

# ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OFFICERS COMMITTEE

of the

## United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

### Executive Committee Members

**Chair:** CDR Trang Tran  
**Chair-Elect:** LCDR Ruby Leong  
**Executive Secretary:** LCDR Sally Doan  
**Corresponding Secretary:**  
 LT Huan Tran  
**Treasurer:** CDR Yoon Kong  
**MOLC Representatives:**  
 CAPT Teresa Ramson & CDR Honeylit Cuelco  
**Leadership & Strategic Planning:**  
 CDR Simleen Kaur

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## APAOC Chair's Corner

Dear APAOC members,

I hope everyone's New Year has been productive and is going well. It is my great honor and privilege to serve as the 2021 APAOC Chair. On behalf of the APAOC members, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the immediate past APAOC Chair, LCDR Kelly Leong, for her unwavering leadership, dedication, and service to APAOC during last years' unprecedented challenges. In addition, I'd like to thank our outgoing Voting Members (VMs) for their tremendous service and contributions during their term to help APAOC remain a strong voice within the USPHS Commissioned Corps and to serve the professional needs of Asian Pacific American Officers and their communities.

As the new APAOC Chair, I strive to continue building APAOC into a strong organization to support APAOC members, Office of the Surgeon General (OSG)'s priorities, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. There are four overarching goals that I would like to pursue for APAOC this year:

*(Continued on page 2)*



### 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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<https://www.facebook.com/PHSAsianPacificAmerican>

### Interested in submitting an article or volunteering?

Please forward your submissions to  
 LT William Chang, [William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov)  
 CDR Harold Sano, [Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov)  
 or LT Sophie Soo, [Sophie.Soo@ihs.gov](mailto:Sophie.Soo@ihs.gov)



# APAOC Chair's Corner

Continued

- Empower APAOC officers to take charge and be leaders
- Promote collaborations within APAOC and with OSG Professional Advisory Chartered Minority Advisory Groups
- Provide more professional development opportunities for officers
- Enhance communications to provide helpful information and valuable resources in a timely manner

The following are the new initiatives that APAOC will be working on:

- APAOC will be inviting speakers for its general meetings to share helpful information, resources, or advice with our members. CAPT Fields was the first speaker of the year. The American Indian/Alaska Native Commissioned Officer Advisory Committee (AI/ANCOAC) Leadership and Community Engagement Committee chairs presented at the APAOC general meeting in March.
- Based on the 2020 APAOC survey results, there is an interest in having long-term strategic goals for APAOC. This will enable APAOC to implement long-term initiatives and have a consistent plan to move forward over a longer period of time. LCDR Ruby Leong and I have developed the draft 3-year strategic goals for APAOC which will be reviewed by the Executive Committee, Subcommittees, and Workgroups.
- With the new direction from USPHS leadership, APAOC will be working with the Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE) Chartered Advisory Group to get more involved with community engagement activities this year. Based on the 2020 APAOC survey results, our members are interested in supporting the OSG's priorities

related to COVID-19, opioids and addiction, maternal health, and hypertension. The Community Engagement Workgroup (CEWG) has taken this into consideration as they plan out activities for this year. The CEWG is also developing a mental health PACE lesson plan that may be used for community outreach in the future.

- APAOC will continue to collaborate with other Chartered Minority Advisory Groups in supporting the OSG's priorities.
  - ◇ On February 18, 2021, I had the opportunity to attend the AI/ANCOAC general meeting with LCDR Ruby Leong and the CEWG Chairs, LCDR Kinbo Lee and CDR Mona Patel, to introduce APAOC and provide collaboration opportunities through training and community engagement activities. On March 17, 2021, the AI/ANCOAC leadership and Community Engagement Committee attended the APAOC general meeting to introduce their organization and express their interest in collaborating with APAOC as well. I look forward to supporting all the great collaborations between APAOC and AI/ANCOAC.
  - ◇ BCOAG has also expressed their interest in collaborating with APAOC through their Cultural Awareness Workgroup initiative and will share more information with APAOC in the near future.
- CAPT David Lau, the Readiness and Deployment Branch (RDB) liaison for APAOC and also the Senior Advisor for AMSUS Executive Planning Committee, has strongly suggested that APAOC have an AMSUS liaison, given the attention that USPHS leadership has given to AMSUS. The AMSUS liaison can share helpful informa-

tion with APAOC members about professional development and award opportunities from AMSUS. Last year, LT Shanly Chen served unofficially in this role, so he has been asked to continue his service through 2021. He has been reporting on AMSUS related information during APAOC general meetings from the beginning of the year. Thank you, LT Chen, for your willingness to serve in this new role.

In celebrating this year's Lunar New Year, the Public Relations Subcommittee successfully hosted the first virtual social event of the year on February 19 where approximately 30 officers joined the festivities. I really enjoyed the fun Lunar New Year Trivia and Guess Who games. Congratulations to all the winners: CDR Hai Lien Phung (1<sup>st</sup> place winner), LCDR Chaolong Qi (2<sup>nd</sup> place winner), and LCDR Sophia Park (3<sup>rd</sup> place winner). Many thanks to LCDR Rebecca Wong and CDR Michelle Tsai, who are the chairs of the Public Relations SC, and their alternates, CDR Shannon Beyale and LCDR Martin Yoon for their contributions. Thank you to those of you in attendance who helped make the event a great success.

On March 4, 2021, LCDR Ruby Leong and I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Roula Sweis, who is the Senior Advisor to OSG/CCHQ. She will serve as the point of contact between OSG and all chartered groups. OSG's goal is to leverage the chartered groups in advancing the Corps and the SG's priorities as a unified voice. Dr. Sweis is excited to learn about the different chartered groups and help with process improvements. She will be setting up cross group meetings on a regular basis to make sure that all chartered groups are aligned.

On March 10, 2021, the Education and Training Subcommittee successfully coordinated and hosted the 1st

*(Continued on page 3)*



# APAOC Chair's Corner

*Continued*

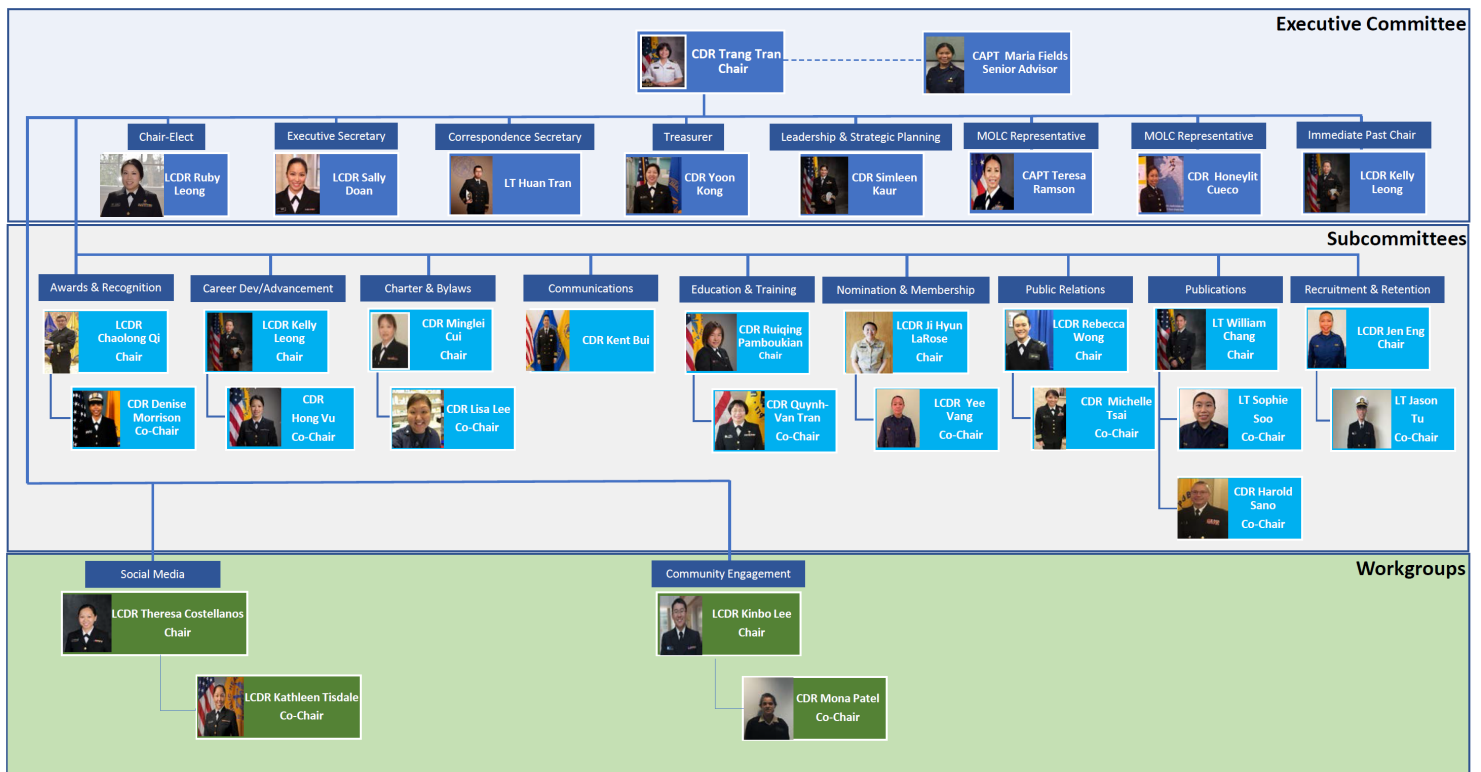
APAOC training session on "COVID-19 Vaccine Development" provided by Dr. Sudhakar Agnihothram, a Primary Reviewer/Regulatory Project Manager in the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, Office of Vaccines Research and Review. The training was well received with 45 attendees. The next APAOC training session will focus on "Building Resilience: Behavioral Health Strategies for COVID-19 Pandemic."

As our country is still fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, many APAOC officers have been deployed. I am honored to serve with LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Sally Doan, and other APAOC officers on our deployment to support the COVID-19 vaccination taskforce. For other deployed and to-be deployed officers, please have a safe deployment. Special thanks to those Voting Members and alternates who are covering APAOC duties to continue supporting the mission. If you need any add-itional support, please do not hesitate to reach out to LCDR Ruby Leong or me.

I'm excited to work with an outstanding group of Voting Members and their alternates to make this year another successful year for APAOC.

In Officio Salutis,  
 CDR Trang Tran  
 APAOC Chair

**APAOC 2021 Organizational Chart**



# Senior Advisor



**CAPT Maria Fields** is a social worker with the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). She currently holds the position of a Senior Advisor for Child Well-being and Safety in the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Administration of Children and Families (ACF). Prior to this assignment, she was a Public Health Officer in the Community Mental Health Services in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) where she worked with state planners in the development of comprehensive mental health programs for adults with severe mental illness and children with severe emotional disability. Prior to transferring to USPHS, CAPT Fields was a social worker with the U.S. Army Reserve and she was deployed to Iraq and mobilized to active duty where she served as Chief of Social Work Services/Family Advocacy Unit and Director for Patient Care Management. She has extensive experience in clinical care of military service members and family members and provided case management of high risk behavioral health patients in the military treatment facility. CAPT Fields has many years of experience in child welfare and worked as a line social worker and supervisor for Child Protective Services in San Diego County, California. She holds a B.S. degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from National University in Irvine, California, Master's in Social Work from San Diego State University and recently completed in June 2020 a Master's Degree in Defense and Strategic Studies at the U.S. Naval War College.

## Chair



**CDR Trang Tran** is the 2021 APAOC Chair. She currently serves as a Senior Regulatory Health Project Manager in the Office of New Drugs within FDA, overseeing the approval review process for nonprescription drug applications and the administrative order process for sunscreen products. She is also managing the development and clearance of guidance for industry for the implementation of the first Over-The-Counter (OTC) Monograph User Fee Program to modernize the OTC drug review and OTC monograph drug development process. Prior to this position, CDR Tran served as the Policy Project Manager for the Office of Generic Drug Policy within the Office of Generic Drugs, overseeing the development, clearance, and implementation processes for various FDA's priority regulatory policy documents and special projects. She was the Lead Project Manager for the first Generic Drug User Fee Amendments (GDUFA) policy implementation and the strategic planning for the GDUFA reauthorization negotiations with generic pharmaceutical industry. Prior to serving as the Policy Project Manager, CDR Tran was the Senior Regulatory Project Manager in the Office of Generic Drugs, coordinating over 160 generic drug approvals with 26 being the first generics. CDR Tran received her Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from Temple University – School of Pharmacy. She completed the pharmacy residency at the University of California, San Diego – Medical Center and the Executive MBA at the University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business.

## Chair-Elect



**LCDR Ruby Leong** has been an active member of APAOC as both a volunteer and voting member since her commission in 2017, and is currently enthusiastically serving her term as the APAOC Chair-Elect. LCDR Leong is stationed in Silver Spring MD at the Food and Drug Administration as a Clinical Pharmacology Team Lead in the Division of Cancer Pharmacology responsible for approval of safe and effective oncology/hematology new drugs. She is a board-certified oncology pharmacist and continues to practice oncology pharmacy as a volunteer at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. She received a Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of Michigan and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in oncology drug development at Rutgers University/Hoffmann-La Roche.





## Executive Secretary

**LCDR Sally Doan** is currently serving as the APAOC Executive Secretary for the 2021 operational year. This is the first year she serves as a Voting Member. She previously served as an Alternate Voting Member for the Awards & Recognition Subcommittee in 2020. She is in the pharmacy category, and currently serves as a Senior Regulatory Health Project Manager, in the Office of Nonprescription Drug, within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in Silver Spring, MD. Previously, LCDR Doan worked in the Office of Generic Drugs, within the FDA, as a civil servant. LCDR Doan joined the USPHS in 2017 and was stationed at Indian Health Service (IHS) in Fort Defiance, AZ. She received her pharmacy degree from the University of Connecticut.



## Corresponding Secretary

**LT Huan Tran** currently serves as the Corresponding Secretary for the 2021 operational year. Previously, he served on the Publication Subcommittee as the chair in 2020 and as Alternate in 2019. LT Tran is a pharmacist who is currently stationed in Seattle, Washington, working as an Investigator at FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs, Office of Enforcement and Import Operations, Division of West Coast Import. LT Tran received his PharmD from the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy in 2017. He was commissioned into the USPHS through the Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP) in 2016 through sponsorship from the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He worked as a staff pharmacist at Federal Correctional Complex Hazelton for three years before transferring to his current duty station.



## Treasurer

**CDR Yoon Kong** is a Research Officer within Center for Food and Drug Evaluation, Office of New Drugs, Office of Drug Evaluation, Office of Nonprescription Drugs, Division of Nonprescription Drugs I Products in Silver Spring, Maryland. She has a Pharm.D. degree with a Board Specialty in Geriatric Pharmacy. CDR Kong currently serves as a senior Interdisciplinary Scientist. In this role, her work contributes to the approval of safe and effective over-the-counter (OTC) drug products, protecting the welfare and safety of an estimated 250 million Americans who rely on over-the-counter medications for self-treatment with more than 300,000 OTC drug products marketed in the U.S. She also serves as a mentor to pharmacy students, fellows and new staff. CDR Kong has been involved in APAOC as a general member since 2010, and has served two, consecutive terms as a voting member since 2016. As a voting member, CDR Kong served as a Co-chair and Chair of the Public Relations & Merchandise subcommittee, Corresponding Secretary, Co-chair of the Recruitment and Retention subcommittee, Chair of the Communications subcommittee, and currently serves as the Treasurer. She is humbled and honored to represent APAOC and deeply grateful to be serving as an USPHS CC officer.



## MOLC Representative

**CAPT Teresa Ramson** is the MOLC Representative for APAOC during operation years 2020 and 2021. Currently, CAPT Ramson serves as the Deputy Director for the Division of User Fee Management and Budget Formulation (DUFMBF) within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In 2009, CAPT Ramson started her federal career as a Project Manager within the FDA, Office of Generic Drugs (OGD). In 2012, after serving at OGD for three years, CAPT Ramson became a Supervisory Project Manager and Special Assistant to the Division Director. She joined DUFMBF in 2014 and has served as a Subject Matter Expert; a Team Leader; a Branch Chief, and in her current role, she is serving as the Deputy Director for the Division. CAPT Ramson's education and expertise include a Pharm.D., MBA, Regulatory Affairs Certification, and a wealth of knowledge in process improvement, policy development, and statutory and regulations relating to major Congressionally mandated user fee programs and drug development process.



## MOLC Representative



**CDR Honeylit Cuenco** is a board-certified pharmacist serving as Chief Pharmacist at FCI Miami for the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Most recently, she practiced at Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in Anchorage. She obtained her pharmacist license in June 2010 and in July 2010, she began her career as a Commissioned Officer working for the Chinle Comprehensive Healthcare Facility in Chinle, AZ on the Navajo reservation. While at Chinle, she worked in the inpatient pharmacy, outpatient pharmacy, and the anticoagulation clinic, as well as occupying the position of Vaccines for Children Coordinator. After 2 years in Chinle, she transferred duty stations to Alaska Native Primary Care Center Southcentral Foundation, where she practiced in the Central Pharmacy, Internal Medicine Clinic, Pediatrics Clinic, and the HIV Clinic as well as serving as the liaison to the Women's Health Department. In January 2015, she joined the team at Alaska Native Medical Center and served as a Transitions of Care pharmacist, Mediset pharmacist, and later as an Internal Medicine/ Specialty Clinics pharmacist.

## Leadership & Strategic Planning



**CAPT Simleen Kaur** was commissioned in January 2012 and has been stationed in Food and Drug Administration, under Center for Biologics and Evaluation and Research, Office of Compliance and Biologics Quality. She has a Masters in Biotechnology from Johns Hopkins University and Bachelors in Biology from the University of Delhi (India). She serves as a Team Leader where she manages production and distribution of CBER Reference materials used in potency testing of biological products such as vaccines prior to release to public. In addition, she reviews microbiological test methods used in the lot release of biological products as submitted in Biological License Applications and Supplements to ensure they are validated in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations and different pharmacopeia requirements. As a Team Leader, she ensures that her laboratory functions are performed in accordance with ISO accredited quality-controlled requirements.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The purpose of this newly-created section is to share some valuable information among officers. The success of this section depends on officers' support to share. Please submit such information to the Publications Subcommittee to share with our members.

## Global Health and Global Health Engagement Graduate Certificate

- The Uniformed Services University (USU) offers an opportunity to earn a Graduate Certificate in Global Health and Global Health Engagement via **distance learning**. This program is open to all armed services and commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- Students can earn their graduate certificate upon completion of 18 credits in this fully accredited program. Students can opt to complete the full program or elect to take one or two courses to expand their skill set and knowledge base. Most courses run approximately 11 weeks each.
- There is **no tuition charge** for eligible personnel.
- For more information on enrollment or if you have additional questions or concerns, please check out the link: <https://www.usuhs.edu/pmb/gh-distance-learning>.



# 2021 APAOC Voting Members



**LCDR Jen Eng**  
(Chair, Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
General Member since 2017

**Current Duty Station:**  
Consumer Safety Officer, FDA  
(Imports Program) , Baltimore, MD

**PHS Category:** Health Service Officer

**LT Yajun Jason Tu**  
(Co-Chair, Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
Alternate VM for  
Nomination &  
Membership Chair and  
Awards & Recognition Co-  
Chair

**Current Duty Station:**  
Branch Chief, FDA, Silver  
Spring, MD  
**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**LCDR Kelly Leong (Chair, Career Development & Advancement Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
APAOC Chair, Executive Secretary, Subcommittee Chair Education & Training workgroup, Subcommittee Chair Social Media workgroup

**Current Duty Station:** Deputy Registered Health Information Administrator, ICE, Washington DC

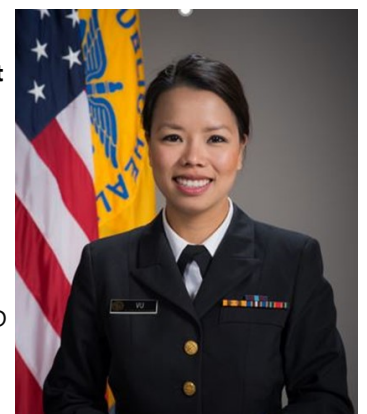
**CDR Hong Vu**

**CDR (Co-Chair, Career Development & Advancement Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
General Member

**Current Duty Station:**  
Supervisory Regulatory Project Manager, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**CDR Minglei Cui**  
(Chair, Charter and Bylaws Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Charter and Bylaws Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Team Lead, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

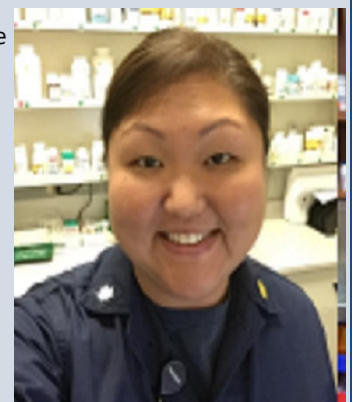
**PHS Category:** Scientist

**CDR Lisa Lee**  
(Co-Chair, Charter and Bylaws Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Alternate VM for MOLC Liaison and Communication Subcommittee Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Program Manager, IHSC, New York, NY

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist





**CDR Kent Bui**  
**(Chair, Communications Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
 Corresponding Secretary, Alternate VM, Public Relations & Merchandise Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Analyst, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**LT William Chang**  
**(Chair, Publications Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
 Alternate VM for Awards & Recognition Subcommittee Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:**  
 Consumer Safety Officer, FDA, Parsippany, NJ

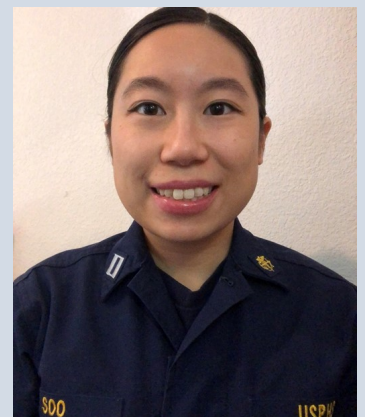


**CDR Harold Sano (Co-Chair, Publications Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
 Alternate VM for Publications Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair and Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee

**Current Duty Station:**  
 Regulatory Project Manager, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**LT Sophie Soo**  
**(Co-Chair, Publications Subcommittee)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
 Alternate VM for Publications Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Staff Pharmacist, IHS, Crownpoint Service Unit, Crownpoint, NM

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**LCDR Kathleen Tisdale**  
**(Co-Chair, Social Media Work Group)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Public Relations Co-Chair, Charter & Bylaws Subcommittee Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Quality Assurance Specialist, Atlanta, GA

**PHS Category:** Environmental Health Officer



**LCDR Theresa Castellanos**  
**(Chair, Social Media Work Group)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Social Media Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Integrated Clinical Pharmacist, Anchorage, AK

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist

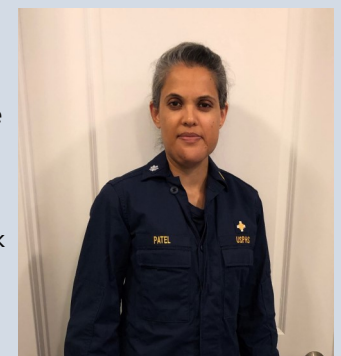


**LCDR Kinbo Lee**  
**(Chair, Community Engagement Work Group)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Alternate VM, Publications Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair, Social Media Workgroup Chair/Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Project Manager, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**CDR Mona Patel**  
**(Co-Chair, Community Engagement Work Group)**

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Alternate VM, Co-chair Community Engagement

**Current Duty Station:** Senior Risk Management Analyst, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist







**CDR Ruiqing Pamboukian**  
(Chair, Education & Training Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
Education and Training Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Program Manager, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Scientist



**CDR Quynh-Van Tran**  
(Co-Chair, Education & Training Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
Alternate VM, Nomination and Membership Subcommittee Chair, Charter and Bylaws Subcommittee Chair, Publications Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Team Lead, CDER Office of Compliance, FDA, Silver Spring, MD



**LCDR Yee Vang**  
(Co-Chair, Nomination & Membership Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Treasurer

**Current Duty Station:** Dental Hygienist, BOP, Forrest City, AR

**PHS Category:** Health Services Officer



**LCDR Ji Hyun LaRose**  
(Chair, Nomination & Membership Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:** Alternate VM for Awards & Recognition Chair, Recruitment & Retention Chair, Corresponding Secretary, and Social Media Workgroup Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Regulatory Project Manager, FDA



**LCDR Rebecca Wong**  
(Chair, Public Relations Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
Social Media Chair, Nomination & Membership Subcommittee Co-Chair

**Current Duty Station:**  
Project Manager, FDA, Silver Spring, MD

**PHS Category:** Pharmacist



**CDR Michelle Tsai**  
(Co-Chair, Public Relations Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
Leadership and Strategic Planning Chair

**Current Duty Station:** Service Chief, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital

**PHS Category:** Health Services Officer



**LCDR Chaolong Qi**  
(Chair, Awards and Recognitions Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:**  
MOLC Representative alternate

**Current Duty Station:**  
General Engineer, CDC, Cincinnati, OH

**PHS Category:**  
Engineer



**CDR Denise Morrison**  
(Co-Chair, Awards and Recognitions Subcommittee)

**Previous APAOC Roles:** N/A

**Current Duty Station:** Acting Unit Chief, Investigations Unit, ICE Health Service Corp, Plantation, FL

**PHS Category:** Health Services Officer



# Support of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program at Whiteriver Indian Hospital

By CDR Harold Sano, LCDR Anna Kit,  
LCDR Helen Chang, & LCDR Matthew Duff

CDR Harold Sano, FDA, Silver Spring, MD, and LCDR Matthew Duff, FDA, Miami, FL, volunteered for a two-week (25 January to 5 February 2021) temporary duty assignment (TDY) at Whiteriver Indian Hospital, located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, in Whiteriver, AZ, to assist with the pharmacist led COVID-19 vaccination program. After being greeted by CDR Weston Thompson, Chief of Pharmacy, these officers were given CDC COVID-19 vaccine training by LCDR Anna Kit, pharmacist in charge of the COVID-19 vaccination program.

LCDR Kit and LCDR Helen Chang were assigned to operate a COVID-19 vaccination clinic that was appointment-based and walk-ins allowed. The dental clinic loaned six operators in support of the vaccination efforts. LCDRs Kit and Chang scheduled and rotated pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. They were trained in administering vaccines, and entered into the rotation within the vaccine clinic. The clinic administered the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 vaccine that was authorized by the Food and Drug Administration under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Appointments were available from 0800 to 1745 hours. The clinic often extended service hours in order to ensure that every prepared dose was administered.

LCDR Duff, a prior Indian Health Service pharmacist serving in Arizona and Alaska, was a certified immunizer for administering



Front row: LCDR Anna Kit and LCDR Helen Chang  
Back row: CDR Harold Sano and LCDR Matt Duff

the COVID-19 vaccine. CDR Sano, served as “the runner,” which involved greeting, screening, and escorting the patient to the next available vaccinator, and then monitoring the patients for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine. High risk patients with the following: a history of an immediate allergic reaction to a vaccine or injectable therapy or any anaphylaxis history were monitored for 30 minutes. Personnel were trained to reconstitute and prepare the vaccine doses. Each reconstituted vial would yield six doses. The most challenging part in preparation of each intramuscular vaccine dose was removing small air bubbles from 0.3 mL dose drawn up in the syringe.

On a typical day, the vaccine clinic would average about 150 patients which required





about total usage of 25 vials mixed daily. The last day of the TDY was the busiest day with over 260 appointments. There were 4 or 5 vaccinators and each vaccinator averaged about 30 patients. The runner averaged about 17,000 steps per day or about 8.5 miles of walking within the clinic.

During the two-week TDY, the hospital sponsored two mass community vaccination events, which allowed tribal members to receive their vaccination without an appointment. The first event was held in a large tent on the hospital grounds and over 600 patients received their vaccinations. The second community vaccination event was held at the Cibecue Health Center, a smaller community on the reservation about 45 minutes west of the Whiteriver Hospital, and over 100 vaccines were administered. Radio and social media were used as public service announcements informing the tribal community of the location and time of the next vaccination event.

This TDY was very inspirational and humbling because Whiteriver was a COVID-19 infection hotspot in 2020 and many of the patients receiving their vaccine had previously recovered from COVID-19. The staff and patients were very pleasant and welcoming. Many of the staff are also patients of the service unit. Whiteriver is located about 200 miles northeast of Phoenix or about a 3.5-hour scenic drive through the desert and switchback mountains. Whiteriver is well over 5000 ft above sea level with beautiful mountains and pine forests. During this TDY, three snow events dumped over 20 inches of snow. There are many options to occupy your free time on the weekend. LCDR Duff went snowboarding with CDR Thompson while CDR Sano visited the Petrified Forest/Painted Desert National Park and the world's largest meteor crater, just east of Flagstaff, AZ. This TDY was a great way to network with other PHS officers and a novel way of obtaining clinical practice hours while making a substantial impact in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Top Picture:** CDR Harold Sano poses for a photo after receiving COVID vaccine at the Cibecue Clinic

**Middle Picture:** LCDR Anna Kit drawing up COVID vaccine dose

**Bottom Picture:** Painted Desert National Park, AZ



# 2021 APAOC Virtual Lunar New Year Social

By CDR Shannon Beyale, CDR Michelle Tsai, LCDR Martin Yoon, and LCDR Rebecca Wong

The Public Relations Subcommittee (PRS) kicked off 2021 with a virtual social event celebrating the Lunar New Year, Year of the Ox, on February 19. The event was a great success with 33 APAOC members attending virtually from across the country.

During the fun-filled social, we played two interactive games called "Guess Who" and Lunar New Year Trivia. Participants were asked to tally points for questions answered correctly for both games. In order to prepare for the "Guess Who" game, the PRS requested childhood and current photos from APAOC members. Ten officers submitted photos for this activity. LCDR Martin Yoon led this game with lively commentary to keep participants engaged. Lunar New Year Trivia was also a success and when asked, "How many people celebrate Lunar New Year in the world every year?" Surprisingly, the answer was 2 billion people! Several officers from different cultural backgrounds shared how they celebrate with family and friends. Many officers keep the tradition of passing red envelopes, or "hóngbāo", which are special monetary gifts unique to the holiday. A plethora of delicious food is also cooked up, with feasts ranging from savory dumplings to represent wealth, fish to represent increased prosperity, fruit for good fortune, and tasty noodles as a symbol of happiness and longevity. There were ten other trivia questions that inspired impromptu conversations and laughter. CDR Michelle Tsai led this game with enthusiastic commentary for Lunar New Year celebrations.

The total points for both games were 21. The winners of the 2021 APAOC Lunar New Year Social were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place - CDR Hai Lien Phung (14/21)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – LCDR Chaolong Qi (13/21)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – LCDR Sophia Park (12/21)

Well done CDR Phung, LCDR Qi, and LCDR Park!

This virtual Lunar New Year Social brought officers together to recognize community and celebrate commonalities in Asian cultures. PRS thanks officers for joining us and contributing to a memorable time together.

*APAOC officers pictured here, participated in the virtual social, while on deployment! Officers include: (starting bottom left and counter clockwise) CDR Trang Tran, CDR Eunice Chung-Davies, CAPT Jade Pham, LCDR Doan Singh, LCDR Sally Doan, and LCDR Evelyn Hong.*



# Lunar New Year Celebration 2021 –APAOC Social Event in Anchorage, AK

*By LCDR Catherine Arnatt*

Life has changed a lot from previous APAOC Lunar New Year gatherings in Anchorage Alaska, but we did not let COVID-19 stop us in our pursuit of celebration and fellowship! Following risk mitigation strategies, our local APAOC branch adapted and persevered, holding a part virtual, part in person, Lunar New Year lunch. We celebrated the upcoming year by eating together, talking, laughing, and sharing our stories.

In the spirit of the Year of the Ox, we are entering 2021 with strength, conscientiousness, patience, calm and fortitude. We are in this together. This is also the year of the Metal Ox, the earth element symbolizing “stability and nourishment.” We are grateful for our peers and fellow officers. We stand strong and build each other up!



*Front from left to right:  
LCDR Theresa Castellanos, LCDR Deirdre Abelada, LCDR Judy Tanuvasa, LCDR Catherine Arnatt  
(Virtually)  
LCDR Madalene Mandap, LCDR Yvette-Marie Pace, LCDR Yekaterina Manyoky, LCDR Anne Arceo.*



# A Reflection on Asian American History

By *LT William Chang*

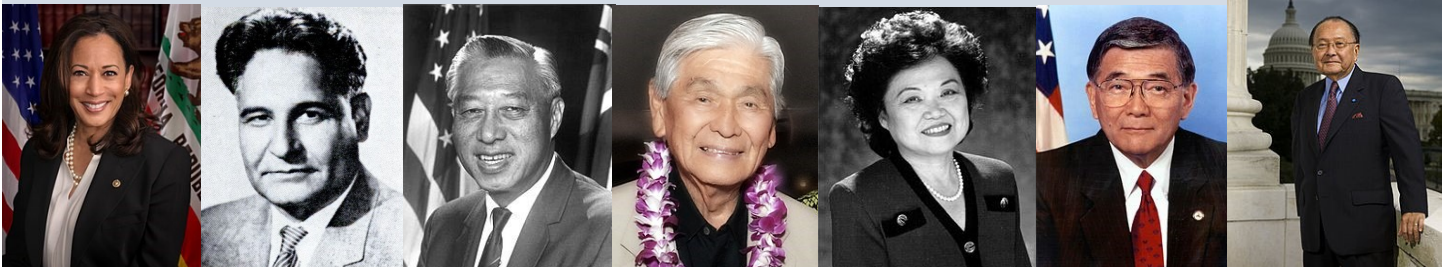
On January 20, 2021, our country swore in our 46<sup>th</sup> President, Joseph Biden and 49<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris. VP Kamala Harris became the first woman and the first American of Asian and African descent to hold that office. She is a trailblazer for both minority communities, and this significant accomplishment intrigued me to explore other notable Asian Americans in politics.

*Did you know...*

- The very first Asian American to be elected to congress was California Congressman Dalip Singh Saund who served from January 3, 1957 to January 3, 1963?
- The first Asian American Senator was Hiram Fong from Hawaii serving from when the state entered the Union in 1959 to 1977?
- George Ariyoshi was the first elected Asian American governor and holds the record for longest tenure in Hawaii?
- The first Asian American woman to be elected to Congress was Hawaiian Congresswoman Patsy Mink who held the office from January 3, 1965 to January 3, 1977?
- Norman Mineta became the first Asian American Cabinet Secretary in 2000 when he was appointed Secretary of Commerce by President Bill Clinton in 2000? He continued in the Cabinet by being appointed Secretary of Transportation under President George W. Bush.
- In 2010, then Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii was appointed President pro tempore of the US Senate, a position that put him 3<sup>rd</sup> in line of Presidential Succession according to the US Constitution? Asian Americans have now occupied the number two (the VP) and three positions in Presidential succession!
- In Congress, there are currently 16 House representatives and two Senators who are of Asian descent?

Asian Americans are not a large proportion of the overall US population. According to 2018 US Census data, Asian Americans currently comprise approximately 5.4% of the U.S. population; when including multiracial Asian Americans, that percentage increases to 6.5%, or about 20.9 million. As of data from July 2015, California has the largest population of Asian Americans of any state, and Hawaii is the only state where Asian Americans were the majority population. So as the Asian American population grows, so to may the representation in government.

If you were wondering about the Commissioned Corps, according to a survey from the USPHS Minority Officers Liaison Council, among USPHS officers who self-identified their race/ethnicity in 2014, approximately 10.3% self-identified as Asian or Pacific Islanders.



Vice President Kamala Harris

Congressman Dalip Singh Saund

Senator Hiram Fong

Governor George Ariyoshi

Senator Patsy Mink

Secretary Norman Mineta

Senator Daniel Inouye



# COVID-19 Vaccination on the Front Line

By *LT Huan Tran*

As the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccines became available, APAOC officers on the front line were among the first to facilitate vaccine distribution, management, and administrations. Through the Indian Health Service, APAOC officers also received their first doses of the vaccine as they continue to serve American Indians/Alaska Natives across the country.



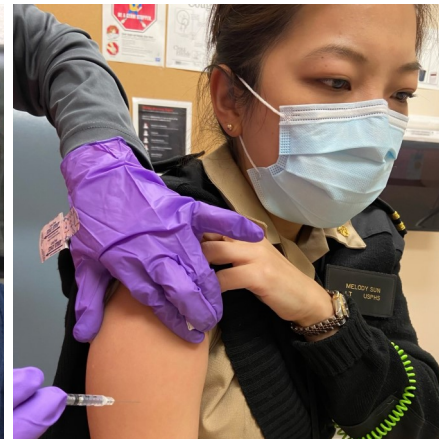
*LCDR Ikjae Chin,  
Lawton Service Unit, OK*



*LT Andrew Su, Winslow Indian  
Health Care Center, AZ*



*LT Sophie Soo, Crownpoint  
Health Care Facility, NM*



*LT Melody Sun, Fort Defiance  
Indian Hospital, AZ*



*CDR Jessica Steinert & LT Miaka Huynh, Lawton Service Unit, OK*



*LCDRs Theresa Castellanos & Cathy Arnatt,  
South Central Foundation, AK*



*LT Nora Lim, Pine Ridge  
Service Unit, SD*



*LT Adena Yau, Crownpoint  
Health Care Facility, NM*



# Call for Article Submissions and Volunteers

## 2021 APAOC Newsletter

The Publications Subcommittee is seeking article submissions for the 2021 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 Sano, Harold, [Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov)  
LT William Chang, [William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov)  
and LT Sophie Soo, [Sophie.Soo@ihs.gov](mailto:Sophie.Soo@ihs.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 Fall Winter 2021 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 Harold Sano, LT William Chang, 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.

