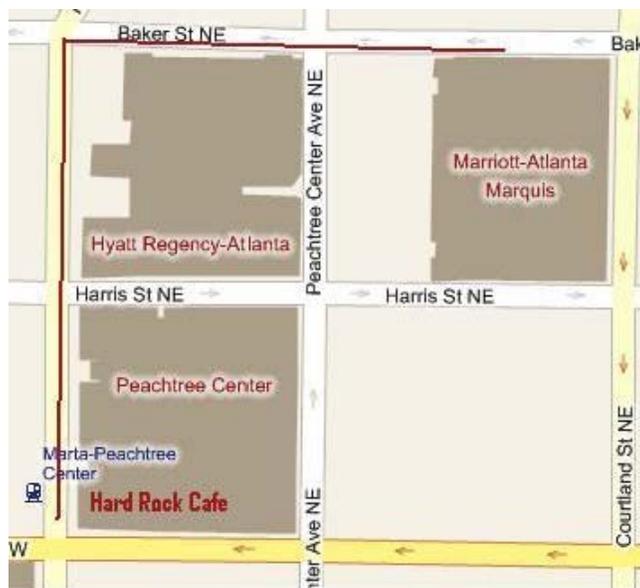
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- Turn left onto Peachtree St. and go about 2 blocks
- Restaurant is on the corner of Peachtree St. NE and Andrew Young International Blvd. NW.



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## PHS Challenge Coins Available at COF

Contributed by LTJG Kristen Nelson

JOAG will be selling two PHS challenge coins at the 2009 COF Symposium in Atlanta, GA: the JOAG Medallion and the PHS Core Values Coin. Challenge coins are a longstanding Uniformed Service tradition. Historically, these coins were given out to a member when they joined an organization. The "challenge" occurs when the individual is asked to produce the coin at a moments notice, meaning the coin is always carried as a reminder of the principles symbolized by the coin. Over the years they have become deeply rooted in Uniformed Service culture and have been issued to improve morale as well as a reward for a job well done.

The two coins available at this year's COF Symposium, are not only meant to foster esprit de corps and boost morale, but they are also meant to serve as daily reminders about what it means to be a Commissioned Corps Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service.

**The JOAG Medallion** is to serve as a constant reminder that we are officers in the Commissioned Corps. It also serves to remind us of certain characteristics an officer must have: generosity, elevation of mind, goodness, nobility, camaraderie, and the continuity of these ideals through time.



**The PHS Core Values Coin** is to remind all officers of the four Commissioned Corps Values: Leadership, Service, Integrity, and Excellence. As Commissioned Corps officers we should strive to be the embodiment of these values through our daily actions.



*Both coins will be available at the JOAG Booth during this year's COF Symposium. Support the Corps and JOAG by stopping by the JOAG Booth near registration and purchasing your challenge coins. The coins are \$10 each and will always remind you of*

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*living up to the "challenge" of being an Officer in the PHS Commissioned Corps.*

*There will only be a limited number of coins, so make sure not to miss out and purchase your coin(s) early.*

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## **Leading by Serving**

Contributed by LT Charlene Majersky

Junior officers serving as health care administrators in the USPHS are keenly aware that leadership means responsibility. It is a process of getting things done through people. The good news is that everyone can learn to lead by first discovering the innate power that lies within each of us to make a difference and being prepared when we hear the call to lead.

The USPHS core values are leadership, service, integrity, and excellence. Accordingly, leadership "provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty", as defined by our Commissioned Corps Core Values.

Leadership is a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change and conventional views of leadership are changing. The rapid pace of change requires new ways of relating to problems. Leadership can be exhibited in many ways and is adapted to varying situations. Leadership qualities and skills can be learned and developed.

Robert Greenleaf, who spent his first career in management research, development and education at AT&T, followed by a second career in teaching and consulting, introduced the term "servant leadership" back in 1970.

"Servant leadership" postulates a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also stresses using openness and persuasion, instead of the use of control and coercive power. Furthermore, it is a style of leadership committed to the growth and development of others. Servant leaders are dedicated to building value-based institutions that contribute to establishing a supportive and caring society.

The heart of servant leadership is that it inspires collaboration, trust, forethought, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment. Essentially, servant leadership goes against what is deemed common wisdom about organizations and power; to let go of control, ego, and to involve those affected by the work in planning and managing it.

In servant leadership, the leader is viewed as a primary resource to those with whom you lead. The leader portrays a person willing to serve and create the community in which you can do the work that you do in order to achieve the objectives and outcomes we are all trying to accomplish together.

One of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model of leadership and servant leadership is that the servant leader aspires to convince others, rather than coerce compliance.

Many of the companies named in Fortune magazine's annual listing of "The 100 Best Companies to Work For" embrace the philosophy of servant leadership and have incorporated it into their corporate cultures. Servant leadership offers much needed hope for the future in developing better, more caring, and just institutions.

The nature of character and its relationship to leaders has also emerged in recent

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years. The literature on leadership encompasses a multitude of varied listings of character traits as practiced by leaders. One of the leading proponents on leadership, Warren Bennis, identifies vision, inspiration, empathy and trustworthiness as primary characteristics of effective leaders.

The five key characteristics of a servant leader include, but are not limited to:

1. Listening – A deep commitment to listening intently and receptively to what is being said and unsaid. Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's own inner voice. Listening, coupled with periods of reflection, is essential to the growth and well-being of the servant leader.
2. Empathy – The servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. The most successful servant leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners.
3. Awareness – General awareness and self-awareness strengthens the servant leader. Awareness helps one in comprehending issues regarding ethics, power and values.
4. Persuasion – Reliance on persuasion rather than on one's positional authority in making decisions within an organization is imperative. Here, the servant leader strives to convince others, rather than coerce compliance.
5. Commitment to the growth of people – Servant leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. The servant leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything in their power to nurture the personal and professional growth of their employees.

Life never stops teaching us about change. As leaders, hopefully we can be gentle guides and coaches to help people discover their own life's wisdom. Meaning is what motivates people. That is why it is important for leaders to create time for people to remember why they are doing this work; to carry out the mission of the USPHS, which is "protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation."

*The USPHS yields Junior Officers serving as health care administrators and leaders, unlimited opportunities!*

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## Maintaining Balance During the Economic Crisis

Contributed by LCDR Tina Bryant

Like many Americans, PHS officers are conscientiously attached to the daily news eager for solutions to the economic problems plaguing our nation. We are experiencing the most prevalent global financial crisis since The Great Depression. Our IRA's, TSP's and other financial investments have plummeted 40-50% leaving us perplexed about how to proceed and manage our financial futures. The yo-yo of the stock market has caused unrelenting anxiety for many Americans and across the globe. The crisis has created undue stress and strain on families and marriages. Americans are adjusting to something unknown to our generation. The downfall of the housing market has scores of individuals dealing with the loss of equity in their homes. Spouses' have lost jobs and are unable to find work at equal pay creating a paradigm shift in the family's spending and lifestyle. The children's education fund is at risk. And you still have to ponder whether to take a family vacation this year or not!

The wave of the economic crisis is challenging America's ability to cope. Due to the global tension, optimism is wavering. How well are you managing during these turbulent times? Are you maintaining an emotional balance in the face of adversity as the financial market spirals out of control? Adaptive and maladaptive coping, are measures that reveal how well you are dealing with these changing times. Here are common signs of **maladaptive behavior** (or, unproductive coping):

- Excessive alcohol/tobacco use/prescription drug use
- Overeating
- Irritable/explosive behavior
- Violence
- Excessive gambling
- Suicidal thoughts

**Adaptive coping** strategies are behaviors that help reduce or alleviate stress and maintain balance in a long-term crisis.

- Exercise
- Adequate sleep
- Spending time with family/friends
- Proper nutrition
- Yoga/meditation/relaxation techniques
- Hobbies/volunteer

Have you noticed any excessive alcohol, tobacco or prescription drug use to sedate unwanted stress or tension? Overeating, consuming larger amounts of food than normal is common when stressed because it provides comfort or relieves tension.

Take comfort in knowing this crisis is not happening to you exclusively and many Americans share your discomfort. Below are techniques proven to reduce the overall effect of stress on the body and mind.

1. Regular exercise 4-5 days per week releases endorphins, a natural chemical that makes you feel better.

## Contributions

[Leading by Serving](#)

[Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group helps Rebuild New Orleans](#)

[Maintaining Balance During the Economic Crisis](#)

2. Stretching increases blood flow by improving circulation and inducing relaxation.
3. Proper sleep 6-8 hours per night improves your daily functioning and restores energy.
4. Maintaining support from a network of family, friends and spiritual leaders offers encouragement and inspiration.
5. Yoga/meditation practiced regularly allows a focused attention on breathing and promotes a calming state of mind.
6. Find something that relaxes you. Inexpensive hobbies include: reading, arts & crafts, gardening, swimming, biking or soaking in a hot aromatherapy bath.
7. Increase socialization and decrease isolation. Visit a dog park, engage with other pet owners. Listen to live music, attend concerts in the park, local festivals or participate in civic volunteer organizations.
8. Alter your personal style and be willing to make changes in your lifestyle to minimize the effects of the financial crisis. Practice optimism. Try new solutions to stubborn problems. Be friendlier, which aids in attracting people to you. Practice generosity at home, the office and in your community.

Resolve to improve your coping strategies. This is a foreseeable long term financial global problem. Focus on what you can change and find support and adapt to what you cannot change. For individuals who continue to experience intense strain; you may opt to seek professional guidance to gain added support as our nation continues to rebound and regain its financial strength again.

*LCDR Bryant is a Licensed Independent Social Worker stationed with the Division of Immigration Health/Homeland Security at the Houston Processing Center.*

**As a reminder, our website has moved. The new URL for JOAG's website is:  
<http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>**