

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OFFICERS COMMITTEE

of the

United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2021

Executive Committee Members

Chair: CDR Trang Tran

Chair-Elect: LCDR Ruby Leong

Executive Secretary: LCDR Sally Doan

Corresponding Secretary:

LCDR Huan Tran

Treasurer: CDR Yoon Kong

MOLC Representatives:

CAPT Teresa Ramson & CDR Honeylit Cuelo

Leadership & Strategic Planning:

CDR Simleen Kaur

APAOC Chair's Corner

Dear APAOC members,

Welcome to APAOC's Fall/Winter newsletter for 2021! I hope everyone has had a productive year and is ready to celebrate the upcoming holiday seasons with your loved ones. Despite all the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a very busy year for APAOC with so many exciting events and activities.

As the operational year is coming to an end, I'd like to take a moment to look back at what APAOC has accomplished together. As the Chair, I have worked with the Chair-Elect (LCDR Ruby Leong), the Senior Advisor (CAPT Maria Fields), the Executive Committee members, standing Subcommittees, and Workgroups to pursue the following four overarching goals for APAOC this year.

Empower APAOC officers to take charge and be leaders.

It is so rewarding for me to see many outstanding APAOC officers, including junior officers, step up to lead different initiatives, events,

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Want to receive weekly APAOC news and announcements to stay up-to-date?

Subscribe to the APAOC listserv!

<https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/apaoc/listserv.aspx>

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Interested in submitting an article or volunteering?

Please forward your submissions to

CDR Denise Morrison, Denise.C.Morrison@ice.dhs.gov

LT Adena Yau, Adena.Yau@ihs.gov

or LT Sophie Soo, Sophie.Soo@hhs.gov



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APAOC Chair's Corner

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activities, and become new Voting Members during this year. Kudos to these officers. APAOC can only be a stronger organization when there is a future generation of good leaders.

Promote collaborations within APAOC and with OSG's Professional Advisory and Chartered Minority Advisory Groups.

APAOC Executive Committee members, Subcommittees, and Workgroups have successfully collaborated and supported each other on many activities and events this year including the first annual Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month celebration, APAOC listening session and roundtable discussions on racial discrimination and hate crimes, APAOC's 5th Annual Leadership Summit, and APAOC Leadership Transition event. There were also many wonderful collaborations with the other OSG Professional Advisory and Chartered Minority Advisory Groups, the National Park Service/Office of Public Health:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AIANCOAC) and the Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) attended APAOC's general meetings in February and July, respectively.
- Collaborated with National Park Service/Office of Public Health to support the Power of Parks for Health Roundtable Series to discuss increasing visibility, representation, and relevancy of AAPI communities in the outdoors during the AAPI Heritage Month in May.
- Collaborated with Social Work

Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) and Psychology Professional Advisory Group (PsyPAG) to present during the Joining Forces in Recognition of National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in July.

- Collaborated with BCOAG to develop the White Paper on *Diversity and Inclusion in the USPHS Commissioned Corps*.
- Collaborated with District of Columbia Commissioned Officers Association to host the Recently Promoted Officers Panel Discussion in September.
- Collaborated with BCOAG Social Committee to organize the Sugarloaf Mountain Hike in September.
- Collaborated with AIANCOAC, BCOAG, Hispanic Officer Advisory Committee (HOAC), and Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG) to host the roundtable discussion on "Addressing Discrimination and Hate Crimes in Minority Communities" in December.

Provide more professional development opportunities for officers.

- Offered coaching, consulting, and connecting opportunities with CAPT Maria Fields, APAOC Senior Advisor throughout the year.
- Provided 5 education and training sessions on different topics (COVID-19 vaccine development; building resilience; APAOC and HHS efforts in supporting AAPI community against racism, xenophobia, and intolerance; opioid epidemic and harm reduction strategies; and

promoted officers panel discussion) and the Leadership Summit on "Building Resilient Leadership During Times of Crisis".

- Offered mentoring opportunities through APAOC Mentoring Program.
- Provided mentoring session with RADM David Goldman, RADM (ret.) Scott Giberson, RADM (ret.) Robin Ikeda, RADM (ret.) Kenneth Moritsugu, CAPT Maria Fields, CAPT Josef Rivero, and CAPT Helen Saccone during the Leadership Summit

Enhance communications to provide helpful information and valuable resources in a timely manner.

- Provided helpful information and valuable resources in a timely manner through APAOC meetings, announcements, newsletters, emails, social media, and website.
- Solicited feedback from APAOC members through surveys.
- Updated APAOC website.

APAOC executed the following new initiatives this year:

- Invited guest speakers to the APAOC general meetings to share helpful information, resources, and advice with our members.
- Established the first 3-year strategic goals for APAOC.
- Established the AAPI Cultural Support Working Group to bring awareness, provide education and resources, and share informed action on addressing racial discrimination and hate crimes.
- Established the ad-hoc AMSUS liaison position to share helpful information about professional

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APAOOC Chair's Corner

Continued

development and award opportunities from AMSUS with APAOC members.

- Organized the first annual AAPI Heritage Month Celebration with RADM (ret.) Samuel Lin serving as the Keynote Speaker.
- Established the first general members demographic database.

The following are some highlights of accomplishments from the Executive Members, Subcommittees, and Workgroups:

Executive Committee:

APAOOC Chair & Chair-Elect (Please see above)

Executive Secretary

- Successfully facilitated 14 APAOC meetings, including six presentations with guest speakers
- Presented at the FDA Commissioned Officers Network Lunch and Learn: Celebrating Annual Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month with APAOC
- Helped organize and facilitate APAOC's 1st AAPI Heritage Month Celebration Presentation

Corresponding Secretary

- Standardized the announcement request process
- Shared helpful information and resources with APAOC members through 90 biweekly and standalone announcements
- Managed the APAOC listserv

Treasurer

- Managed APAOC Funds
- Supported the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)

NIH Chapter with planning activities for the Vivek Murthy lecture series on public health leadership

- Developed APAOC demographic and feedback survey, analyzed and presented the survey results to APAOC members

MOLC Representatives

- Successfully reviewed PACE-related lesson plans with a focus on cultural competence and political consciousness
- Planned the MOLC Virtual Awards Ceremony
- Facilitated the compilation and clearance of APAOC new Voting Members packet, SAAs packet, and APAOC's HMI OUC award through MOLC and OSG

Leadership and Strategic Committee

- Provided support to subcommittees and workgroup in developing strategic goals of the operational year
- Simplified the quarterly reporting process and end of the year updates of strategic plans
- Supported the Education and Training Subcommittee in preparation and execution of Annual Leadership Summit

Standing Subcommittees:

Awards and Recognition

- Completed APAOC Honor Award process following MOLC's timeline and guidance
- Developed new nomination forms, voting tool for APAOC Awards, and FAQs for SAA/PHS Honor Awards
- Submitted 10 SAA nominations after thorough review/revision of

activity logs (all 10 nominations were approved in November 2021)

- Submitted 2 PHS Group Award nominations (one has been approved)

Career Development & Advancement

- Recruited 56 participants for the APAOC Mentoring Program
- Updated the APAOC Promotion guide to reflect the new promotion benchmarks and guidance for all categories
- Hosted the APAOC Leadership Summit Group Mentoring Session with 6 esteemed mentors and 20 mentees

Charter and Bylaws

- Revised the APAOC Bylaws
- Solicited 9 volunteers to help with reviewing APAOC SOPs
- Facilitated the review and approval of all SOPs by 30 November 2021

Communications

- Assisted the APAOC Chair in external communications by disseminating monthly and ad-hoc APAOC announcements to PACs and JOAG
- Redesigned the APAOC Homepage
- Updated and standardized APAOC website content, including mission statement, goals, and contacts for Executive Committee members, Subcommittees, and Workgroups
- Supported the FAPAC NIH Chapter with planning activities for the Vivek Murthy lecture series on public health leadership

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APAOC Chair's Corner

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Education and Training

- Organized and facilitated 5 education and training sessions on COVID-19 Vaccine Development; Building Resilience; APAOC and HHS Efforts in Supporting AAPI Community Against Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance; Opioid Epidemic and Harm Reduction Strategies; and Promoted Officers Panel Discussion
- Led the planning activities for the 5th Annual Leadership Summit on "Building Resilient Leadership During Times of Crisis" with esteemed Keynote Speaker and panelists

Nomination and Membership

- Updated the APAOC Organizational chart and roster
- Delivered two presentations during AAPI Heritage Month
- Coordinated nomination and selection of new Voting Members and Senior Advisor
- Established the first general members demographic database

Publications

- Published 3 newsletters that included stories of Asian American history, COVID vaccinations, coping with stress, and preceptor interns
- Recruited 20 different volunteer authors and editors to contribute to newsletters success

Public Relations

- Developed fitness toolkit to assist officers with the USPHS Exercise Challenge for 12 weeks

- Planned and hosted the Lunar New Year event
- Planned and coordinated 2 presentations during the AAPI Heritage Month
- Provided oversight of the AAPI Cultural Support Working Group that issued one resource paper and hosted one listening session and two roundtable discussions to address discrimination and hate crimes
- Collaborated with SWPAG and PsyPAG to present during National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in July

Recruitment and Retention

- Recruited 53 new APAOC officers
- Attended 8 virtual OBC Open Houses
- Organized 3 events: Virtual APAOC Social Hour, APAOC & BCOAG Collaborative Social – Sugarloaf Mountain Hike, and APAOC Leadership Transition Event

Workgroups:

Community Engagement

- Completed HMI lesson plan (pending PACE and OSG clearance)
- Coordinated speaker and CE documentation for CDR David Huang's Topics in Public Health presentation that took place in December
- Conducted training on PRECEDE-PROCEED model at PharmPAC meeting & APAOC meeting
- Established the framework for Regional Leads to host community outreach events nationwide starting next year

Social Media

- Conducted a social media campaign in the month of May
- Provided messaging for the USPHS social media platform regarding AAPI Heritage Month
- Increased Facebook followers by 10% and Instagram followers by 26%

Congratulations to all APAOC Voting Members for your outstanding accomplishments! These accomplishments would not have been possible without the tremendous contributions and support from all Voting Members, Alternate Voting Members, Senior Advisor, and volunteers.

It has been my great honor and privilege serving as the APAOC Chair during this year. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to work with and get to know LCDR Ruby Leong, APAOC Chair-Elect, CAPT Maria Fields, APAOC Senior Advisor, and so many outstanding APAOC Voting Members and General Members. This is definitely one of the highlights of my USPHS career that I will always cherish and feel proud of. I am fully confident that the next APAOC leadership and Voting Members will continue building APAOC as a strong organization.

Wishing everyone a safe and wonderful holiday season!

In Officio Salutis,

CDR Trang Tran
APAOC Chair



2021 APAOC Honor Award Recipients

The APAOC awards were developed to promote future leadership of Asian Pacific Americans in Public Health Service by honoring members of the Commissioned Corps or equivalent Civil Service professionals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of the Nation's Health.

Congratulations to the following officers!

CDR Jerry Zee

RADM Samuel Lin Senior Officer Award

LT Xia Michelle Lin

RADM Kenneth Moritsugu Junior Officer Award

LCDR Nancy Tian

CAPT Allan Lock Service Award

Interviews with the 2021 APAOC Honor Award Recipients

CDR Jerry Zee, recipient of the RADM Samuel Lin Senior Officer Award



Why did you join the U.S. Public Health Service?

I joined because after 9/11 happened, as a native New Yorker, I felt it was my duty to respond in a positive way by serving my fellow Americans in uniform. It has been an incredible journey for 16+ years and I hope many more years to come.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement professionally was providing inmates at a Federal Bureau of Prisons facility with high quality, day-to-night health care during and after Super Storm Sandy while the electricity was out in New York City. All human beings ought to be treated equitably with dignity and care, and I am grateful to serve in that capacity during the most trying time at my duty station post 9/11, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What advice do you have for junior officers?

My advice to junior officers is live out your passion in the Commissioned Corps uniform and don't hold anything back because it is worth it!

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LCDR Nany Tian, recipient of the CAPT Allan Lock Service Award

Why did you join the U.S. Public Health Service?

Back to 2009, I was attending a conference at San Diego, California, while I was in the last year of my doctoral program in Texas. When I was at the exhibition hall, I saw the FEMA booth staffed by two officers, which inspired me to learn about the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) for the first time. I did more research on the USPHS upon my return and realized that I shared the passion for its mission to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our nation. I was commissioned in 2011. The rest is history.

What is your proudest achievement?

Early in my USPHS career from 2012-2017, I worked in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) as a public health analyst where I spearheaded the National Hospital Preparedness evaluation efforts. My ASPR days greatly equipped me in disaster and public health emergency response. It taught me to make data-driven decisions, solve challenging problems and be resilient in rapid response environments. Building on these skills, I would say my overall proudest achievement in the last decade has been the opportunity to support the missions of the USPHS during several deployments. I have been deployed 17 times with more than 200 days in many leadership roles including Team Lead, Information Management Section Chief, and Group Supervisor. There is nothing like the feeling of being deployed to contribute to and get the pulse of the nation's health firsthand. It is very invigorating.

What advice do you have for junior officers?

Along this amazing PHS career path, don't travel alone. As USPHS officers, we are so connected with each other, our civilian colleagues, and the public we serve. Through supporting one another, we learn from each other and grow as professionals. Never forget we are in this together with our mentors' guidance, colleagues' support, and friends' cheers. Every day when you wake up, remember to let your drive and life's purpose inspire you and others to make a difference in public health.



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LT Xia Michelle Lin, recipient of the RADM Kenneth Moritsugu Junior Officer Award

Why did you join the U.S. Public Health Service?

I had a uniform dream when I was a child – I always wanted to join one of the uniformed services because it means enormous pride and service to other people. Fast forward many years, I joined CDC as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer in 2013 and learned that joining U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps was an option! However, I was not eligible at that time because I was not a U.S. citizen. Since then, I knew I would join when I became eligible. In 2017, I became a U.S. citizen and applied to USPHS as soon as it was open to my category (Scientist) that year. In the summer of 2019, I was finally called to active duty and able to wear the uniform I literally dreamed numerous times. I was pinned on my 44th birthday (maximum age for joining USPHS) and my eyes were full of tears. Our uniform represents the USPHS core values, Leadership, Service, Integrity and Excellence. These are the important values in my life and the reasons I joined.



What is your proudest achievement?

In the summer of 2020, I was deployed to support CDC's COVID-19 response. I led a team that worked around the clock to collect, validate, and reconcile U.S. COVID-19 case and death counts for 50 states and 10 other jurisdictions. The team faced many challenges but we were able to use our technical expertise and expert judgment to provide daily preliminary and final counts of COVID-19 cases and deaths to the CDC Director, HHS leadership, and the White House. We also provided official case and death counts for daily updates to the CDC website (COVID Tracker) and verified those visualizations before they went live each day. That is my proudest achievement.

What advice do you have for junior officers?

As a junior officer myself, I understand the challenges we are facing in these unprecedented times. I hope we can manage negativity, focus on opportunities, and enjoy the satisfaction from our fulfilling work. After all, we all joined the service for its mission.



COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout in Dover, Delaware

By CDR Harold Sano, CDR Su-Lin Sun, and CAPT Ryan Nguyen



(L to R) CAPT Monika Houstoun, CDR Harold Sano, CDR Su-Lin Sun, and CAPT Ryan Nguyen

This past winter, as the Nation began distributing the COVID-19 vaccines, many states began setting up mass vaccination clinics. In mid-February 2021, a team of approximately 23 Commissioned Corps Officers, were put on notice for deployment to Dover, Delaware and assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with organizing a mass vaccination drive through clinic. This was one of the first FEMA mass vaccination events conducted with the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) support and one of the first events in which the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were concurrently administered at the same site. The deployment team consisted primarily of nurses, pharmacists, and one medical officer. To participate in this deployment, each officer had already completed their COVID-19 vaccination series.

The PHS team deployed to Delaware within 48 hours and organized an Incident Command System (ICS) structure. Everyone was required to do a COVID-19 rapid test on the first day of arrival to ensure safety within the team. CAPT Ryan Nguyen, CDR Su-Lin Sun and CDR Harold Sano were among several pharmacists from FDA that deployed. Nurses and pharmacists who were licensed and trained to administer vaccines were assigned to various drive-through lanes, while the other pharmacists were assigned to one of two vaccine preparation teams. The Moderna pharmacy team prepared only Moderna doses, and the Pfizer pharmacy team prepared only Pfizer doses in order to avoid potential errors and mix-ups.

FEMA and Delaware Emergency Management Agency were the lead agencies in charge of the drive-through vaccination clinic. The mission was to provide Delaware residents (e.g., senior citizens, schoolteachers) a fast and convenient way to receive their 2nd vaccination.

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COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout in Dover, Delaware

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Pharmacy tent for preparing Pfizer vaccine



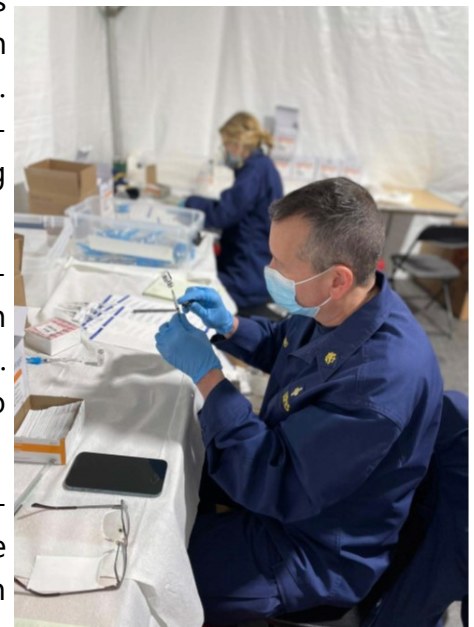
Drive through vaccination lanes

The drive through clinic was set up at the Dover International Speedway racetrack parking lot with ten marked lanes allowing the residents to receive their 2nd shot while remaining in their car. The four outer lanes (1-4) and (7-10) were assigned either for Moderna or Pfizer vaccine patients, and the two middle lanes were assigned to vehicles with multiple patients needing both Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. The drive-through clinic was open for residents beginning at 8:00 am through 6:30 pm and was originally scheduled for five days but was expanded to one additional day to offer both first and second doses. The goal was to vaccinate approximately 2,500 residents per day.

CAPT Ryan Nguyen was the pharmacist in charge for the Pfizer vaccine preparation team which included CDR Su-Lin Sun, CDR Harold Sano, and CAPT Moni Houstoun. CAPT Nguyen was in constant collaboration with the FEMA and Delaware Public Health officials for forecasting the number of Pfizer vaccine vials needed to thaw and refrigerate for the next day's calculated daily vaccine needs to minimize vaccine waste. Each vial yielded six doses (syringes) and had an expiration of six hours once reconstituted. CAPT Houstoun, CDRs Sun, and Sano were the vaccine preparers. Preparing the vaccine involved diluting the vaccine, preparing syringes with accurate beyond use date/time, and maintaining cold chain storage and inventory to reduce vaccine waste by the end of day. They had to prepare approximately 250 doses before the first patients arrived at 8:00 am to keep the vaccination lanes moving without any delays.

The Pfizer team averaged about 1,250 prepared doses per day. Between the Pfizer and the Moderna teams, the task force mission vaccinated approximately 16,000 Delaware residents in six days. The team was happy to report that all doses were used, with zero wastage, and no mix-ups between Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Despite the sub-freezing temperature during February, the deployment team did an outstanding job providing a great service for the state of Delaware and our Nation. The response team was even recognized in a tweet by the U.S. Surgeon General, VADM Vivek Murthy. It was an honor to participate in this deployment.



CDR Sano preparing Pfizer dose



Deployment to the Resource Coordination Branch

By CDR Kent Bui

December 11, 2020 marked an important milestone as the FDA granted Pfizer-BioNTech the first Emergency Use Authorization for a vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Despite this achievement, the U.S. experienced one of its darkest hours in the fight against COVID-19. New cases in January 2021 surged above 250,000 per day, and more than 3,200 Americans died every day. To support the public health emergency response, I deployed to the Resource Coordination Branch (RCB) at the Secretary Operation Center (SOC).

The mission of RCB is to coordinate all resource requests consisting of personnel, supplies, equipment, and services for planned and unplanned incidents and events. RCB performs operations and logistics functions, including acquisition and provision of health and medical resources via the Request for Resource (RFR) process to address unmet needs, monitoring and tracking the mobilization, deployment, ongoing status, and redeployment of requested teams, equipment, and supplies.

My daily activities at RCB included tracking incoming and existing RFRs from local, state, and tribal agencies, identifying new requests, assisting in generating Task Orders that allow RCB to fill requests, and tracking the completion and fulfillment of requests. In addition, I developed an instructional RCB RFR Flowchart, which depicted the workflow of how RFRs are received and processed by RCB and SOC leadership. I also witnessed the successful implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign evident by the surge in RFR requests for specialized syringes and needles to extract an additional dose from the early version of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine 5-dose vials, which contained up to 6 doses. This method ensured that every single dose of the vaccine was used and would be available to the much-needed public.

I am honored for the opportunity to contribute to the pandemic response to combat COVID-19 and protect public health. I have learned much from this deployment and look forward to continuing my service to promote and advance the mission of the USPHS in the fight to end the COVID-19 pandemic.



CDR Kent Bui at the Mission Support Center during his COVID-19 deployment to Resource Coordination Branch



Virtual Learning at CMS amidst COVID-19

By Susie G. Kye (PharmD Candidate 2022), St. John's University College of Pharmacy

Preceptor: CDR Jerry Zee, PharmD, MPH, CPH, CMS ACO Coordinator

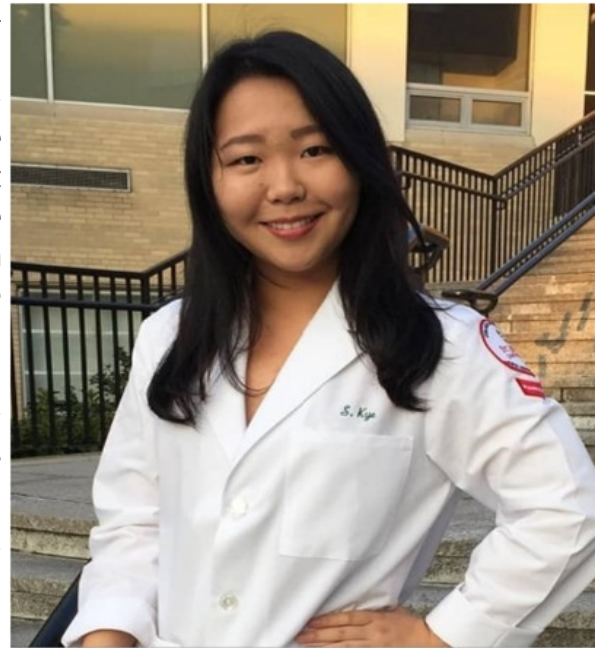
I had the pleasure of completing a 4-week (9/20/21-10/15/21) Advance Pharmacy Practice Experience rotation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) under the direction of Commander Jerry Zee, the Accountable Care Organization Coordinator for CMS Region II. I was not familiar with Medicare and other types of health insurance coverages, which led me to seek out this specific rotation in the hopes of acquiring knowledge and a new perspective as an invaluable experience to better serve my patients as a future pharmacist. My goals for this rotation were to develop extensive knowledge of the Medicare program and understand the administrative and regulatory responsibilities of pharmacists at CMS.

I was offered various opportunities to attend regional pharmacist meetings, educational programs, and training sessions. These enriching learning opportunities helped me understand the daily roles and responsibilities of CMS pharmacists at the regional level.

The rotation also helped me realize other potential opportunities that pharmacists can contribute to in the federal government and expand my knowledge on Medicare. I was given the opportunity to present the Medicare Part D CY2022 updates, alongside Mr. John Cocchiara, the Lead Regional Pharmacist for the Medicare Part D Program, to student pharmacists from Rutgers University. I am grateful that daily feedback was provided as I prepped to ensure my presentation was a success. From this project, I learned to identify yearly updates of the Medicare Part D program for each state and gained greater confidence in my presentation delivery. There were research projects provided by Commander Kelly Valente, the Regional Pharmacist for CMS Region I, which helped me gain a greater understanding in future changes to the Medicare Part D program.

Prior to this rotation, I was curious about the amount of Asian-American representation in the federal government, specifically in CMS and within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). I assumed there would be a select few Asian Americans representation at CMS and HHS. I was pleasantly surprised to learn there are many more serving in CMS and HHS than my original expectation. I felt proud that many Asian-Americans are making a significant public health impact serving our country. I realized that there are many opportunities for Asian Americans like myself to serve within CMS and HHS.

I grew both professionally and personally from this CMS rotation, and developed time management skills by effectively allocating time to study Medicare parts A, B, C, and D between meetings and projects. It was very rewarding to develop robust relationships with the many CMS pharmacists who provided me valuable experience, and support.



Susie G. Kye (PharmD Candidate 2022)



Results of the 2021 APAOC Demographic and Feedback Survey

By CDR Yoon Kong and LCDR Vicky Hsu

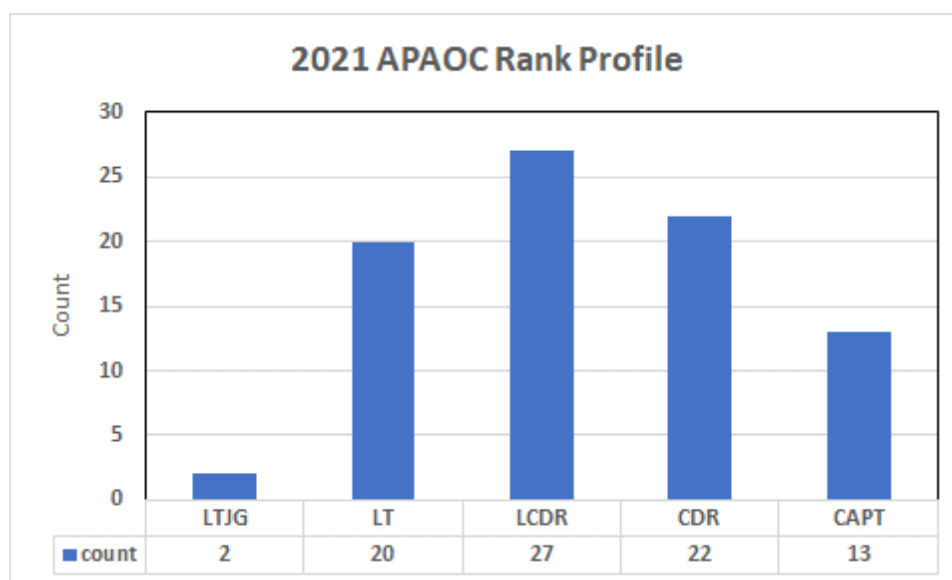
The Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC) aims to enhance and advance communication of minority related and professional development issues between the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) and U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) officers. To this end, APAOC serves to meet the following objectives to fulfill its mission and goals: 1) Provide advice and consultation to the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) on issues of interest and concerns of APAOC officers and the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, 2) Act as resource for career development and mentoring of APAOC officers, 3) Provide support for OSG initiatives and community outreach and 4) Serve as a network of support for APAOC members. <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/apaoc/mission.aspx> <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/apaoc/function.aspx>

The first component of this survey was to solicit relevant demographic information from APAOC members to start establishing a general membership database that can be used to support various OSG initiatives and APAOC activities. Also, understanding demographic composition of APAOC members and community would enable us to gauge how we are doing as an organization, determine strengths and weaknesses, and discover ways to address weaknesses and improve our services. The second component of this survey was to gauge feedback on how APAOC as an organization can continue to serve our members in a sensitive, effective, and meaningful manner. The survey was rolled out on October 4, 2021. A total of 86 APAOC members responded to the survey. The results of the survey were shared with members on November 17th, 2021.

The survey questions and results are presented below.

1) What is your PHS Rank?

The top three ranks were Commander, Lieutenant Commander followed by Lieutenant.



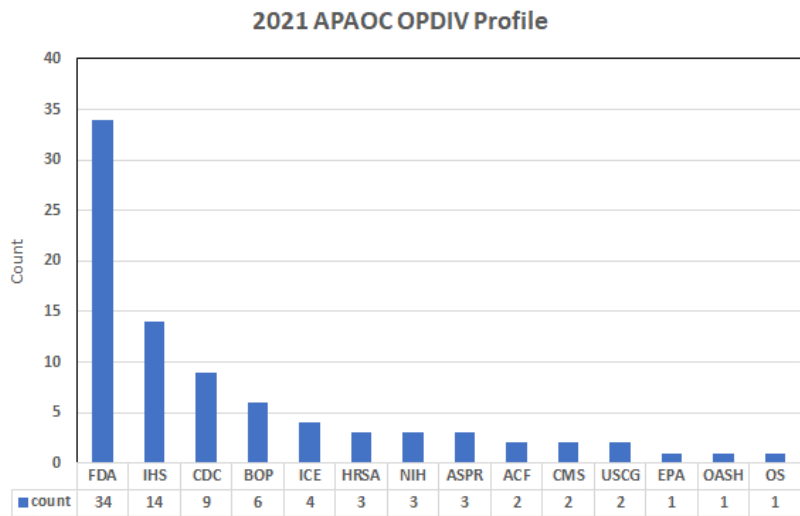
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Results of the 2021 APAOC Demographic and Feedback Survey

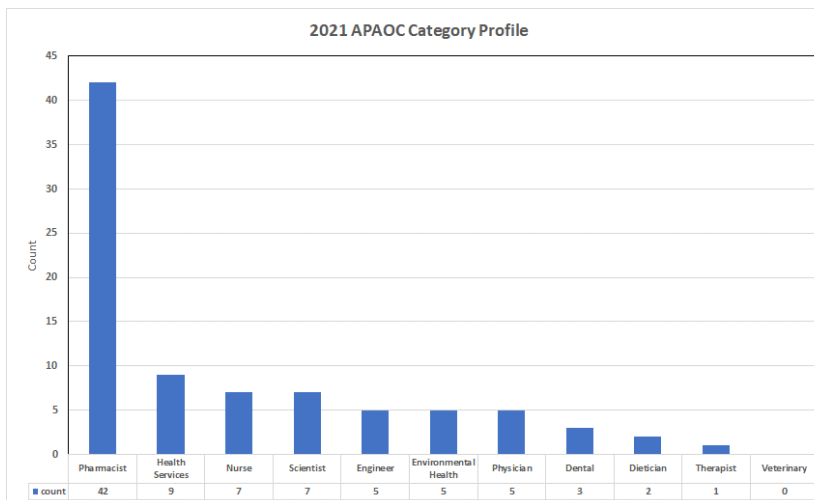
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2) What is your Department/Operating Division?



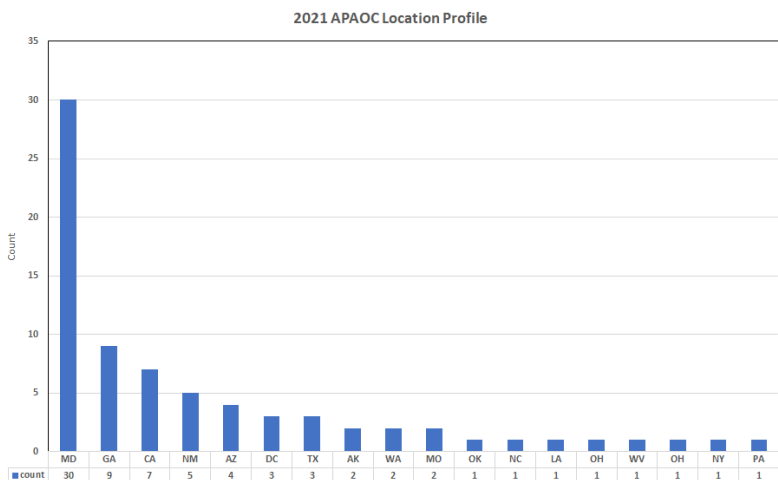
The top three Operating Divisions were Food and Drug Administration, Indian Health Services, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

3) What is your professional category?



The top three categories were Pharmacist, Health Service Officer, and Nurse.

4) What city/state or U.S. territory is your duty station located?



The top three geographical locations were Maryland, Georgia, and California.

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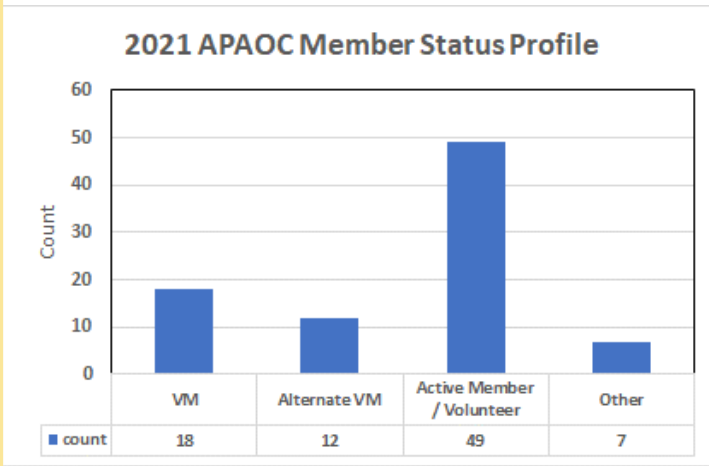


Results of the 2021 APAOC Demographic and Feedback Survey

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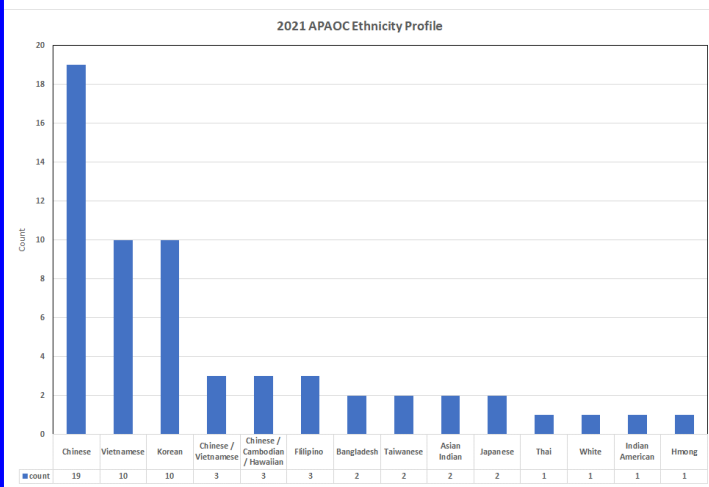
5) What is your current APAOC membership?

The majority of respondents identified as active members/volunteers.



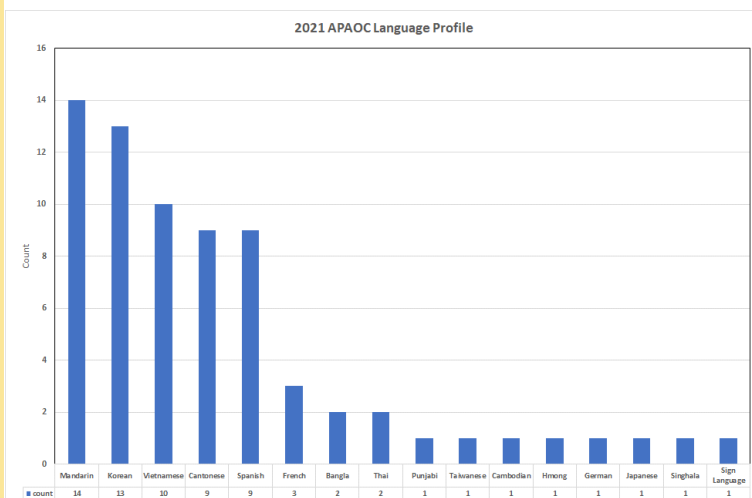
6) What is your ethnicity?

The top three ethnicities were Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.



7) What language(s) can you speak?

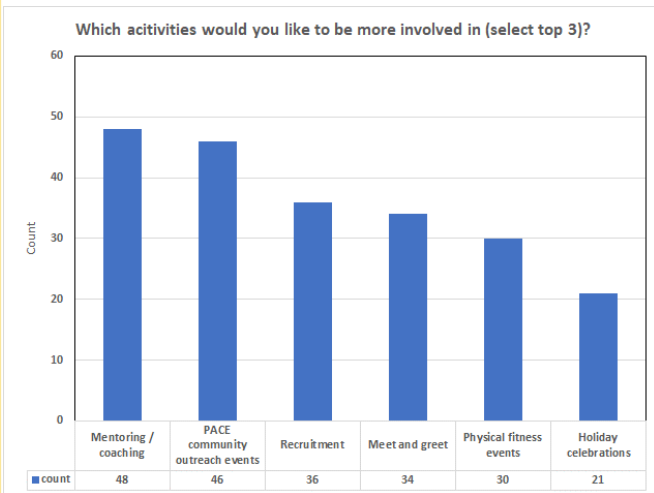
The top three languages were Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese.



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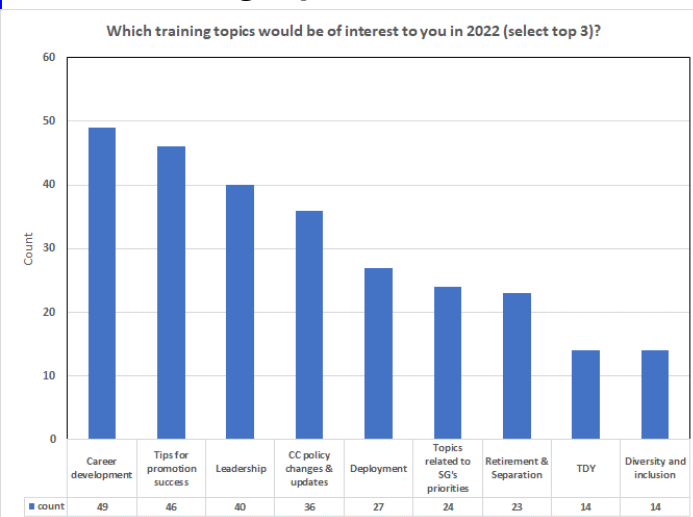


8) What APAOC activities would you like to be more involved in your local area (top 3)?



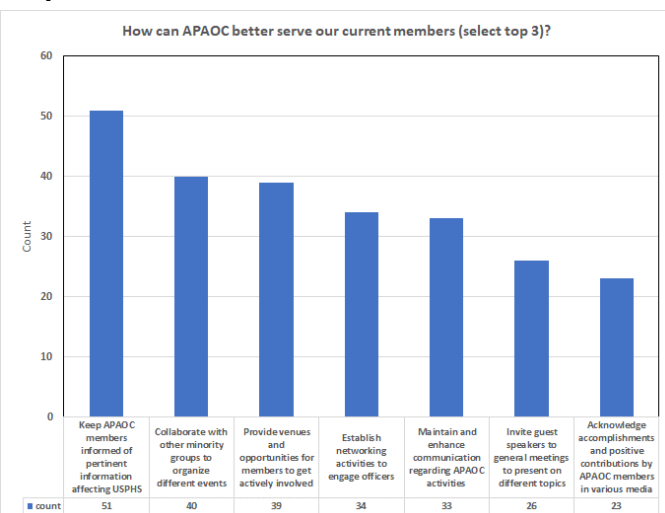
The top three activities selected were mentoring/coaching, PACE community and outreach events, and recruitment.

9) What training topics would be of interest to you in 2022 (top 3)?



The top three training topics were career development, promotion success tips, and leadership.

10) How can APAOC better serve our current members (top 3)?



The top three areas selected were: 1) provide pertinent USPHS information to APAOC members, 2) collaborate with minority groups for events, and 3) provide venues/opportunities for APAOC member active participation.

(continued on page 16)



Results of the 2021 APAOC Demographic and Feedback Survey

Continued

11) Which areas do you feel APAOC has demonstrated a strong presence (open-ended response)?

- Excellent/frequent communications
- Mental health/Healthy Mind Initiative
- Career development, pertinent trainings, webinars, annual leadership summits
- Social networking events/friendly atmosphere
- Commitment and leadership of APAOC Voting Members
- Collaborations with other Chartered Minority Advisory Groups and Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC)
- Active engagement from APAOC Senior Advisor

12) Which areas do you feel APAOC needs to improve (open-ended response)?

- Create opportunities in other geographical areas, aside from East Coast/DC metro area
- Low participation in some APAOC activities
- Leadership opportunities and trainings, more seminars/workshops relevant to career progression
- Offer more informal networking events
- Work more with OSG, minority, or other groups
- Increase senior officers' participation for mentorship and promotion package review
- Connect with officers, inclusion of others
- Ways to learn about APAOC earlier in career

13) Please let us know if you have any other thoughts/suggestion/concerns that you may have and provide your contact information so that we can follow up with you (open-ended response).

- General praise for APAOC and newsletters
- Work collaboratively with category PACs to leverage shared interests, goals, activities
- Regular check-in calls with new members
- Plan more local social events around the country
- Continue mentorship program
- Provide announcement on how to recruit new members
- Provide resources such as free CEUs, BLS classes, educational programs

APAOC would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for continued support and active involvement. We welcome any additional feedback moving forward to create a robust, dynamic, compassionate, and effective organization to support APAOC officers, Office of the Surgeon General, and AAPI communities.



APAOC and BCOAG Collaborative Social Hiking Event at Sugarloaf Mountain

By LCDR Yajun Jason Tu and LCDR Jen Eng

On September 18, 2021, eight U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps Officers and four civilians hiked through the trails of Sugarloaf Mountain. Sugarloaf Mountain is located about 20 miles northwest of Rockville, Maryland. There were also ten officers outside of the DC/Maryland/Virginia area who participated virtually. The event was organized by LCDR Yajun Jason Tu and LCDR Jen Eng of the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC) Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee, and LCDR Njeri Jones of the Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) Social Committee. This was the first ever APAOC and BCOAG collaborative social event.



(L to R) CDR Julie Clement, CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh, LCDR Yajun Jason Tu, LCDR Ingrid St. Amand, LT Tessa Fletcher, LCDR My-Le Nguyen, CDR Kara Lampasone, and LT Lorna Benoit

Sugarloaf came by its name because its shape reminded early hunters and pioneers of the sugar loaves common in those days. Sugarloaf Mountain has been designated a Registered Natural Landmark due to its geological interest and striking beauty. Around mid-morning, the group gathered at the East View parking lot with a warm welcome given by LCDR Tu, followed by introductions of attendees. LCDR Tu challenged the group to hike the steepest and most difficult trail to the summit of the mountain, the Orange trail (Sunrise Trail). It was a short but strenuous quarter mile climb that offered spectacular views at the top. The group accepted the challenge and successfully made it to the top of the mountain. After climbing the difficult trail, the group was rewarded with magnificent and astonishing views at the top, overlooking the Potomac River and villages at the base of the mountain.

Upon returning back to the East View parking lot, the group continued hiking the White trail (Mountain Loop Trail), a two-and-a-half-mile loop around the summit. The ascent started cool and pleasant, but towards the end it ended very humid. However, all participants enjoyed seeing and talking with one another in person since most of us have not had a chance to see other officers since the pandemic.



(L to R) LCDR My-Le Nguyen, LT Tessa Fletcher, LT Lorna Benoit, LCDR Ingrid St. Amand, LCDR Yajun Jason Tu, CDR Kara Lampasone, and CDR Julie Clement

The event was well received by the group with requests of hosting the event again next year, perhaps making it an annual outing. The hike was a perfect opportunity for networking and building camaraderie among officers. We helped to increase awareness about USPHS and promote APAOC's visibility, while also modeling a healthy lifestyle by being physically active. Every participant went home with a giveaway, either a

PHS or APAOC logo swag, huge smiles, and a sense of accomplishment. This event was highly successful and well collaborated between APAOC and BCOAG.



Tips from Promoted Officers-A Summary from an APAOC and DC COA Panel Discussion

By CDR Bic Nguyen, CDR Quynh-Van Tran, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Sophia Park, and LT Xia Michelle Lin

On September 29, 2021, the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC) and the District of Columbia Commissioned Officers Association (DC COA) held a joint panel discussion with USPHS officers promoted during the 2020 and 2021 promotion cycles. The panelists were:

- CAPT Simleen Kaur (Food and Drug Administration (FDA), HSO)
- CAPT Melissa Laufenberg (ICE Health Service Corps (IHSC), Nurse)
- CDR Jonathan Boress (Indian Health Service (IHS), Pharmacy)
- CDR Kristina Melia (IHSC, Pharmacy)
- LCDR William Chang (FDA, Engineer)
- LCDR Michelle Hughes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Scientist)
- LCDR Tiffany Pham (Administration for Children and Families, HSO)

During the discussion, the panelists shared their experiences on topics such as career progression, mentoring, awards, and other relevant topics related to the promotion process. Here are highlights of what they believed to be keys to their success.

General Comments:

- Build strong working relationships with your supervisors/raters, especially with civilian supervisors who may not understand the importance of scores in the Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER). Understand what supervisors expect the officers to accomplish in order to obtain scores of 6 and 7 for each precept. Set clear expectations early and communicate regularly.
- Advocate for awards. Seek opportunities to write awards for any special assignments, collateral duties, or volunteer work.
- Demonstrate career progression through programmatic and geographic moves, or increased billet and responsibilities. Plan your move at least 2 years before your promotion cycle to allow time to establish your new responsibilities in your job.
- Consider at least one move to an agency that works with underserved and vulnerable populations such as the IHS, Federal Bureau of Prisons, or IHSC as they are mission priority sites to meet career progression benchmark for all ranks.

Leadership roles:

- Obtain leadership roles in committees by volunteering for professional advisory committee projects. Volunteering will help you to establish rapport within the committees and facilitate you to be considered for future leadership roles.
- Consider authoring articles for newsletters as not only a CV booster, but as a good way to get your name known.
- Seek opportunities to utilize your skillsets to meet the needs of the organization you are serving.
- Talk with your supervisor and seek opportunities to lead working groups or other projects. Ensure you see through to project completion to demonstrate accountability and reliability.
- Voting membership can play a significant role because it means that you have been recognized by your fellow officers as a capable leader. Consider starting out as an alternate voting member.

(continued on page 19)



Tips from Promoted Officers-A Summary from an APAOC and DC COA Panel Discussion *Continued*

Mentorship:

- Consider having mentors throughout your entire career, not just during promotion cycles.
- Take advantage of category or agency mentoring programs. You can have multiple mentors – think agency, category, senior officer, and even officers of the same rank.
- For junior officers, try the [JOAG Peer to Peer Mentoring Program](#).
- Set a time to go over your promotion materials with your mentor(s) in detail. This may be critical in helping you locate areas for improvement.

Promotion documents:

- Prepare promotion documents early and seek feedback from various senior officers both inside and outside the agency.
- Keep a spreadsheet throughout the year to record your accomplishments.
- Refer to benchmarks while writing your CV. Highlight all the key benchmarks for your promoting rank and remember to look at your entire career rather than just recent accomplishments.
- METRICS! Quantify accomplishments as much as possible to show impact.
- Reviewing Official Statement may be the most important document in your promotion packet because it is coming from your reviewing official. Focus on your agency work and the impact of your work on the public health and agency.
- Ask for letters of appreciation for any acting roles if you have done a good job.
- Be sure to upload into eOPF all supporting documents for everything that is on your CV.

Awards:

- Refer to the benchmarks for appropriate award(s) that need to be obtained for a certain rank. For example, a Commendation Medal for promotion to O-5 is important. Think national level impact, which may mean that you have to wait a little bit before you can put together a write-up to try for a higher-level award.
- Include metrics in the award write-up to show impact.
- Have colleagues review and edit your draft award write-up before submitting it for review and clearance.

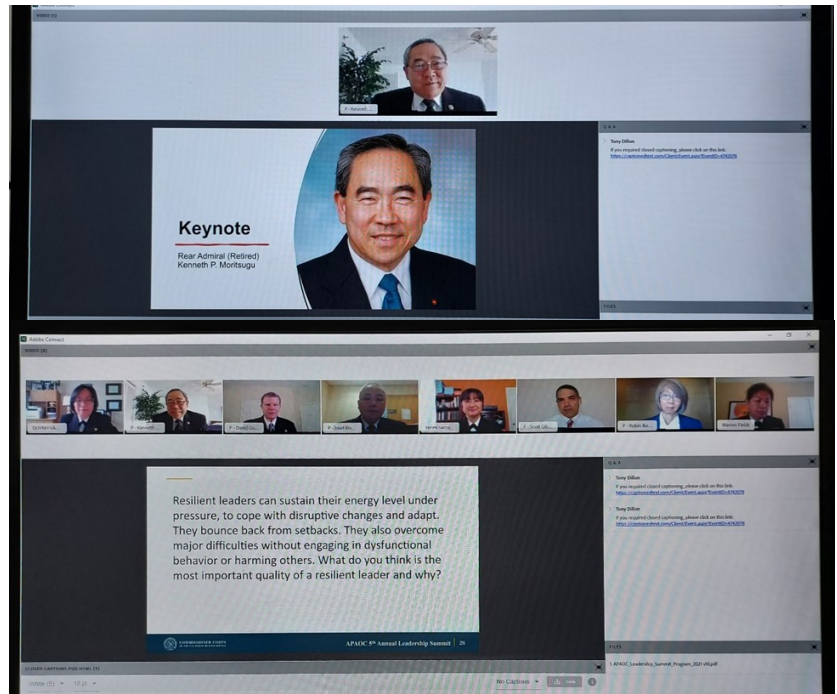
Special thanks to all the panelists and the planning committee members from APAOC and DC COA for making this panel discussion a great success with 128 officers in attendance. The event was led by LCDR Yvon Yeo and other planning committee members including CDR Bic Nguyen, CDR Ruiqing Pamboukian, CDR Quynh-Van Tran, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Doan Singh, and LT Michelle Lin. We hope these tips help our fellow officers put the best foot forward when submitting their next promotion packets.



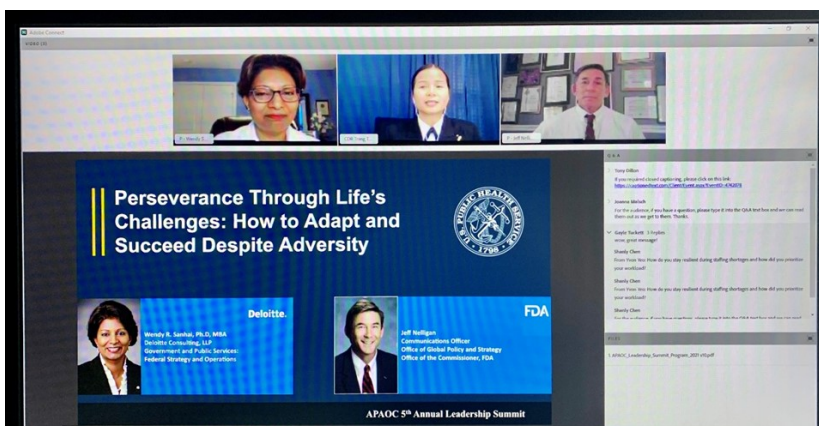
APAOC's 5th Annual Leadership Summit and Mentoring Session

By CDR Trang Tran

On October 22, 2021, APAOC successfully organized the 5th Annual Leadership Summit with over 100 attendees. It was a great honor and privilege for APAOC to have RADM (Ret.) Kenneth Moritsugu serve as the keynote speaker along with other esteemed panelists that included RADM (Ret.) Scott Giberson, RADM (Ret.) Robin Ikeda, RADM David Goldman, CAPT Marivic Fields, CAPT Josef Rivero, CAPT Helen Saccone, Mr. Jeff Nelligan, and Dr. Wendy Sanhai. During this event, the audience was inspired by the keynote speech, the celebration of APAOC slide show, APAOC accomplishments, and the panel discussions on resilient leadership and perseverance through life's challenges.



Special thanks to CDR Ruiqing Pamboukian and CDR Quynh-Van Tran, APAOC's Education & Training Subcommittee Chairs, for successfully leading the planning efforts for this special event. In addition, we would like to thank all members of the Planning Committee (CAPT Marivic Fields, CAPT Simleen Kaur, CDR Trang Tran, CDR Hong Vu, LCDR Vicky Hsu, LCDR Kelly Leong, LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Sophia Park, LCDR Doan Singh, LT Shanly Chen, and LT Michelle Lin), the Master of Ceremony (CDR David Shih), and the IT Support Team (CDR Thiep Vo, LCDR Andy Duong, Mr. Tony Dillon, Mr. Gideon McMullin, and Ms. Joanna Malsch) for their outstanding dedication and contributions to make this event a great success. We have received much positive feedback from panelists and attendees. For those of you who could not attend the event, please watch the recording through this link: <https://collaboration.fda.gov/pgiu6fx5hbia/>.



At the end of the Annual Leadership Summit, RADM David Goldman, RADM (ret.) Robin Ikeda, RADM (ret.) Kenneth Moritsugu, CAPT Maria Fields, CAPT Helen Saccone, and CAPT Alan Ou participated in a zoom mentoring session to meet with 20 mentees. The session was broken down into 3 groups of mentors and mentees to have an informal conversation about career progression and professional development. All mentors and mentees really enjoyed the experience. Many thanks to LCDR Kelly Leong for leading this successful mentoring session.



2021 APAOC Leadership Transition Event - the Hybrid Way!

By LCDR Jen Eng and LCDR Jason Tu



(L to R) LCDR Jason Tu, LT Suresh Jayasekara, CDR Nguyet Ton, LCDR Jen Eng, LCDR Ruby Leong, CAPT Maria Fields, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Yen Phan, LCDR Nancy Tian, CAPT Sam Wu, and LCDR Vicky Hsu

There is nothing more magical than getting together for the holiday season. APAOC Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee was excited to be able to host the first ever hybrid (in-person and virtual) Leadership Transition Event on December 11, 2021. It was great to finally see one another and put on fun and festive attire. Even our virtual participants dressed up and participated in our ugly sweater contest, the winner was an officer stationed in Oklahoma!

During this event, CAPT Fields, APAOC Senior Advisor, had the honor of providing the opening remarks. She enlightened the group with her knowledge, skills, positive advice, and wisdom. CAPT Fields has been so instrumental for APAOC this year, particularly in supporting junior officers. After the opening remarks, CDR Trang Tran, APAOC Chair, shared this year's APAOC outstanding accomplishments and welcomed the new APAOC leadership and Voting Members.

CAPT Fields and CDR Tran also had the opportunity to congratulate and present the award certificates to APAOC Honor Award Recipients: CDR Jerry Zee (2021 RADM Samuel Lin Senior Officer Award Recipient), LT Xia Michelle Lin (2021 RADM Kenneth Moritsugu Junior Officer Award Recipient), and LCDR Nancy Tian (2021 CAPT Allan Lock Service Award Recipient).

As the operational year comes to an end, CDR Trang Tran has passed the baton to LCDR Ruby Leong as the next APAOC Chair in 2022. LCDR Leong shared her vision to continue supporting professional development of APAOC officers, enhancing visibility of APAOC within USPHS, and providing service in AAPI communities.

APAOC would like to sincerely thank CAPT Fields, all current Voting Members, Alternate Voting Members, and volunteers for their unwavering service and dedication to support the APAOC mission. This event certainly brought holiday cheer to all officers that attended! The hybrid style will resurface again in the future so everyone can be included no matter where you are stationed around our wonderful nation.

Please take a moment to enjoy the [Holiday Slideshow](#) and the [Leadership Transition Event Slideshow](#).



Call for Article Submissions and Volunteers

2022 APAOC Newsletter

The Publications Subcommittee is seeking article submissions for the 2022 APAOC Newsletter. Please consider submitting articles highlighting any newsworthy activities of APAOC members, whether you are a general member or a voting member.

Interested in submitting an article or volunteering?

Please forward your submissions to

CDR Denise Morrison, Denise.C.Morrison@ice.dhs.gov
LT Adena Yau, Adena.Yau@ihs.gov
or LT Sophie Soo, Sophie.Soo@hhs.gov

General Guidelines

- Please submit articles in Microsoft Word (.doc or docx format), using Times New Roman 12-point font.
- An editor will be assigned to each article and they will work with the authors to edit/modify the content as necessary.
- When emailing your article, please include the following subject line: **APAOC Spring 2022 Newsletter – [Article Title]_[Author Last Name]**

Agency Clearance (if required for your article)

- Please obtain appropriate clearances for any agency-specific or agency-sensitive information prior to submission to APAOC.
- Before sending the article to your Agency, we encourage the primary author to contact CDR Denise Morrison, LT Adena Yau, and LT Sophie Soo via email once you have your preliminary draft for an initial review.

Photography Guidelines

- Photographs are strongly encouraged to be submitted with articles. Please ensure that the submitted pictures meet the following guidelines:
- Photographs in .JPG or .PNG format are preferred. High quality resolution is strongly recommended.
- Please embed photo(s) into the Word document and include original file(s) as an attachment for better resolution.
- Uniformed officers must follow the USPHS uniform specifications and related policy uniform (e.g., conference name tags should not be visible over the uniform).
- Uniformed officers must follow general military etiquette when including different ranks (e.g., officers should be ordered in lowest to highest rank, left to right).
- A caption is required for each picture; in the caption, please include the rank and full name for each PHS officer present in the picture.
- If there is a civilian in the photo, please obtain their written authorization to publish the photo.

