

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OFFICERS COMMITTEE

of the

United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

NEWSLETTER

Summer 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 Cuoco

Leadership & Strategic Planning:

CDR Simleen Kaur

APAOC Chair's Corner

Dear APAOC members,

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy some summer activities outside of your work and deployment schedule.

Congratulations to all the APAOC officers who have been promoted. For those who did not get promoted this cycle, please don't get discouraged. As VADM Vivek Murthy mentioned, this year's promotions presented unique and challenging circumstances to the Corps that required an immediate reduction of the temporary rank promotion rates to help ensure the long-term strength of the Corps and consistency with our sister services. APAOC will continue to help our Officers in preparing for promotions through the Education and Training sessions and the Mentorship Program.

Thank you to all the Officers who have deployed for your service and I wish a safe deployment to Officers who are currently deployed or are preparing for a deployment. I truly appreciate all your hard work and dedication to APAOC, given competing priorities for deployments and work/life balance.

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Interested in submitting an article or volunteering?

Please forward your submissions to

CDR Harold Sano, Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov
LCDR William Chang, William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov
or LT Sophie Soo, Sophie.Soo@ihs.gov



APAOC Chair's Corner

Continued

In the past few months, APAOC has been actively working on many activities and initiatives. I am happy to share the following noteworthy accomplishments:

- APAOC established the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Cultural Support Working Group in the beginning of April in light of the recent increase in violence and hate crimes against the AAPI community. This new Working Group will now be housed under the Public Relations Subcommittee (SC). Its' goals are to bring awareness, provide education and resources, and share informed actions for APAOC members and AAPI community.
- The Publication SC issued the APAOC Spring Newsletter on May 3, 2021.
- LCDR Rebecca Wong, LCDR Sally Doan, LCDR Yee Vang, and I presented a discussion on AAPI Heritage Month Celebration for the FDA Commissioned Officers Network Lunch and Learn Seminar Series on May 12, 2021.
- The Public Relations, Nomination & Membership SCs, and the Executive Secretary successfully co-hosted the first annual AAPI Heritage Month celebration on May 19, 2021. It was an honor for APAOC to have RADM (ret.) Samuel Lin, founding member of APAOC, serve as the keynote speaker, which made the event even more special. Many thanks to the planning committee to make this event possible. If you didn't have the opportunity to attend the event, please refer to the recording link [here](#) (passcode: m778r9!k).
- APAOC collaborated with National Park Service/Office of Public Health on Power of Parks

for the Health Roundtable Series celebrating AAPI Heritage Month on May 26, 2021. Many thanks to CAPT Joy Lee for representing APAOC as one of the panelists. Please refer to the recording link below for this event for those who are interested.

Watch the event: [Power of Parks for Health Roundtable Series: AAPI Heritage Month](#)

- CDR Kent Bui and CDR Yoon Kong collaborated with NIH Chapter of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council and National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities on the first Vivek H. Murthy Distinguished Lecture Series for Public Health Leadership on May 27, 2021.
- The AAPI Cultural Support Working Group published the resource paper entitled "Hate Crimes and Discrimination Against AAPI is a Public Health Issue" on May 28, 2021 under the lead of LCDR Doan Singh.
- The Recruitment and Retention SC successfully hosted a fun virtual APAOC social hour with the Hawaiian theme for APAOC members on June 11, 2021.
- The AAPI Cultural Support Working Group successfully hosted an APAOC Listening Session on Racial Discrimination and Hate Crimes on June 16, 2021.
- We completed the first APAOC's 3-year strategic goals (2021-2023). Many thanks to all helpful input from Voting Members and Alternates.
- The Charter & Bylaws SC completed the revision of the Bylaws. Many thanks to all Voting Members and Alternates for providing input and helpful suggestions.
- The Education and Training SC

successfully hosted four education and training sessions on different topics; "COVID-19 Vaccine Development" on March 10, 2021 (46 attendees), "Building Resilience: Behavioral Health Strategies for COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond" on April 21, 2021 (39 attendees), "APAOC and HHS Efforts in Supporting AAPI Community Against Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance" on June 23, 2021 (29 attendees), and "Opioid Epidemic in the United States: Harm Reduction Strategies and the Role of Naloxone" on June 30, 2021 (28 attendees).

- The solicitation of new APAOC voting members closed as of June 15, 2021. Thank you for all the great nominations.
- The AAPI Cultural Support Working Group hosted a virtual round table discussion on racial discrimination and hate crimes on July 28, 2021.
- In observance of the National Minority Mental Health Month, APAOC and other Chartered Minority Advisory Groups supported the Social Work Professional Advisory Group and the Psychology Professional Advisory Group in hosting an event on July 28, 2021.
- APAOC solicited new APAOC Senior Advisor nominations by August 16, 2021.

Below please find information about upcoming APAOC activities and events. I look forward to your active participation and contribution:

- The Recruitment and Retention SC is collaborating with the Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) Social Committee to host a 5K hike up the Sugarloaf Mountain on September 18, 2021.

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APAOC Chair's Corner

Continued

- Please save the date for the 5th Annual Leadership Summit, a virtual event, scheduled for October 22, 2021, from 9:30 to 1400 EDT, followed by a speed mentoring session from 1400-1500 EDT. I'm very happy to share that we've been able to invite many distinguished panelists to participate in this event including RADM (ret.) Kenneth Moritsugu, RADM (ret.) Robin Ikeda, RADM (ret.) Scott Giberson, RADM David Goldman, CAPT Maria Fields, CAPT Helen Saccone, and CAPT Josef Rivero.

Looking back at all the accomplishments thus far and looking forward to all the upcoming events and activities, I'd like to sincerely thank all the Voting Members, alternates, and volunteers for their hard work and dedication to APAOC despite busy workloads and deployments to make these efforts possible.

In Officio Salutis,
CDR Trang Tran
APAOC Chair

Onward and Upward !

APAOC congratulates the following Voting Members on their recent promotion! Their successful promotion exemplifies their professional achievements, readiness and deployment skills and the embodiment of the Commissioned Corps' core values of leadership, service, integrity, and excellence. Bravo Zulu!

To Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Engineer

William Chang

Pharmacy

Huan Tran

Yajun Jason Tu



Love Thanks to Loving

By LCDR William Chang

June 12, 2021 marked the 54th anniversary of the landmark civil rights Supreme Court decision in the case of Loving vs. The State of Virginia. Its decision struck down Virginia's anti-miscegenation law and ended all race-based legal restrictions on marriage in the United States. These restrictive laws were a product of old "Jim Crow" laws in the South that made interracial marriage a crime. As of 1967, 16 states still had anti-miscegenation laws that forbid interracial marriages.

Mildred and Richard Loving were residents of Virginia. They had fallen in love and wanted to get married. Under Virginia's laws, however, Richard, a white man, could not marry Mildred, a woman of African American and Native American descent. The two traveled to Washington D.C. where they could be married, but when they returned home, they were arrested for committing a criminal offense. Both were found guilty and were given a one year prison sentence.

On appeal, the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia ruled that the state had an interest in preserving the "racial integrity" of its constituents and because the punishment applied equally to both races, the statute did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th



(Top): CDR Hien Albright, husband CDR Matt Albright, and son Hieu

(2nd row left): CDR Song Lavalais, husband Dimetrius, son Davin, daughter Maya.

(2nd row right): LCDR Will Chang, wife Marlena, son Liam, son Owen, daughter Riley

(3rd row left): LCDR Josephine Zepeda, husband Michael, daughter Holly, son Wyatt.

(3rd row right): LT Sara Onyango and husband John

(4th row left): LCDR Cathy Arnatt, brother Charles, father Mike, sister in law Holly, mother Sun Ae, son Josiah, niece Alaina, daughter Amelia, husband Michael

(4th row right): LT Eric Heinze, wife Chaitali, son Devin, son Ethan

Amendment.

The United States Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, reversed the Virginia Court's ruling. The Supreme Court cited the Due Process Clause and concluded that the law was rooted in racial discrimination. "Under our Constitution," wrote Chief Justice Earl Warren, "the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual, and cannot be infringed by the State."

It is hard to believe that when I got married in 2005, that it was only 38 years after that landmark court decision. It puts a different perspective on the length and reach of history. Today, according to the Pew Research Center, approximately 17% of marriages in the United States are interracial, which is about 670,000 couples. We would like to celebrate this love, thanks in no small part to the Loving's.



St. John's University Interns at CMS

By Tanay Maddula and Michelle Huang, PharmD Candidates Class of 2021,
St. John's University – College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has long stood as a column in the United States healthcare system. CMS provides health coverage for more than 100 million people through programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act - Health Insurance Marketplace, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As the single largest payer of healthcare in the US, it is deeply intertwined in many practices of healthcare, yet there are very few people that understand or experience the innerworkings of CMS.

Over the course of a 4-week Advance Pharmacy Practice Experience Rotation (5/19/21 – 6/14/21), I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to work under Commander Jerry Zee, the Regional Pharmacist for CMS Region II (NY, NJ, PR, USVI). As a student pharmacist, I sought out this rotation in the hopes of obtaining perspectives and experiences from CMS that would assist in my future career in pharmacy. My goal was to understand administrative and regulatory skills of the CMS pharmacists as well as develop my understanding of the Medicare Program.

Commander Jerry Zee, like myself, is an Asian-American. He provided me unique perspective to CMS and pharmacy as a whole. He also provided me knowledge of the structure of



Tanay Maddula, PharmD Candidate

CMS as well as many opportunities and pathways in pharmacy offered by CMS and the US Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. Throughout my rotation I attended various meetings with Medicare Account Managers, Regional Pharmacists, professional organizations, members of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, and Account Care Organizations Coordinators. In every meeting I attended, I was warmly welcomed and was encouraged to ask questions about any processes or pertaining to the discussions. Such a welcoming and supportive environment speaks volumes to the mentorship and culture fostered by CMS as well as the Federal Government. One notable experience was during the weekly divisional check-in call. In the meeting everyone discussed their day and were very relaxed, eventually the conversation turned to cultures, and everyone talked about unique perspectives

of their positions from their culture. I was able to speak as an Indian American and my view as a student volunteer for CMS. Such a meeting showed the inclusion found in the work environment of CMS.

During my rotation at CMS, I was able to grow both as a student and as an individual. I was given an opportunity to attend an audit for Formulary Administration of a health plan led by Mr. John Cocchiara, the Lead Regional Pharmacist for the Medicare Part D Program. I was able to attend and participate in that audit and learn pharmacy perspectives that are often not talked about during my studies in school. He described details of each case and gave me reasoning to his questioning on each case. By being able to shadow and learn from Mr. Cocchiara on the protocol and workflow of such an audit, it provided me immense experience that will help with my future endeavors in Managed Care. As a first generation Asian-American, son of Asian immigrants, my scope of pharmacy was narrow, only knowing that of my father's independent pharmacy and clinical pharmacy. However, Mr. Cocchiara was a wonderful mentor and taught me about many aspects of the field of pharmacy that I was not aware of. I was able to expand my horizons and understanding of the field of pharmacy through this rotation, and

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St. John's University Interns at CMS

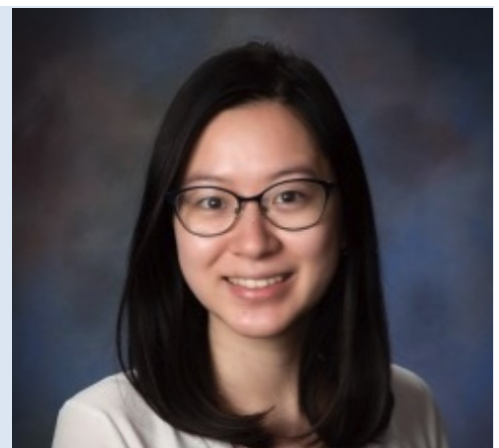
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through the advice and perspectives of Mr. Cocchiara and Commander Jerry Zee.

Overall, I learned valuable time management skills in studying the aspects of Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D between meetings. I developed relationships with incredible individuals who provided me many perspectives from their wealth of experience. I learned communication and networking skills. Lastly, I gained invaluable knowledge of many aspects of pharmacy previously unknown to me. These skills will be truly inestimable and easily transferrable for my future rotations and endeavors in pharmacy.



My name is Michelle Huang, and I am a sixth-year pharmacy student at St. John's University – College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Queens, New York. I had the pleasure of completing my Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience rotation with CMS – New York Regional Office (NYRO). Throughout my virtual rotation, I shadowed several pharmacists and maintained regular communication with my preceptor, Commander Jerry Zee, a U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps officer and Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) Coordinator, while he was on COVID-19 Mission deployment. I participated in various meetings, educational program sessions, and trainings with the CMS community that provided enriching learning opportunities.



Michelle Huang, PharmD Candidate

Furthermore, I assisted Dr. Lucy Saldana (Regional Pharmacist for CMS – San Francisco Regional Office) with Part D Coverage Determinations, Appeals and Grievances (CDAG) audit reviews for sponsoring organizations and ensured appropriate approvals and denials of prior authorization requests. After familiarizing myself with the medications from sample cases, my efforts advanced the goal of improving the delivery of health care service in the Medicare Prescription Drug program. It was gratifying to see how evidence-based medicine ties in with protocols and regulations, which will undoubtedly guide me in my career as a pharmacist. Thank you CMS!



Crownpoint Healthcare Facility Student and PGY-1 Residency Program

By LT Sophie Soo and LT Adena Yau

Crownpoint Healthcare Facility is located on the Navajo (Diné) Reservation in rural New Mexico servicing a population of over 20,000 Native Americans. The pharmacy department was recently awarded the Navajo Area Director's Award for "Outstanding Group Performance". This recognition was given, in part, on account of the robust student experiential program and a postgraduate year 1 (PGY-1) pharmacy residency program developed by the department.

The experiential student program dates back to the 1990s. The pharmacy department has increased partnerships with pharmacy schools across the nation, and now accommodates approximately 50 students annually, typically in their final year of pharmacy school, from seven schools of pharmacy. Rotations are ambulatory care-focused, and offer experiences in the main hospital, as well as two satellite clinics. Students work alongside our family medicine providers and pharmacist clinicians to provide direct patient care, and to ensure the safest and most effective medication therapy. Students are integral team members in vaccine preparation and mass vaccination events, including the ongoing COVID vaccination efforts. In addition, students have the opportunity to deliver their final seminar presentation to approximately 50 medical and pharmacy staff members. After completion of their rotation with Crownpoint, several students have been inspired to pursue careers with Indian Health Service and/or ambulatory care-focused postgraduate training.

The PGY-1 pharmacy residency program began in 2011 and is accredited through the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Since its inauguration, the program has successfully graduated 14 residents, a majority of whom remain commissioned officers today. Experiential rotations offered during this program currently

include administration, ambulatory care, informatics, and inpatient practice; with additional opportunities to participate in medical emergency response, and to present residency projects at two national meetings. This program has also been able to offer dedicated ambulatory care rotations for residents to gain experience towards their New Mexico Pharmacist Clinician (PhC) credential, which allows pharmacists to practice at the top of their license. PhCs effectively serve as mid-level providers and are authorized to independently examine, diagnose, prescribe medications, and bill NM Medicaid for services rendered. Prior residents have gone on to have successful careers with various agencies throughout the federal government.

The pharmacy department at Crownpoint Healthcare Facility is a tight knit group, we regularly get together for hikes up the mesa, DnD games, visiting National Parks, and potlucks. We welcome any inquiries into our programs and are happy to speak with any pharmacists and students who are interested in [applying!](#)



From left to right: CDR Ben Peacock, LCDR Amy Luo, LCDR Keith Warshany, LCDR Kali Autrey, LT Sophie Soo, LT Charles Matli, LT Adena Yau, and LT Janet Peroti



Practical Approaches in Life: During a Pandemic

By CAPT Karen Dorse, CAPT Indira Harris, CAPT Chiara Rodriguez,
and CDR Denise Morrison

"We are not all in the same boat...but we are all in the same storm!" - Damian Barr

Most, if not all, share the same sentiment: the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every facet of our lives, including interactions with others and has silently and completely flipped our lives upside down. At this point, most of us are experiencing COVID-19 fatigue. A simple act of affection or kindness (e.g., a hug, smile, or handshake), is quite different now.

We must think about wearing a mask or gloves with almost every interaction, outside of our immediate family. As a resilient agency, we are forced to embrace, transform, remain flexible and adapt, regardless of our desire to embrace this change or not.

COVID-19, along with work-life responsibilities and stressors, has forced us to consider and implement creative strategies and practical approaches to better cope and have some type of normalcy during our daily living. While we continue to fight this silent killer, there are additional approaches to consider as you manage your workload and personal commitments. Please remember to practice compassion and empathy, encourage, motivate, and help others during this unforeseen pandemic, because we all internalize stress differently and utilize varying coping strategies.



Adobe stock image

If you are a parent:

- Establish an alternate reliable childcare plan if you are required to return to work, i.e., teleworking or in the office.
- Establish within your community a "village" of parents, who can help care for your children or loved ones in an emergency.
- Create a digital space with other parents to chat (e.g., offer advice, post pictures, provide creative ideas for activities, support each other).
- Create a digital space for your children with other children (friends, relatives, classmates) to support each other.
- Create community kid-friendly virtual events and activities, e.g., pet parades, fun contests, parties, book clubs.
- Take a car ride with family.
- Have a backyard picnic, movie, carnival-like activity with popcorn, snow cones, cotton candy.
- Create a menu as if going to a restaurant (takeout or prepared) and write out the menus for everyone; children can participate in menu writing and restaurant "set-up."
- If able to do so, hire a tutor to help children with online schooling; get ideas from fellow friends and colleagues regarding virtual learning tips or develop a virtual learning survival kit.
- Discuss with your supervisor a plan to establish a flexible work schedule, when possible, to best accommodate your child (children's) online schooling and meet the agency's mission.
- Utilize meal planning, when possible; try to prepare meals two to three days in advance and freeze the meals.
- If you are an essential worker, try to schedule uninterrupted sleep times.
- Try to identify your stress thresholds (e.g., trouble focusing, irritability, heightened emotions, hypervigilance, low energy).

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Practical Approaches in Life: During a Pandemic

Continued

- Identify, acknowledge, take a moment alone, close your eyes, tune in to your breathing, imagine/visualize positive thoughts, (e.g., park, vacation) and listen to calm music.
- Take turns giving your spouse/partner a “day off” from doing normal household chores, managing children.
- Establish scheduled dates with spouse/partner, a few times per month, (e.g., in-home movie after children have gone to bed, walk in the park/community alone if you have older children, exercise together).
- Plan, plan, plan! Take days off when you can, especially before the last quarter of the fiscal year. Use all your days of leave; do not forfeit your time off, if you can help it.

If you do not have children:

- Establish or join a virtual support group.
- Establish or join a virtual book club.
- Establish or join a virtual movie, have discussions during and after.
- Take walks, go hiking, exercise, gardening.
- Write letters to family and friends, versus texting.
- Think of a new hobby/interest you would like to do and do it.
- Keep a core of individuals for support.
- Cook/bake a meal and try a new recipe.
- Ensure you take care of activities of daily living (e.g., showering, get dressed, hygiene, comb hair, apply makeup,) even if you are not leaving the house.
- Attempt to maintain routines you had prior to COVID-19; if needed, adjust them to ensure health and safety.

If you have ill or aging parent(s), or a special needs family member who requires assistance:

- Develop a care plan (i.e., summary of health conditions, medications, physician’s contacts, local social service supports, end of life options). Download a CDC template.

- Have an advance directive; this should be done for anyone (i.e., adult or senior).
- Establish an alternate reliable plan if you are required to return to work.
- Establish within your community a “village” of individuals, who can care for your parent(s)/special needs family member in an emergency.
- Solicit the assistance of trustworthy teens or college-age nursing students to help with periodically caring for your parent(s) (e.g., many teens have completed Certified Nursing Assistant courses in school).
- Create crafts for your parent(s)/special needs family member to engage in.
- Schedule all appointments and errands on the same day.
- Schedule early morning errands and appointments to lessen their contacts.
- Encourage letter writing to other family members and/or their friends.
- Set up video chats to talk to other family members and/or friends.
- Take your loved ones for a car ride.
- Engage their involvement in family activities as much as possible.
- When possible, provide lots of hugs and physical contact.

Remember to check on your loved ones, peers, and supervisors and make every attempt to maximize your time and every moment you have. These are challenging times, but remain positive, grateful, hopeful and know it is okay to be vulnerable and to reach out in times of need.

About the authors: This was a collaborative effort among CAPT Karen Dorse, Senior Investigator; CAPT Indira Harris, Behavioral Health Unit Chief; CAPT Chiara Rodriguez, IHSC Investigations Unit Chief, and CDR Denise Morrison, Senior Investigator.



A Win-Win Situation: Student Rotations at the FDA

By LCDR Tramara Dam and LCDR Kinbo Lee

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) mission is to protect the public health through ensuring safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, and medical services; and by ensuring the safety of the Nation's food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. With over 1,100 officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) assigned to the Agency, there exists an opportunity to pay it forward for our service, regardless of our professional category, through the FDA Pharmacy Student Experiential Program (FPSEP).

At its foundation, the FPSEP familiarizes final year pharmacy students with the organizational structure of the Agency, the laws, regulations and guidances that shape the respective programs, and the subsequent review processes that have developed to execute its mission. Furthermore, the FPSEP provides an opportunity to learn about the FDA's multi-disciplinary processes for addressing public health issues involving drugs, biologics, and medical devices. Pharmacy students who participate in the FPSEP acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities beneficial to their professional career. Each FDA rotation site has its own list of objectives. An FDA rotation allows pharmacy students to become familiar with the missions, functions, and organizational structure of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), FDA and the United States Public Health Service (PHS).

Students submit applications that include a statement of intent and their top three preference of FDA Office/Division (e.g., Office of Minority Health and Office of Generic Drugs) and preceptors then select candidates from the pool. Preceptors from within or across offices are free to partner with each other and share students to provide them further Agency exposure. In addition, a robust lecture series is available covering a wide variety of regulatory and enforcement-related subjects (e.g., International Drug Control Systems,

Medication Error Reduction, and Counterterrorism and Emergency Coordination). Students leave with a positive experience, and confidence in the regulatory body that protects public health.

LCDRs Tramara Dam and Kinbo Lee are both preceptors and they believe the FPSEP program is a win-win situation for both students and the Agency. Students gain the opportunity to learn how FDA regulatory actions are carried out, and the Agency benefits by encouraging a culture of excellence within the organization. The FPSEP program provides Agency exposure, recruits potential candidates, pushes site-side innovations as well as encourages proper organization of the staff's daily duties.

Remember, being a PHS officer comes with the benefit of a vast network that spans across agencies! If you have a protégé/mentee with an aptitude or interest in the FDA and its work, please reach out to your colleagues at the FDA (or the authors here) and encourage your students to apply for the FPSEP program. More information regarding eligibility and requirements may be found here: <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/scientific-internships-fellowships-trainees-and-non-us-citizens/fda-pharmacy-student-experiential-program>.



From left to right: LCDR Tramara Dam, Christine Oh (Pharmacy Student - Shenandoah University), and LCDR Kinbo Lee



Opioid Outreach at the 2020 Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival

By CDR Kent Bui



From left to right: LT Nam To, CDR Hannah Pham, LCDR Marleen Tran, LCDR Trami Nguyen, CAPT Mimi Pham, LCDR Sally Doan, LCDR Loan Nguyen, CDR Haksong Jin, and CDR Kent Bui

On January 18, 2020, nine U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps Officers representing Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE) conducted an opioid outreach event to increase opioid epidemic awareness and promote the mission of the USPHS in the Vietnamese community during the 2020 Vietnamese Lunar New Year festival.

Vietnamese Lunar New Year is one of the most celebrated holidays in the Vietnamese culture to welcome the arrival of the New Year (Lunar calendar). This is an opportunity for friends and families to reunite, honoring gods, spirits, and ancestors, celebrating past year accomplishments, and wishing for blessing, health and wealth in the new year. It would be a big oversight not to mention the holiday music, the lion dance, the authentic food, and traditional sweet treats available during this special occasion.

This year's opioid outreach event was held at the Ernst Community Cultural Center of the Northern Virginia Community College to promote opioid and addiction awareness, one of several Surgeon General Priorities. An exhibit table was set up with the USPHS and PACE logos, Naloxone demo kits, and a poster presentation with educational information. The information on the poster include statistics of the U.S. opioids overdose deaths from 1999-2017, signs of an opioid overdose, steps to

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Opioid Outreach at the 2020 Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival

Continued

respond to an opioid overdose, and instructions of how to administer Naloxone during an opioid overdose. This outreach table was well attended by many event participants, including military veterans, many of whom were attracted to our Service Dress Blue uniforms. Officers educated attendees on the current opioid and addiction pandemic that is ravaging our nation. Attendees were given instruction on how to recognize opioid overdose signs as well as steps to respond to an opioid overdose by administering Naloxone.

The outreach event was a great success, and we received much positive feedback from event organizers and attendees. This was the perfect opportunity for promoting USPHS visibility and educating the American public, especially the Vietnamese community, on opioid and substance use disorders.



LCDR Loan Nguyen demonstrated the use of the Naloxone kit to the attendees.



APAOC Officers Deployed in Support of the FDA COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

By CDR Trang Tran, CDR Quynh-Van Tran, LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Sally Doan, LCDR Doan Singh, LCDR Ji Hyun LaRose & LCDR Sophia Park



From left to right: CAPT Dianne Paraoan, CAPT Juliette (Toure) Taylor, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Doan Singh, LCDR Evelyn Hong, LCDR Sally Doan, and LCDR Ruby Leong

Between February and April 2021, CDR Trang Tran, CDR Quynh-Van Tran, LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Sally Doan, LCDR Doan Singh, LCDR Ji Hyun LaRose, and LCDR Sophia Park deployed to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic (FCVC), in Silver Spring, MD. The FCVC was located on the White Oak campus with clinic hours of operation of 0830 to 1700, seven days a week. In the four months of operation, the USPHS officers administered over 3800 COVID-19 vaccine doses to approximately 1900 FDA colleagues, contractors, and other federal employees. Under the leadership of CAPT Darian Tarver (Director, FDA Commissioned Corps), CAPT Helen Saccone (FCVC Lead), CAPT Jade Pham (FCVC Deputy Lead), and CAPT Steven Link

(Program Manager), the clinic was comprised of sections led by the Vaccine Coordinator, Intake and Clinical Leads, and Safety and Admin Officers.

LCDR Doan Singh and LCDR Sally Doan were deployed as part of the vaccine preparation team as vaccine coordinator and syringe preparer, respectively. They helped create the standard operating procedure for vaccine handling, calculated daily vaccine needs, diluted COVID-19 vaccine, and prepared syringes with accurate beyond use date and time. They also ensured appropriate daily vaccine dispensing, maintained proper cold chain and storage conditions of the vaccine, and kept inventory to minimize vaccine waste.

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APAOC Officers Deployed in Support of the FDA COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

Continued

CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Ji Hyun LaRose, and LCDR Sophia Park deployed as COVID-19 vaccinators, using best clinical practices and established Center for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) and FDA guidelines. They confirmed patients' information, assessed the patients' medical history, provided counseling, and answered any questions prior to vaccinating the patients. The vaccinators also performed quality control of the patient vaccination records to meet federal, state, and FDA reporting requirements and ensured record accuracy and completeness in collaboration with CAPT (ret.) Randy Anderson, the FCVC Reporting and Data Administrator.

LCDR Ruby Leong and LCDR Sally Doan deployed as COVID-19 vaccinators and also provided support for the Intake Team. Upon arrival at the FCVC, patients had their temperature taken and were asked a series of questions about any symptoms that would preclude them from proceeding with their appointment at the FCVC. At the Check-In Stations, LCDR Ruby Leong and LCDR Sally Doan documented the patients' arrival, checked patients into the FCVC's appointment management system, and provided the vaccination packets, which included the Emergency Use Authorization Fact Sheet about the COVID-19 vaccine and how to schedule the next dose. At the Kiosk Station, LCDR Ruby Leong and LCDR Sally Doan aided patients in filling out their vaccination records.

In addition to deploying as part of the Intake Team, CDR Quynh-Van Tran also staffed the Check-Out Station, where patients were checked out of the FCVC's appointment system and observed for any post-vaccination adverse reactions for 15 to 30 minutes (based upon patient-specific risk factors).

It was a privilege and an honor for us to serve in this historical intra-agency mission under PHS leadership, deploy alongside over 70 other dedicated and motivated Commissioned Corps Officers across FDA to fight the pandemic, and uphold the PHS mission of protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of our Nation.



LCDR Sophia Park



Hawaiian Themed Social

Aloha! The APAOC Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee hosted a virtual Hawaiian themed social on June 19, 2021. APOAC and DC COA swag was given out as prizes to winners of SCATTERGORIES™. The event was facilitated and emceed by LCDR Martin Yoon.

During this event, new incoming APOAC members were welcomed and introduced to all other participating officers. Special thanks to LCDR Jen Eng and LCDR Jason Tu for organizing this fun event.



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 Harold Sano, Harold.Sano@fda.hhs.gov
LCDR William Chang, William.Chang1@fda.hhs.gov
and LT Sophie Soo, 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, LCDR 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.

