

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OFFICERS COMMITTEE

of the

United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2022

Executive Committee Members

Chair: LCDR Ruby Leong

Chair-Elect: LCDR Chaolong Qi

Executive Secretary: LCDR Vicky Hsu

Corresponding Secretary: CDR Sophia Park

Treasurer: CAPT Teresa Ramson

MOLC Representatives:

CAPT Simleen Kaur & LCDR Sally Doan

Leadership & Strategic Planning:

CDR Lisa Lee

APAOC Chair's Corner

Dear APAOC Members,

We hope in your reflections on the past year, you see all of the wonderful work you do for the advancement of the Surgeon General's priorities, and the meaningful contributions you make for the benefit of APAOC members and members of the Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. The overarching theme for this 2022 Fall/

Winter newsletter is service as we enter the holiday season; service to our APAOC members and service to our AANHPI communities.

APAOC has set a high bar in the past few months, in terms of collegiality and precedence-setting, that resulted in the following noteworthy accomplishments:

- In the span of just 2 months in September and October, over 50 APAOC officers led the way in making a difference for over 1350 members of our AANHPI communities by conducting four in-person and four virtual community

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APAOC Chair's Corner

Continued

engagement events. APAOC officers participated in two health fairs at the Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington Health Fair in Herndon, Virginia (see pages 5-6 for further details) and Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) Health and Community Service Fair in Gaithersburg, Maryland where clinical services (e.g., vaccinations, blood pressure monitoring, Narcan training and dispensing) and education/outreach on topics relating to mental health and opioid overdose response were provided. The recently Office of the Surgeon General (OSG)-approved APAOC Healthy Mind Initiative was launched at the CCACC Health and Community Service Fair attended by over 350 community members. Officers volunteered at the American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure in Fort Worth, Texas, the first APAOC community engagement event outside of the DMV area (see page 10 for further details). These community engagement events also had a recruitment component to recruit health care professionals from our AANHPI communities in support of diversity of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. APAOC collaborated with PACE-DC for the annual Out of Darkness Walk Resources Fair in Washington DC.

- For National Suicide Awareness Month in September, APAOC partnered with the Asian American Health Initiative of Montgomery County, MD and SAMSHA to provide presentations on the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline to

AANHPI communities, including Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino communities, reaching over 600 community members.

- APAOC's 6th Annual Leadership Summit on Global Public Health Leadership, held on October 14, 2022, was a huge success (see page 11 for further details). There were over 360 registered participants, including retired and active duty PHS Officers, members from our fellow sister services, and civilian colleagues. The Education and Training Subcommittee Chairs, LT Shanly Chen and LCDR Huan Tran, along with their respective alternates, LTs Andrew Su and Miaka Huynh, and team of volunteers did a phenomenal job in executing an event of this magnitude. We hope that Officers benefited from the experiences shared by the esteemed panelists and took away valuable lessons.
- Immediately following the Leadership Summit, the Career Development/Advancement Subcommittee Chairs, CDRs Harold Sano and Nguyet Ton, led a mentoring/career networking session with APAOC's CAPTs Curi Kim, Joy Lee, Jing Li, Alan Ou, and Teresa Ramson and junior Officers. We are grateful for the APAOC mentors' support, words of wisdom, and time!
- APAOC hosted a roundtable discussion on November 8, 2022 with all the Chartered Minority Advisory Groups (CMAGs) and Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG) on the topic of cultural humility, led by LCDR Nicole Pascua (see pages 13-14 for

further details). It was an honor and privilege to have RDML Richardae Araojo and RDML Emil Wang provide the opening and closing remarks.

As you hopefully get a moment to enjoy the blessings in your lives this holiday season, we want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our Senior Advisor, all the voting members, alternates, and volunteers for your leadership, and continued dedication and commitment to APAOC and the AANHPI communities that we serve. Without you, APAOC's successes and accomplishments from this year would not have been possible.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and joyous holiday season, from the APAOC family to yours!

In Officio Salutis,
LCDR Ruby Leong
2022 APAOC Chair

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MOLC Award Ceremony at the 2022 USPHS Symposium

By CDR Amos Chen and LT Miaka Huynh, Editors LCDR Chaolong Qi and LCDR Sally Doan



APAOC Officers providing tremendous onsite support to the award ceremony.

On Thursday, May 26, 2022, after two years of pandemic travel restrictions, the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) was finally able to host its 31st Annual Award Ceremony at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Phoenix, Arizona. With enormous support from MOLC leaders and volunteers, the award ceremony was once again a success!

MOLC was founded in 1990 to serve as a liaison to the Surgeon General, representing USPHS racial and ethnic minority officer groups. In addition to Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC), MOLC is also composed of three other Chartered Minority Advisory Groups (CMAGs): American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AI/ANCOAC), Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG), and Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee (HOAC). The 2022 MOLC leadership consists of Co-Chairs CAPT Simleen Kaur and LCDR Sally Doan from APAOC, Co-Vice Chairs CDR Will Freiberg and LCDR Adele Davis from AI/ANCOAC, Co-Secretaries LCDR Rhonita Culver and LCDR Chelsea Bostic from BCOAG, as well as two liaisons, LCDR Jorge Muñiz Ortiz and LT Adelaida Rosario from HOAC. Each year, MOLC hosts an award ceremony at the USPHS Symposium to celebrate the achievements of USPHS minority officers. This tradition started in 1990 and continues to grow and thrive to this day.

As this was the first in-person symposium since the pandemic, many APAOC officers stepped up to ensure the success of the MOLC award ceremony this year. Even though the original AI/ANCOAC hosts were unable to attend, our APAOC Representative LCDR Sally Doan volunteered to serve as the Mistress of Ceremony. The ceremony was attended by more than 150 guests and officers. Distinguished guest speakers included a surprise visit from our previous Surgeon General VADM (Ret.) Richard Carmona, as well as the past and present MOLC Senior Advisors RDML Brandon Taylor and RDML Aisha Mix. Several Chief Professional Officers also attended the ceremony to celebrate with the awardees.

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MOLC Award Ceremony at the 2022 USPHS Symposium

Continued

The award ceremony started out with a hearty breakfast, which led into welcome remarks by RDML Mix. The presentation of colors was then exquisitely presented by the Phoenix COA Honor Guard, followed by the invocation from LT Darion Smith. In addition to the live presentation, RADM (Ret.) George Blue Spruce Jr. shared another spirit-lifting invocation through a pre-recorded video. The event was later blessed by several basket dances led by the local Co-op Village Traditional Pima Basket Dancers and concluded with a group dance that almost all guests and officers participated in. The beautiful dances were followed by a heartfelt USPHS honor song presented by CDR Frank Dodson. After the special dance and song performances, RDML Brandon Taylor gave an inspirational keynote speech on the meaning of service. Admiral Taylor encouraged officers to challenge what they know, to push through difficulty by having uncomfortable conversations, and to know that “luck is when preparation meets opportunity.”

For the presentation of the awards, the 17th Surgeon General of the United States VADM Richard Carmona started out the event by honoring a senior MOLC officer with the award named after him. Fourteen other awards were later presented to minority officers from the four CMAGs, including three APAOC award recipients. At the conclusion of the award presentation, our former APAOC Chair CDR Trang Tran provided updates from MOLC’s Collaborative Cultural Awareness workgroup led by LCDR Jorge Muñiz Ortiz and herself. MOLC representatives collectively presented gift coin boxes containing the challenge coins from all four CMAGs to VADM (Ret.) Carmona, RADM (Ret.) Spruce, and RDML Taylor, in appreciation of their support to the ceremony. Finally, at the end of the morning, CDR Dodson concluded the event with closing remarks.

The first return of the in-person MOLC award ceremony was a success because of the dedicated efforts of all the onsite and offsite volunteers. The planning committee included a total of 43 officers on the planning committee, many of whom are from APAOC. Special thanks is also given to CAPT David Lau for providing tremendous on-site guidance, advice, and support in the planning and execution of the ceremony.



LCDR Sally Doan, the event MC and on-site Lead of the ceremony, presenting a gift coin box containing the challenge coins from all four CMAGs, to RDML Brandon Taylor, the Keynote speaker of the ceremony.



RDML Brandon Taylor and RDML Aisha Mix, MOLC Senior Advisor, joining LCDR Chaolong Qi, APAOC Chair-Elect, in presenting the 2022 CAPT Allan Lock Award to CDR Trang Tran.



2022 KCSC Community Health Fair

By CDR Katherine Won, LCDR Sylvia Park, LT Amie Park



Left to right: CAPT Haksong Jin, CDR Ick-Ho Kim, CDR Katherine Won, CDR Judy Park, LCDR Sylvia Park, LCDR Elizabeth Kim, LT Sung Jik (Andrew) Park, LT Amie Park

On October 1, 2022, the Korean Community Service Center (KCSC) of Greater Washington hosted its annual health fair at Open Door Presbyterian Church located in Herndon, VA with approximately 120 attendees. KCSC is the largest Korean social service agency in the DC metropolitan area and holds the health fair annually to provide free healthcare and education on various health-related topics to the local community. This type of community outreach is vital because it provides education and medical services at little or no cost to low-income or uninsured families who may face numerous cultural, linguistic, and financial barriers accessing health care services. The health fair also serves as a culturally appropriate venue to promote health equity by providing community members the opportunity to engage with health professionals who otherwise would not be accessible without health insurance. During the planning phase of the event, KCSC reached out to the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee about potential interest in participating in the health fair. Nine Public Health Service (PHS) officers from various categories (Environmental Health, Health Services, Nursing, and Pharmacy) stepped up to provide health care services and education across five booths: opioid overdose training, SAMHSA's new 988 Lifeline Suicide & Crisis, blood pressure screening, dental screening & oral hygiene services, and PHS recruitment/information.

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2022 KCSC Community Health Fair

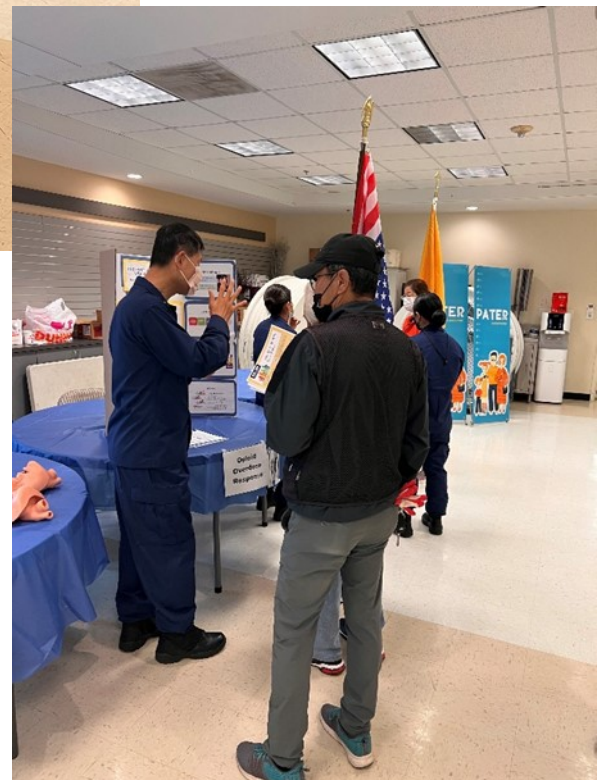
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The Fairfax County Community Services Board also collaborated with the PHS on the opioid overdose response training and provided 40 Narcan sprays to the community. In an effort to be culturally and linguistically sensitive, PHS officers spoke in both English and Korean to effectively provide services. The remaining booths were operated by providers recruited by KCSC who offered other health services including COVID-19 bivalent booster and flu vaccination administration, education on Alzheimer's disease and support, awareness of KCSC services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, elder abuse, mental health counseling/psychiatric services, and alcohol and substance abuse counseling. Health fair participants were encouraged to stop by all booths and receive verification on a card to be gifted with a goody bag. As we continue to seek opportunities to serve the community and address social issues of our time, we are grateful for the invaluable partnerships we have built with KCSC and the local government.



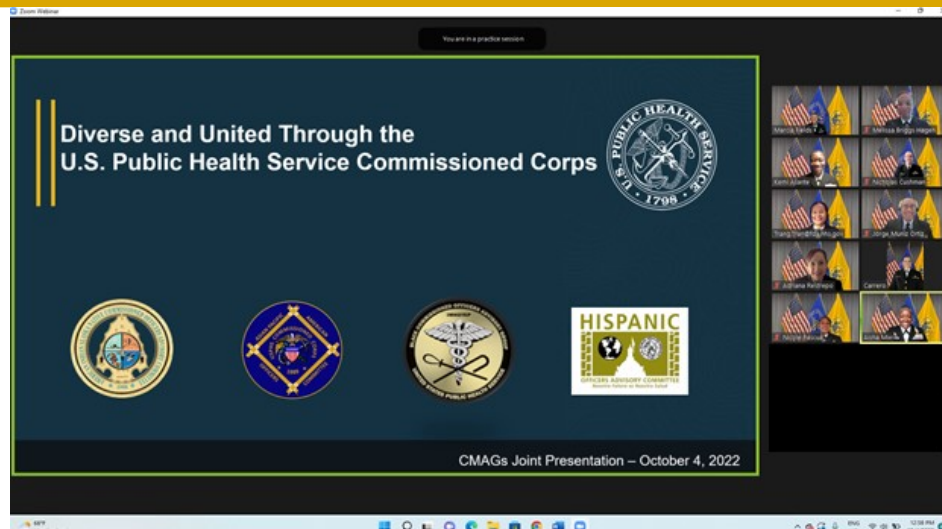
Above: CDR Ick-Ho Kim is providing a blood pressure screening.

Right: CAPT Haksong Jin is explaining Opioid Overdose Response.



Diverse and United Through the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

By LCDR Adriana Restrepo, CDR Kemi Asante, CDR Melissa Briggs Hagen, CDR Joseph Landers, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Nicholas Cushman, LCDR Marcia Fields, LCDR Jorge G. Muniz Ortiz, LCDR Nicole Pascua, and LT Fabiola Carrero



Left to Right, Top to Bottom: LCDR Marcia Fields, CDR Melissa Briggs Hagen, CDR Kemi Asante, LCDR Nicholas Cushman, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Jorge Muniz Ortiz, LCDR Adriana Restrepo, LT Fabiola Carrero, LCDR Nicole Pascua, and RDML Aisha K. Mix

Cultural diversity and its impact on our lives have become increasingly important issues in a globalized world wherein the interactions between cultures continue to grow exponentially. Bringing awareness to cultural differences and initiating discussions on topics of relevance to ethnic minority officers within the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is one of the many missions of the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC).

The MOLC was established in 1990 by the Surgeon General (SG) and USPHS to advise and serve the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) on issues of professional development and to advocate for the recognition of contributions made by minority officers in the USPHS. The MOLC consists of four Chartered Minority Advisory Groups or CMAGs: American Indian/Alaska Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AI/ANCOAC), Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC), Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG), and Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee (HOAC). The MOLC is recognized by the SG as the liaison between the OSG and the four CMAGs. According to the 2020 USPHS Demographics [website](#), 40% of USPHS officers identified themselves as White not of Hispanic origin, while 12% identified as non-Hispanic Black, 9% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 6% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4% as Hispanic; 28% did not specify their racial or ethnic heritage.

In April 2022, representatives from each CMAG came together to form a Cultural Awareness Workgroup as a specialized task force within the MOLC. This workgroup comprises of representatives from each CMAG. It was created to provide a platform for all CMAGs to collaborate and share ideas and lessons learned from cultural outreach events led by each CMAG to promote a diverse and inclusive USPHS community.

On Tuesday, October 4, 2022, the workgroup held a virtual CMAGs Joint Presentation entitled "Diverse and United Through the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps." We were honored to have RDML Aisha K. Mix, the MOLC Senior Advisor, who provided opening remarks. During this presentation, the MOLC Cultural Awareness Workgroup Co-Leads (CDR Trang Tran and LCDR Jorge G. Muniz Ortiz) and representatives from AI/ANCOAC (LCDR Nicholas Cushman), APAOC (LCDR Nicole Pascua), BCOAG (CDR Melissa Briggs Hagen), and HOAC (LT Fabiola Carrero) shared information about their respective advisory group and initiatives to promote ethnic diversity and cultural awareness within the USPHS. The event was well attended with over 200 live attendees and received very positive feedback by many as it highlighted and celebrated the diversity and unity that exists among USPHS officers. The recording link of the presentation may be found [here](#).

The USPHS is united through the mission of protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation. Each officer brings unique strengths and experiences to help meet that mission. A culturally diverse USPHS enhances creativity, encourages new perspectives, and fosters collaborative efforts towards a united front.



Interviews with Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) Award Recipients

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), the premier organization representing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) employees in the Federal and District of Columbia governments. The FAPAC awards and the Distinguished Public Service Scholarship recognize civilians and military service members who have made significant contributions to the advancement and promotion of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). Please see the [FAPAC website](#) for additional information and a comprehensive list of prior winners.



2022 FAPAC Award Recipient CDR Jerry Zee

What has been your most significant contribution to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community?

I think my contributions over the 17+ years on active duty and participating in various APAOC initiatives whether that be as an active general member or as a voting member. It has never been a dull moment.

What is a career goal you have?

To inspire more and more AAPIs to join the USPHS Commissioned Corps, and I am grateful that I have done that. In fact, all of my recruits (7 and counting) are from various ethnic minority groups (Filipino-Americans, Korean-American, Jewish-American, African-American, Hispanic-American, Pakistani-American).

How do you stay motivated during challenging times?

When I reflect why I joined the USPHS Commissioned Corps back in 2005, all the challenging times make it worthwhile and it always bring a big smile to my face knowing that I stayed faithful to my purpose and the Corps mission.



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Interviews with Federal Asian Pacific American Council Award (FAPAC) Recipients

continued

2021 FAPAC Award Recipient CDR Nancy Tian

What has been your most significant contribution to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community?

Since commissioned in 2011, CDR Tian has been very active in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. As the co-chair for the APAOC Community Engagement Workgroup in 2018 and Team lead for the Healthy Mind Initiatives (HMI) Chinese Community, CDR Tian organized and led 12 HMI community outreach events at churches, schools, and professional seminars, which resulted in reaching 200 parents for the promotion of mental health awareness in our youth. CDR Tian also chaired the planning committee with 24 members in collaboration with federal, county, and community sponsors and implemented the national essay contest for high school students on "Speaking up About Mental Health! This is My Story" essay challenge in 2019 and 2022.



To further serve the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, CDR Tian chartered the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)-FDA Chapter in August 2019 to promote career development opportunities for 3,000 AAPI employees at FDA. Four of five executive board members for FAPAC-FDA Chapter are also APAOC officers. As the president of FAPAC-FDA Chapter, CDR Tian has fostered strong collaborations with APAOC for the first time to coordinate the events planning for celebrating the AAPI Heritage Month in 2021.

What is a career goal you have?

As a first-generation immigrant growing up in a poor and rural community, I am passionate and motivated to take on greater responsibilities and contributions in reducing health inequities through ongoing community outreach and public health initiatives. I will continue to dedicate myself on the community outreach efforts to fight against the opioid epidemic and promote mental health awareness across the nation for improving public health. As evidenced by my career trajectory, I will continue with incremental progression to provide leadership and mentoring for our next generation of public health professionals and PHS officers.

How do you stay motivated during challenging times?

Along this amazing PHS career path, the mentorship from my fellow officers and the support from my colleagues and friends has lifted me up many times during challenging times, most especially when confronted with an unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Our services through deployment and community outreach have provided critical support to the vulnerable and underserved populations, which has always made me so proud of being in Uniform.



Advancing Public Health Together: Tour de Cure Texas 2022

By LCDR Quynh Tran and LT Miaka Huynh

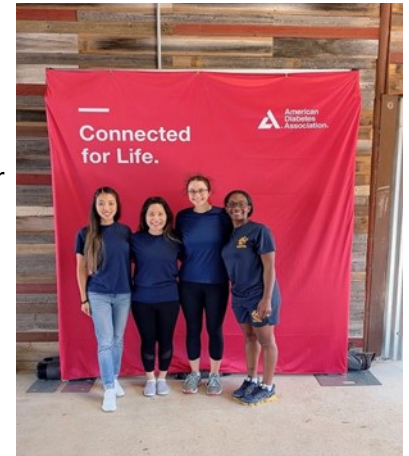
On Saturday, October 15, 2022, APAOC Community Engagement Work Group (CEWG) held their first event in the Texas and Oklahoma region, led by LCDR Quynh Anh Tran and LT Miaka Huynh. LCDR Tran initiated a partnership with the local American Diabetes Association (ADA) organization in Fort Worth, TX and established APAOC CEWG as essential volunteers for the 2022 ADA Tour de Cure – Texas. Before the event, the leads worked with APAOC CEWG leadership to develop a brochure/announcement about the event and solicit for volunteers. The leads also ensured clear communication between ADA team to PHS officers, maintained an active contact list for all officers, and allocated PHS



Registration Area. Left to Right: LCDR Jolin Nguyen, LCDR Kristen Konosky, LCDR Quynh Tran, LT Miaka Huynh

volunteers to various responsibilities based on medical background, experiences, and preferences. The leads recruited 13 PHS volunteers to participate at 5 rest-stops, providing first-aid, water, snacks, and performing basic triage as needed for 218 attendees and riders. During the event, four officers provided basic first aids to riders (i.e. provided care for scrapes/cuts, assisted with obtaining water/pickle juice for cramps due to dehydration).

The event was a success with no riders suffering from significant injuries or serious medical issues. The event had a total of 400 attendees, including riders, administrative and operational staff, and volunteers (PHS and non-PHS). In addition to serving the ADA community, this event offered an opportunity for PHS officers within the Texas and Oklahoma regions to meet, network, collaborate towards achieving a common purpose, and as an added bonus, boosted comradery and team cohesion. The event served as a critical conduit to channel APAOC missions and goals through outreach efforts at the local community level, which further strengthen the collaboration and partnership with various public health organizations, and leveraging resources to advance health in AAPI populations across the nation. This event was a great opportunity for PHS and APAOC officers to promote PHS visibility and carry out the mission of the service.



Snack/Water Common Area. Left to Right: LT Miaka Huynh, LCDR Quynh Tran, LCDR Rachel Forche, CDR Jahana-Jones



Snack/Water Common Area. Left to Right: LT Miaka Huynh, CDR Joyce Davis, LCDR Stephanie Chiang, LCDR Quynh Tran, LT Sara Blackmon, LCDR Trisha Chandler



Tour de Cure Texas - Rest Stop 3. Left to Right: LCDR Andrew Ratliff, LT Marlise Williams



APAOOC's 6th Annual Leadership Summit—Global Public Health Leadership

By CDR Judy Park, LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Chaolong Qi, LCDR Huan Tran

On October 14th, 2022, APAOC hosted the 6th Annual Leadership Summit for over 330 USPHS Officers, civilian colleagues, and members of our sister services. The theme for the 6th Annual Leadership Summit was "Global Public Health Leadership." As the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, public health is an international concern with no borders. Global public health leadership is a vital element in managing global health crises. As USPHS Officers, we are in a unique position to be global public health leaders and make an impact on an international level. The theme of "Global Public Health Leadership" was selected because we recognized that this is a very crucial skill to have as we continue into the third year of the pandemic and for USPHS officers to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our nation and beyond at an international level.

For this summit, APAOC was honored and privileged to bring together a panel of internationally recognized officers and global public health leaders. Panelists joined from all over the United States, South Africa, and Thailand. To kickstart the morning session, RADM (Ret.) Boris D. Lushniak delivered an inspiring keynote on "Making a Global Health Difference". Following the keynote presentation, LCDR Huan Tran moderated the International Public Health discussion featuring RADM (Ret.) Lushniak, CAPT Amy DuBois, CAPT Alpha Patel-Larson, CAPT David Lau, and CAPT Joe Woodring as panelists. After the morning sessions, the audience was presented with a slideshow in celebration of APAOC and our accomplishments during the intermission. Resuming the afternoon sessions, LT Andrew Su moderated a discussion on Overseas Assignments and Deployments featuring CAPT Alan C. Ou, CAPT Jialynn Wang, CDR Yoon Kong, and LCDR June Page. To close out the Leadership Summit, CDR Matthew Kirchoff provided the audience with his unique insights on Global Clinical Trials and Drug Development.

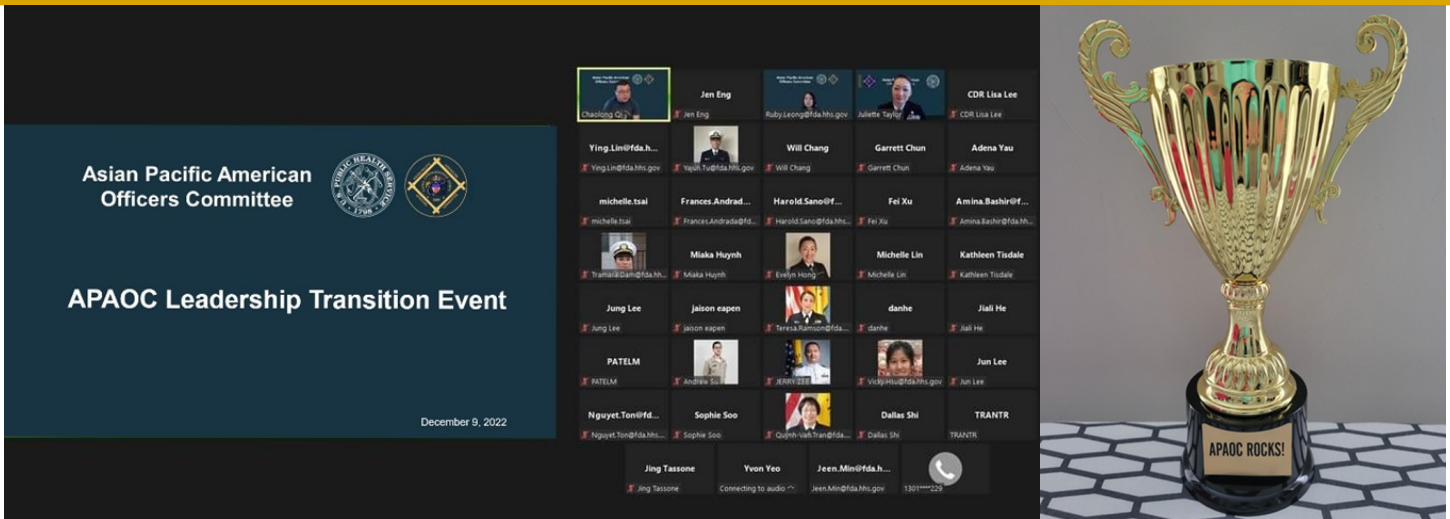
We would like to thank our esteemed keynote speaker and our distinguished panelists for their time, participation, and support to make this leadership summit a very special and successful event. The insights, experiences, and advice that they shared with us were so valuable and relevant in the times of change. We also extend special thanks to LCDR Huan Tran and LT Shanly Chen, 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 Juliette Taylor, CDR Lisa Lee, CDR Trang Tran, CDR Sophia Park, LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR Chaolong Qi, LCDR Sylvia Park, LT Miaka Huynh), the Master of Ceremony (CDR Judy Park), and our afternoon moderator (LT Andrew Su) for their outstanding dedication and contribution to making this event a great success.

The 6th Annual Leadership Summit received overwhelmingly positive feedback from panelists and attendees and we hope this summit has been informative and helpful for your professional growth and for empowering you to apply your public health and leadership skills on a global platform. For officers who could not attend the event, please use the following links to access the [program](#), [slides](#), and [recording](#) (Passcode: 52U#VyS8).



2022 APAOC Leadership Transition Event

By LT Ying Lin and LCDR Yajun Jason Tu



The end of the year marks the start of a new year. On December 9th, 2022, the APAOC Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee successfully hosted the 2022 APAOC Leadership Transition virtual event, which focused on concluding the 2022 APAOC key accomplishments, sharing 2023 APAOC vision and goals, and meeting and greeting. The event was attended by 40 officers on a Friday afternoon. All officers in attendance, including the incoming Voting Members, had the opportunity to introduce themselves during this event. It was great to wrap up the year with accomplishments, lessons learned, gratitude and energy boost to welcome another year.

During this event, CAPT Juliette Taylor, APAOC Senior Advisor, provided the opening remarks. She enlightened the group with her knowledge, skills, positive advice, and wisdom. She shared her experience working with LCDR Ruby Leong, the 2022 APAOC Chair, and LCDR Chaolong Qi, the 2022 APAOC Chair-Elect, and raised her expectations to the incoming APAOC leaderships. More specifically, CAPT Taylor advised APAOC leaders and members to 1) explore collaborations with other organizations for yielding collective accomplishments and impacts in advancing the Surgeon General's priorities; 2) examine the actions for alignment with priorities; and 3) challenge to a high bar, even it is uncomfortable. CAPT Taylor has been holding coffee talks twice a month throughout the year to provide coaching, consulting, and connecting with our fellow APAOC officers. She has been so instrumental for APAOC in supporting our fellow officers.

After the opening remarks, the 2022 APAOC Chair, LCDR Ruby Leong, highlighted major APAOC accomplishments in 2022 and welcomed the new APAOC leadership and Voting Members. LCDR Leong also commended her Executive Committee team and Subcommittee/Workgroup Chairs/Co-Chairs, Alternate Voting Members, and volunteers for their extraordinary leadership, dedication, and contributions to APAOC, the Commissioned Corps, and the Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities.

As the operational year comes to an end, LCDR Ruby Leong has passed the baton to LCDR Chaolong Qi as the next APAOC Chair in 2023. LCDR Qi accepted the APAOC Chair Trophy (pictured above) from LCDR Leong and proceeded in sharing his vision and goals for APAOC in 2023 to continue supporting professional development of APAOC officers, enhancing AAPI community outreach and education to advance Surgeon General priorities, and promoting health equity for AAPI communities. After LCDR Qi shared his vision and goals, the 2022 APAOC Executive Committee team and Subcommittee/Workgroup Chairs/Co-Chairs and/or their alternates reported out their respective end-of-year accomplishments. It was a very successful year with many significant accomplishments for APAOC. The event was concluded with games, laughter, and holiday cheers.

APAOC would like to sincerely thank CAPT Taylor, all current Voting Members, Alternate Voting Members, and volunteers for their unwavering service and dedication to support the APAOC mission. All the officers in attendance had a wonderful time. They expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the 2022 Leadership Transition and are looking forward to future APAOC events. Thank you to all officers who attended the event to make it a great success!



Building Engagement and Allyship through the Lens of Cultural Humility

By LCDR Nicole Pascua

On November 02, 2022, the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Cultural Support Workgroup hosted the Second Annual CMAG & SOAGDAG Roundtable Discussion titled: "Building Engagement and Allyship through the Lens of Cultural Humility." This informative one-and-a-half-hour event included a Cultural Humility presentation, Roundtable Discussion, and brief Question & Answer period. The event was attended by 86 officers from at least 15 federal agencies across 22 states.

LCDR Chaolong Qi, the 2023 APAOC Chair, provided the welcome remarks to distinguished guests and attendees, and set the stage for the invaluable discussion among the CMAG and SOAGDAG. He provided a brief overview of the history of the AAPI Cultural Support Workgroup and APAOC's longstanding history of collaborative efforts with other chartered advisory groups. He discussed how cultural humility is integral for collaborative work—whether it be for Agency duties, deployments, or PHS activities that support the Surgeon General's priorities.

The event featured RDML Richardae Araujo, Director of the FDA's Office of Minority Health and RDML Emil Wang, the 15th Engineer Chief Professional Officer and the FDA's Senior Regulatory Counsel and Senior Advisor for Manufacturing and Regulator Policy. RDML Araujo provided the opening remarks whereas RDML Wang provided the closing remarks. Additionally, the event included a Cultural Humility presentation by LCDRs Adriana Restrepo and Iman Martin. They provided an overview of the topic and discussed how learning about others and self-reflection are life-long processes. Their discussion also spoke to the importance of adopting a cultural humility lens to better understand the individuals and communities that are being served during deployments.

The panel discussion and brief Q&A session involved representatives from the four chartered minority advisory groups (CMAGs) and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG). These representatives were CDRs Velliyah Craig and CDR Lynette Wasson from the American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AI/ANCOAC), LTs Kun-Yun Hsieh and Hana Kim from the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC), CDR Sean Bennett and LT Brett Dodd, Jr. from the Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG), LCDRs Ramses Diaz-Vargas and Jorge Muniz Ortiz from the Hispanic Officers Advisory Group (HOAC) and CDR Dakota McMurray and LCDR Delice Echols from SOAGDAG.

LCDR Nicole Pascua moderated the overall event and during the roundtable discussion asked the panelists to respond to questions that included the following: how the concepts of cultural humility and cultural competence can be used to bring greater awareness and understanding of each CMAG; how officers and the CMAGs can promote awareness of the intersections of a person's identity, such as age, religion, disability, class, and sexual orientation; how the concept of cultural humility can increase diversity and inclusivity within the PHS; and lastly, how each chartered advisory group can promote the concepts of cultural humility, such as the commitment to self-evaluation and continuous learning about others.

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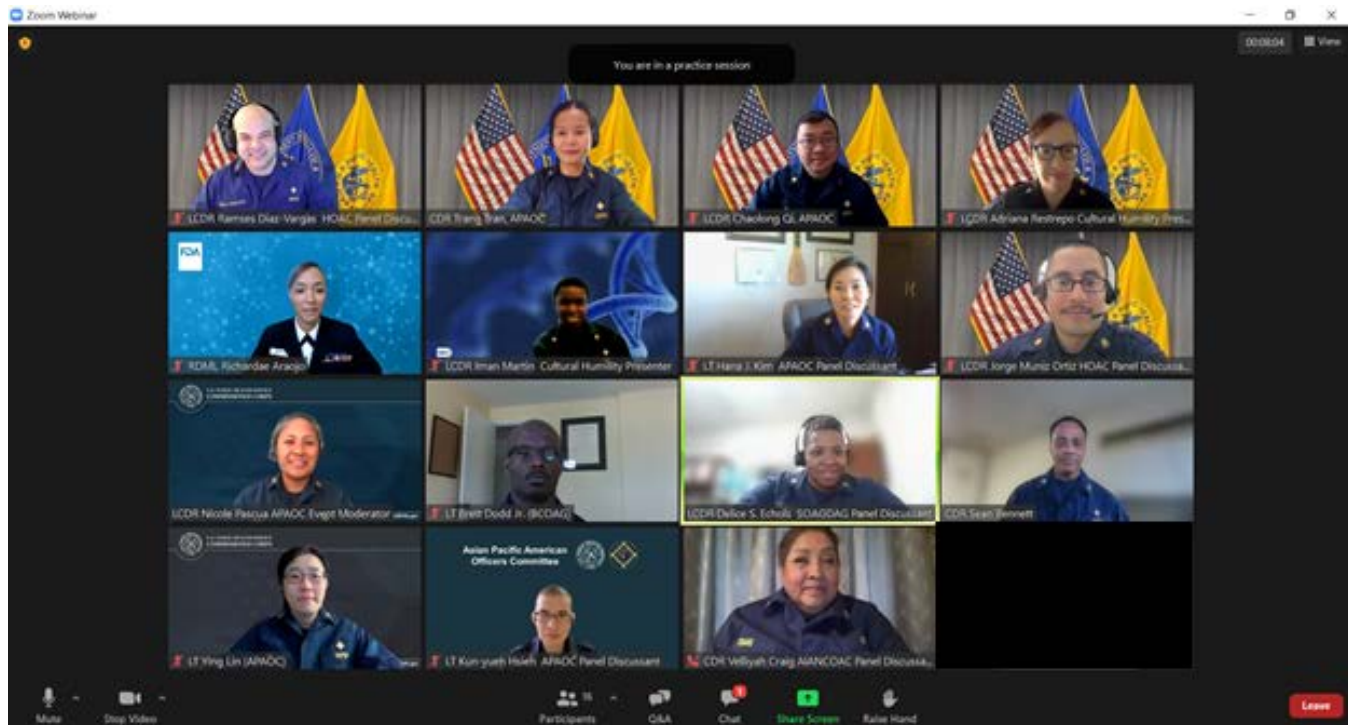
Building Engagement and Allyship through the Lens of Cultural Humility

Continued

APAOC and the AAPI Cultural Support Workgroup anticipate collaborating on future initiatives with MOLC, other CMAGs, and SOAGDAG that support a more inclusive and diverse culture within the USPHS community. To volunteer for the AAPI Cultural Support Workgroup please contact LCDR Nicole Pascua at: Nicole.Pascua@samhsa.hhs.gov.

Special thanks to LCDR Marleen Tran and LT Ying Lin for their IT support during the webinar, as well as the members of the Joint CMAG & SOAGDAG Planning Committee who provided feedback and ideas that made this event a success-- LCDRs MacArthur Lucio and Nicholas Cushman from AI/ANCOAC, LT Brett Dodd, Jr. from BCOAG, LCDRs Ramses Diaz-Vargas and Jorge Muniz Ortiz from HOAC, CDR Dakota McMurray and LCDR Delice Echols from SOAGDAG, and CDR Trang Tran, LCDRs Chaolong Qi and Ruby Leong, and members of the event task group from APAOC.

To view the recorded event, please refer to the recording link below:
https://fda.zoomgov.com/rec/share/zeKeaAsoply7qAyDNEepbVPV7Kpr--oNfWr5wskBSWyKQa7oNXLe_DG-gTZIOFZI.wTN-ttAng-NTZC_w



From top row, L to R: LCDR Ramses Diaz-Vargas, CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Chaolong Qi, LCDR Adriana Restrepo, RDML Richardae Araojo, LCDR Iman Martin, LT Hana Kim, LCDR Jorge Muniz Ortiz, LCDR Nicole Pascua, LT Brett Dodd, Jr., LCDR Delice Echols, CDR Sean Bennett, LT Ying Lin, LT Kun-yueh Hsieh, and CDR Vellyyah Craig.



Project Bridge

By Kelly Yang

Project Bridge is a mental health initiative created by a team of Asian-American teens to address issues we have seen in mental health services for teens. We identified the main issues we found with mental health resources for teens that already existed, and found that many of us did not feel comfortable talking to trusted adults and school guidance counselors about our mental health struggles. This was the result of several factors, but one of the biggest reasons was that we felt like adults could not understand mental health struggles from a teen's perspective.

That is why Project Bridge was started- to enable and empower teens like ourselves to share their mental health stories and find resources for mental health in a welcoming environment. Our team wrote articles about our own struggles with mental health to put on the Project Bridge website, and the experience was therapeutic for many of us. We have also included mental health resources on the Project Bridge website such as hotlines and YouTubers who specialize in mental health videos. We are so excited to announce the winners of our multimedia contest:

Congrats to the anonymous author of "Dear Shooting Star" for winning FIRST PLACE in the Written/Audio Category of the 2022 Share Your Story Multimedia Contest! Read their submission here:

"Dear Shooting Star"

star light, star bright; first star i see tonight

i wish i may, i wish i might

please have the wish i wish tonight

dear shooting star,

i could wish for money or fame or for someone to love but tonight, i wish to know what it feels like to love my own body. i wish to stop avoiding mirrors or dodging cameras or squeezing my eyes shut after stepping out of the shower. please don't get me wrong, shooting star — i think my body is amazing. she works hard in a million little ways to keep me thriving. we understand each other better than we understand anyone else. we share our own little love language in all the little things we do to keep each other happy.

i just wish with all my might that she didn't look the way she does.

shooting star, just once would i like to look at my reflection without shameful tears blurring my vision. i would like to go just one day without feeling sorry for my soul, who seems to be trapped in a house that doesn't belong to her. if i were heartless i would have wished for a different body altogether — but the thing is, shooting star, that no matter how much it dismays me, this body is mine. she is mine, and i am hers; we belong to each other for now and forever. she loves me enough to keep me alive and that's why it pains me that i haven't yet learned how to love her back.

<https://projectbridge22.wixsite.com/my-site-1/post/dear-shooting-star>

(continued on page 8)



Project Bridge

Continued

And congratulations to Ximing for winning FIRST PLACE in the Visual Arts Category of the 2022 Share Your Story Multimedia Contest! View her submission here:



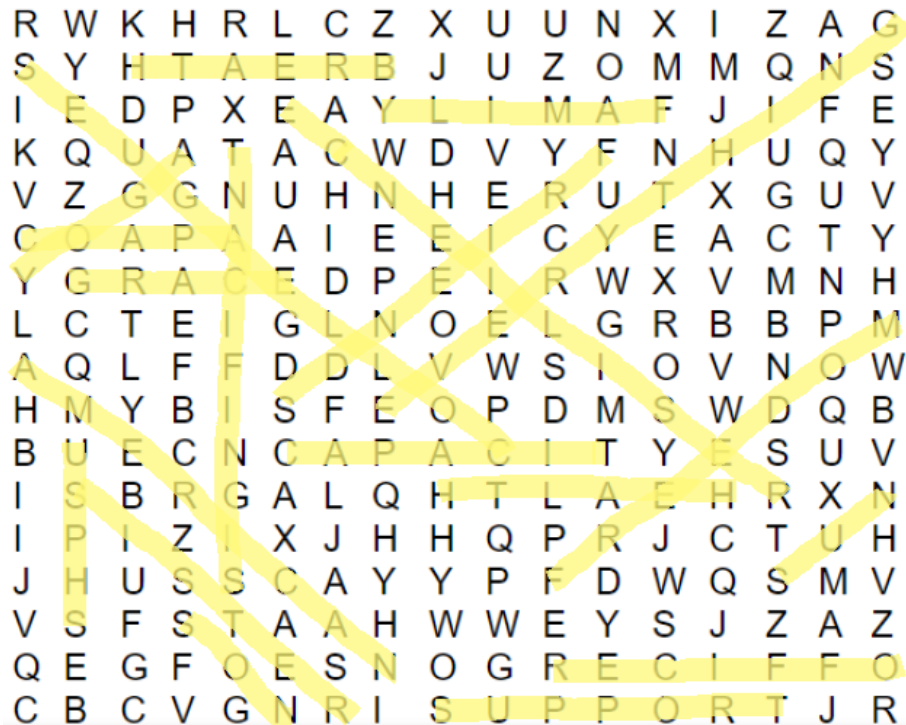
<https://projectbridge22.wixsite.com/my-site-1/post/feeling-overwhelmed-first-place>

View all the winners here: <https://projectbridge22.wixsite.com/my-site-1/winners>. We believe that personal stories are incredibly powerful and can help those who are struggling with their mental health to feel seen, supported, and inspired. We hope that sharing these stories opens a path to teens talking about mental health without the fear of stigma or shame.



APAOC 2022 Summer Newsletter

Gratitude Word Search Answers



Key:

America	Breath	Capacity	Colleagues	Family	Friends	Grace
Health	Officer	Resilience	Son	Sun	Yoga	Support
USPHS	Freedom	Sister	Significant	Everything	APAOC	

I am grateful for a strong **support** system! - **CAPT Ramson**

I am grateful for **resilience**, a sound mind, **freedom**, and the ability to make a difference! - **CDR Morrison**

I am grateful for my **family** and **friends** who have been very supportive! - **CDR Lee**

I am grateful to be American and a **USPHS officer**! - **CDR Sano**

I am grateful for my family and **friends**! - **CDR Ton**

I am grateful for my family, friends, **colleagues**, and the ability to work from home! - **CDR Tran**

I am grateful for my family, friends, and **America**, for giving me the opportunities to learn, grow, and become a better person each day! - **LCDR Dam**

I am grateful for **everything**! - **LCDR Hsu**

I am grateful for family, **health**, children, **sun, yoga**, summer, fall and many more! - **LCDR LaRose**

I am grateful for every **breath** I take, the people around me, and all thing in all circumstances. I am grateful for endless **grace**! - **LCDR Lee**

I am grateful to work in a **capacity** to protect the health and safety of the public! - **LCDR Eng**

I am grateful for awesome **APAOC** members! - **LCDR Leong**

I am grateful for my older **sister**! - **LCDR Qi**

I am grateful for my **significant** other! - **LCDR Soo**

I am grateful for my **son**! - **LCDR Tu**

I am grateful for my friends, **family**, and loved ones who support me! - **LT Yau**



Call for Article Submissions and Volunteers

The Publications Subcommittee is seeking article submissions for the 2023 APAOC Newsletters. 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

LCDR Jun Lee, Jun.Lee@fda.hhs.gov
LT Adena Yau, Adena.Yau@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 Spring 2023 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 the Publications Subcommittee 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.

