

**Black Commissioned Officers  
Advisory Group (BCOAG)  
Bylaws**

**Supplement to the BCOAG Charter**

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## **I. General**

The Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) was chartered February 7, 1990. Originally known as the Black Commissioned Officers Steering Committee, the group was formed out of a delegation of officers who attended the 1987 meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust. Under the leadership of RADM Audrey F. Manley (ret.), the group was formally organized and developed a report of recommendations and initiatives for consideration by C. Everett Koop, M.D., who then served as the Surgeon General.

BCOAG, in conjunction with the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC), provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General (SG) on interests and concerns of Black officers in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and on issues relating to the professional practice and personnel activities of Commissioned Corps (CC) Officers. BCOAG provides similar advisory assistance, upon request, to the Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and to non-HHS agencies and programs that routinely use CC personnel. BCOAG supports the initiatives of the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) and establishes and supports programs that serve minority and local communities in reducing health disparities.

The purpose of this document is to supplement the BCOAG Charter and to further clarify and define the general operational responsibilities of the BCOAG Executive, Voting, and Committee members. This document also defines and governs the role and function of the advisory group. The Bylaws will be updated and revised according to the future requirements of the BCOAG Executive Committee (EC) and Voting Members (VMs).

### **A. Governing Body**

The EC is the governing body of BCOAG and consists of the following officers: Chair, Chair-Elect, Executive Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, two (2) MOLC Representatives including Immediate Past Chair, and the Operations Liaison.

The committees, established under the EC, are responsible for managing and carrying out specific functions and duties.

### **B. Operational Year**

The operational year corresponds to the calendar year that begins on January 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on December 31<sup>st</sup> of that year.

## **II. Membership**

### **A. Voting Members**

1. Nomination of voting members begins on May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and ends no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The number of active voting members is limited to a minimum size of 7 member and maximum size of 30 members.

2. The selection of new voting members is finalized by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The final nomination package for new voting members is submitted to the MOLC Chair no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year. A final list of nominees will be sent by the MOLC Chair to the SG for approval by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.
3. At the discretion of the BCOAG Chair, incoming voting members are formally introduced to the general body during last meeting of the operational year. The voting members must have final OSG approval and received their official appointment before being announced to the general body.
4. Voting members are expected to serve in the following manner:
  - 4.1 Dedicate the necessary time to attend meetings and perform duties related to BCOAG;
  - 4.2 Actively participate in discussions with a willingness to listen to and respect other viewpoints;
  - 4.3 Consider the welfare of the group over personal interests;
  - 4.4 Accept and follow through on assignments in a timely manner;
  - 4.5 Actively participate in at least one project annually; and
  - 4.6 Actively participate in meeting discussions and provide input to BCOAG leadership, as requested.
5. Voting members are expected to serve on the BCOAG EC, Standing, or Ad Hoc Committees, and to assist with BCOAG activities.
  - 5.1 Each voting member that is not on the EC shall Chair or Co-Chair one BCOAG committee, but may serve on as many committees as desired.
  - 5.2 All EC and Committee Chair positions must be filled before a VM can be assigned to Co-Chair a committee.
  - 5.3 If a VM is not elected or appointed to serve on the BCOAG EC or as a Committee Chair/Co-Chair, the VM is expected to actively seek opportunities to serve in other leadership positions within BCOAG Committees (e.g., Team Lead). If the VM cannot find a leadership position, the officer will be assigned by the Chair/Chair-Elect to any unfilled lead position upon approval from the EC.
6. Voting members are expected to attend all official BCOAG meetings.
  - 6.1 If a VM is unable to attend, it is the voting member's responsibility to appoint an alternate to attend in his/her place.
  - 6.2 To encourage the participation of BCOAG general members, the alternate should be a non-voting member who is familiar with the voting member's responsibilities in BCOAG.
  - 6.3 While acting on behalf of the VM, the alternate has the full rights and privileges of the VM.

- 6.4 If an alternate is unable to attend for the VM, an excused absence may be requested from the Chair prior to the meeting.

## **B. Non-Voting Members**

This type of membership is open to all individuals who are supportive of the mission of BCOAG and interested in assisting BCOAG in achieving its objectives. Non-voting members may serve as committee co-chairs, subcommittee chairs and co-chairs, committee members, and activity leads and co-leads. Non-voting members may participate in any activity, but do not have voting privileges.

## **C. Ex-Officio**

This membership consists of former BCOAG Chairs who serve in an advisory capacity to assist new EC officers.

## **III. Term of Appointment for Members**

### **A. Initial Term**

The SG appoints VMs for a three-year term with the possibility of serving no more than a total of six (6) years. The official term begins January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following operational year.

### **B. Reappointment**

A member completing his/her first three-year term on the BCOAG is eligible for reappointment for one additional three-year term. Voting membership is limited to six (6) years of service. Voting members seeking reappointment must reapply.

### **C. Alternates**

Each VM shall recommend a single individual who shall serve as his/her alternate. The alternate must be identified at the beginning of the operational year and their name should be forwarded to the Chair, Chair-Elect and Executive Secretary. The alternate shall be a non-voting member of BCOAG and be in compliance with CC basic readiness standards. If a VM is unable to find an alternate, the BCOAG Chair shall assist in identifying a non-voting member to serve as an alternate.

1. Alternates should be paired with one (1) VM only.
2. Alternates cannot fill-in for another VM when they are not needed by their assigned VM.
3. Alternates for the BCOAG Executive Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Operations Liaison, and MOLC Liaisons should support the respective positions

and have a working knowledge of the positions in order to fulfill these functions in the event of a short-term vacancy.

#### **D. Attendance & Absenteeism**

Any VM who misses two (2) meetings in an operational year without just cause and prior notification to BCOAG Chair may, at the discretion of the BCOAG EC, be officially warned or asked to resign voluntarily; the VM shall be considered "inactive" and not eligible for the end-of-year Letter of Appreciation and the Special Assignment Award.

1. Voting members who are absent but have arranged for an alternate to serve in their capacity will have their absence excused and will be marked "absent with alternate", or "AWA" noted on their attendance record.
2. Voting members who do not make arrangements will be marked as having an "unexcused absence" or "UA" which will count against their attendance record.
3. Voting members who make arrangements with the Chair and whose alternate is not available for the meeting shall have an "excused absence" or "EA" noted on their attendance record.
4. Voting members with unforeseen circumstances or emergencies, who are unable to contact the BCOAG Chair prior to meeting may have their attendance marked "excused absence" or "EA" after discussion of the circumstances with the BCOAG Chair.
5. Non-voting members should submit their attendance in a manner established by the Executive Secretary.

#### **E. Removal**

BCOAG shall have the option to initiate a request to the SG to terminate voting membership. The voting member's supervisor will be notified of the member's dismissal or resignation from BCOAG. Notification of removal will be documented in the officer's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).

#### **F. Resignation**

A VM who wishes to resign from his/her term will be required to complete the following procedures:

1. Submit a formal letter to the BCOAG Chair and the OSG for resignation from a BCOAG position.
2. Give four (4) weeks advance notice in order to allow BCOAG to find a replacement.

## **G. Replacement of a BCOAG Voting Member or Committee Chair Vacancy**

1. In the event of a permanent, in-term BCOAG VM or EC vacancy, as a result of resignation or other unforeseen situations, the duties of the departing VM shall be temporarily fulfilled by their alternate or by another non-voting member. Fulfillment of the vacancy must be approved by the BCOAG Chair. Permanent fulfillment of the vacancy will be conducted through the annual BCOAG VM nomination process.
2. In the event of a short-term vacancy due to medical or maternity leave, work detail, deployment, or other reason:
  - 2.1 The position may remain vacant until the EC member or committee chair is available to return to his or her duties.
  - 2.2 The committee co-chair or EC member alternate should ensure that the duties of the vacant position are achieved.
  - 2.3 In the event that the EC member alternate and committee co-chair are also unavailable to fulfill the duties of the vacant position, the BCOAG Chair may request that another VM fulfill the duties of the vacant position. In the event that no VMs are available, the BCOAG Chair may request that a non-voting member fulfill the vacant position.
3. Interim alternate appointments will expire when the original EC member or committee chair is available to return to his or her duties or when the term of the original EC member or committee chair expires.

## **IV. Executive Committee**

The EC, as the governing body, manages the daily operations of BCOAG. The EC members may be expected to devote extra time and effort in addition to attending to the minimum core duties and responsibilities stated below.

### **A. Election and Term of Appointment**

#### **Election**

The election of EC members and committee chairs is held in the month of October or November each year. To allow for timely and adequate transition procedures, the electoral process may begin as soon as the MOLC submits the new BCOAG VM appointment recommendations to the OSG. Under no circumstances will the new VM selections be announced publicly prior to final OSG approval. In the event that a position is vacant after elections, the BCOAG Chair shall appoint a VM to the vacant position with concurrence from the EC.



## **1. Chair**

The BCOAG Chair shall be elected as the Chair-Elect in the year prior to serving as Chair. If the Chair-Elect is unable to progress to Chair, the BCOAG VMs may choose to elect a Chair without serving first as Chair-Elect. Alternately, the BCOAG VMs may choose to re-elect an incumbent Chair if the Chair-Elect is unwilling or unable to progress to Chair in the subsequent year.

Under no circumstances will any officer be allowed to serve more than two (2) years as BCOAG Chair. At the expiration of the Chair's term, the Chair will serve an additional year as a member of the EC in the position of Immediate Past Chair.

If the term of the Chair coincides with the expiration of that individual's voting membership to BCOAG, the Chair may serve one (1) additional year as an ex-officio member of BCOAG provided the individual's supervisor is informed and concurs with the extension, unless reappointed as a VM per the provisions of **Article II**. For example, a BCOAG member can be appointed and serve as Chair-Elect in his/her third year and then serve a fourth year in an ex-officio status (non-voting) as Chair, if not reappointed to a new three-year term.

## **2. Chair-Elect**

The BCOAG Chair-Elect shall be elected from among the voting membership. The Chair-Elect serves three-years as a member of the EC (first year as Chair-Elect, the second as Chair, and third as Immediate Past Chair); there is no re-election of the Chair-Elect position. There will be an annual election for Chair-Elect.

## **3. Executive Committee Members**

All Executive Committee members, excluding the Chair and the Immediate Past Chair, are elected from among the VMs by a simple majority vote. Appointments are one-year terms with the possibility of serving one (1) additional consecutive term in the same position, with the exception of the Chair- Elect.

## **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

### **1. Chair**

The Chair shall:

- 1.1 Carry out and implement the mission, goals, objectives, and functions of the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws.
- 1.2 Assume responsibilities for representing BCOAG to all government agencies and media.
- 1.3 Work closely with the Immediate Past Chair, ex-officio members, and any prior BCOAG Chairs to ensure a smooth transition and proper continuation of BCOAG business.

- 1.4 Submit the BCOAG annual business plan to the EC for approval and disseminate to the BCOAG Membership thereafter.
- 1.5 Lead the BCOAG EC meetings.
- 1.6 Lead the BCOAG VM meetings.
- 1.7 Lead BCOAG general meetings.
  - 1.7.1. In the event the Chair is not able to lead the general meeting, the Chair Elect will lead the meeting. If the Chair Elect is not available, another member of the EC will lead the meeting. If none of the members of the EC is available, the meeting should be rescheduled or canceled.
- 1.8 Coordinate all BCOAG activities and ensure Committee members follow-up on assigned tasks or projects.
- 1.9 Facilitate the approval of Committees' goals and budgets during the first two (2) months of the calendar year and conduct a mid-point evaluation at the end of the second quarter.
- 1.10 Work closely with and involve the Chair-Elect in Chair responsibilities and activities.
  - 1.10.1. Discuss policies and procedures required to chair BCOAG with the Chair-Elect throughout the operational year.
  - 1.10.2. Provide the Chair-Elect the opportunity to preside over two (2) or more General Body meetings.
- 1.11 Submit a list of VM nominees to OSG via MOLC for approval.
- 1.12 Facilitate the formal introduction of new VMs to the general body during the first meeting of the operating year;
- 1.13 Submit the Special Assignment Award and Recognition Certificate for qualified BCOAG VMs to OSG via MOLC for approval.
- 1.14 Oversee the election of the EC and standing Committee Chairs.
- 1.15 Facilitate the orientation of new EC members and Committee Chairs, and ensure that outgoing EC Members and Committee Chairs provide a written description of all duties and related resource/tools to the respective incoming members.
- 1.16 Generate the End-of-Term Summary Report, one to two pages in length of the BCOAG activities during term.
  - 1.16.1. The content of the report shall be prepared from summaries of activities provided by various Committee Chairs.
  - 1.16.2. The annual report shall be distributed to the BCOAG General Membership as an addendum to the meeting minutes no later than the second meeting following the conclusion of term.

## **2. Chair-Elect**

The Chair-Elect must be a VM. The Chair-Elect shall:

- 2.1 Assist the Chair with the responsibilities and duties listed above.
- 2.2 Assist the Chair in the implementation of action items, activities and other deliverables of all Committees.

- 2.3 Work closely with the Chair to learn the policies and procedures required to chair BCOAG.
- 2.4 Exercise all the rights and responsibilities granted to the Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws in the absence of the Chair.
- 2.5 Assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the event that the Chair is unavailable.

### **3. Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary must be a VM. The Executive Secretary shall:

- 3.1 Assist BCOAG Chair in preparing meeting agendas.
- 3.2 Record all meeting discussions and prepare meeting minutes.
- 3.3 Maintain permanent files containing the BCOAG minutes and reports.
- 3.4 Keep attendance of all meetings and notify the Chair and Chair-Elect if a VM has two (2) unexcused absences from BCOAG meetings.
- 3.5 Monitor the attendance of voting membership to ensure proper organizational representation.
- 3.6 Determine if a quorum of VMs is present in order to conduct BCOAG business; a quorum is defined as a minimum of fifty percent (50%) attendance by VMs.
- 3.7 Exercise all the rights and responsibilities granted to the Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws in the absence of the Chair and Chair-Elect.
- 3.8 Have a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order.
- 3.9 Assume the responsibilities of the Chair-Elect in the event that the Chair-Elect is unavailable.
- 3.10 Assume the responsibilities of the Correspondence Secretary in the event that the Correspondence Secretary is unavailable for one-time occasions (in case of a short-term vacancy, the Correspondence Secretary's alternate should fulfill the role).
- 3.11 Ensure transfer of all meeting minutes and records to the incoming Executive Secretary.

### **4. Correspondence Secretary**

The Correspondence Secretary must be a VM. The Correspondence Secretary shall:

- 4.1 Manage the announcement submissions and listserv requests in the BCOAG email account weekly.
- 4.2 Forward inquiries sent to the BCOAG email account to the appropriate EC member(s).
- 4.3 Disseminate all correspondence to BCOAG members in a timely manner through weekly announcements and as directed by the BCOAG Chair.
- 4.4 Manage the BCOAG listserv.

- 4.5 Assist BCOAG Chair with preparing the End-of-Term Summary Report.
- 4.6 Keep an electronic copy of the most current version of BCOAG's Standard Operating Procedures on a BCOAG designated archive platform.
- 4.7 Assume the responsibilities of the Executive Secretary in the event that the Executive Secretary is unavailable for one-time occasions (in case of a short-term vacancy, the Executive Secretary's alternate should fulfill the role).

## **5. Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) Representatives (2)**

There are two (2) MOLC representatives. One of the MOLC representatives shall be a VM and is elected by a majority vote of the BCOAG voting membership, the other MOLC representative shall be the Immediate Past Chair.

The MOLC Representatives shall:

- 5.1 Represent BCOAG at all MOLC meetings.
- 5.2 Fulfill the rotational responsibilities within the MOLC.
- 5.3 Report to BCOAG VMs and non-voting members the pertinent information from the MOLC and Chief Professional Officer (CPO)/Surgeon General Professional Advisory Committee (SGPAC) meetings.

## **6. Operations Liaison**

The Operations Liaison must be a VM. The Operations Liaison shall:

- 6.1 Assist with developing the annual BCOAG Business Plan.
- 6.2 Work closely with BCOAG committees Operations and Strategic Planning Liaisons to ensure completion of mid-year and end- of-year status reports, and annual succession and planning activities.
- 6.3 Develop and maintain BCOAG's organizational chart.
- 6.4 Ensure that process improvement recommendations and after-action reports submitted by BCOAG committees is shared with BCOAG EC for review.
- 6.5 Provide monthly updates to the BCOAG members during monthly BCOAG General Body meetings;
- 6.6 Act as a liaison to Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) in planning the yearly symposium.
- 6.7 Represent BCOAG at the COF Symposium MOLC Booth or select a designee
- 6.8 Maintain inventory of BCOAG merchandise available;
- 6.9 Coordinate transactions related to BCOAG merchandise;
- 6.10 Prepare and submit a comprehensive operational report to the BCOAG EC by the end of the operational year.

## **7. Immediate Past Chair**

The Immediate Past Chair **does not** have to be a VM.

Following a term as Chair, the individual may serve a one (1) year term as Immediate Past Chair, regardless of voting membership status. The Immediate Past Chair will provide advice and assistance to BCOAG and its EC. The Immediate Past Chair will serve as one of the two MOLC representatives.

## **8. Senior Advisor**

The Senior Advisor is **not** a VM.

The Senior Advisor is a senior officer and active BCOAG member who serves a three- year term. This officer shall hold the temporary rank of O-6 or above. The Senior Advisor is expected to be a consultant to the BCOAG EC, voting membership, and general membership, and advise on any issues, concerns, and policies and procedures related to BCOAG. The Senior Advisor may advocate for, but may not officially represent BCOAG.

## **9. Captains' Council**

The Captains' Council members are not VMs.

The Captains' Council is comprised of 5, but no more than 11, active BCOAG members ranked O-6 or above, who serve a three year term.

- 9.1 Nomination of Captains' Council members begins on May 1st of each year and ends no later than June 30th of each year.
- 9.2 The selection of Captains' Council members is finalized by September 1st by the EC.
- 9.3 New Captains' Council members are formally introduced to the general body with the announcement of the incoming VMs.
- 9.4 Captains' Council members are expected to serve in the following manner:
  - 9.4.1. The Captains' Council members will attend the monthly BCOAG General Body meetings and provide quarterly updates on relevant matters.
  - 9.4.2. The BCOAG Captains' Council will also serve as liaisons to BCOAG Committees. The Captains' Council members may advocate for but may not officially represent BCOAG.
  - 9.4.3. Provide advisory services to the BCOAG EC and BCOAG Committees focusing on mentorship and leadership to achieve the mission of BCOAG and the USPHS.
  - 9.4.4. Collaborate and advocate for innovative solutions to meet the challenges impacting Black Officers in the US Public Health Service.
  - 9.4.5. Support the BCOAG Senior Advisor in the implementation of USPHS initiatives affecting officers at ranks O-5 and below.

- 9.4.6. Collaborate with BCOAG EC to create and implement practices to reinvigorate and maintain participation by O-6 officers in BCOAG.
- 9.4.7. Develop educational activities that aid in leadership development and support officers at ranks O-5 and below in reaching the O-6 rank.
- 9.4.8. Facilitate and guide BCOAG officers to participate in seminars, research or projects that result in the submission of publications, white papers, and presentations at regional, national and international levels.

## **V. Committees**

Committees are created to better serve the mission of BCOAG. A committee may be either a standing committee, in response to on-going assignments, or an Ad Hoc committee/working group, in response to specific (or short-term) assignments. In the event, an Ad Hoc Committee's on-going assignments persists beyond three (3) years and is expected to continue without a foreseeable end date, the EC will evaluate and determine whether the Ad Hoc Committee should be converted to a standing committee. If a determination is made to convert the Ad Hoc Committee to a standing committee, the conversion will be implemented the year the determination is made and updated on the subsequent revision of the Bylaws.

### **A. Term of Appointment**

The standing committee chairs are elected from among the current and newly-elected VMs by a simple majority vote by current VMs. Committee Chairs serve a one-year term with the option of serving one additional term. All Ad Hoc Committee Chairs are selected from the pool of VMs by the BCOAG Chair, in concurrence with the EC. All unfilled Committee Co-Chair positions are determined by each respective Committee Chair and should be familiar with the duties of that Committee Chair and act in the Chair's absence. In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Co-Chair shall exercise all the rights and responsibilities that are granted to the Committee Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws.

Committee Co-Chair and Committee members can be non-voting members.

### **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

The following are descriptions of standing committees within BCOAG.

Committee Chairs provide leadership and direction to committee members to meet specific goals and objectives (see below). Committee Chairs are responsible for keeping records of resources and accomplishments and providing necessary information for the BCOAG Chair's End-of-Year Report, with assistance from the Operations and Strategic Planning.

Ad Hoc Committees/working groups created in response to specific (or short-term) assignments are not listed in these bylaws, but their function and accomplishments will be described in the End-of-Term Summary Report of BCOAG activities and accomplishments.

## **C. Standing Committees**

### **1. Awards Committee**

The Awards Committee shall:

- 1.1 Prepare the BCOAG nomination packages and submit to the BCOAG Chair who shall forward them to OSG for final approval.
- 1.2 Prepare any other ad hoc award nominations on behalf of BCOAG.
- 1.3 Prepare the Special Assignment Award nomination package and submit to the Chair who shall forward it to MOLC for final approval.
- 1.4 Draft memoranda recognizing outgoing BCOAG members and the Chair upon the expiration of appointments.
- 1.5 Develop other recognition strategies such as Member of the Quarter.

### **2. Behavioral Health Committee**

The Behavioral Health Committee shall:

- 2.1 Support Black Commissioned Corps officers experiencing personal or professional hardships by providing information and resources on behavioral health.
- 2.2 Coordinate comprehensive dissemination of behavioral health related fact sheets in observance of behavioral health awareness .
- 2.3 Coordinate and/or provide behavioral health presentations for BCOAG officers and other stakeholders as requested.

### **3. Career and Professional Development (CPD) Committee**

The CPD Committee shall:

- 3.1 Provide guidance and support to all BCOAG members in career development.
- 3.2 Monitor issues and concerns in career development/advancement;
- 3.3 Organize BCOAG trainings.
- 3.4 Update and monitor the BCOAG mentor/mentee program.

### **4. Charter and Bylaws Committee**

The Charter and Bylaws Committee shall:

- 4.1 Review and revise the charter every five (5) years, and bylaws every three (3) years or as needed to align with changes in Commissioned Corps policies or SG guidance.
- 4.2 Ensure approval of all changes to the existing charter, bylaws and standard operating procedures (SOPs) by the voting members.

- 4.3 Prepare all member-approved changes in the BCOAG charter and bylaws and submit to the BCOAG Chair to forward to the SG for final approval.

## **5. Communications and Public Relations (CPR) Committee**

The CPR Committee shall:

- 5.1 Evaluate and maintain the BCOAG website to ensure that a useful format and structure of the website content is established and maintained.
- 5.2 Enhance BCOAG visibility by ensuring that useful and up-to-date information of interest to BCOAG is readily available.
- 5.3 Work in conjunction with other BCOAG Committees to develop and update website content in a timely manner.
- 5.4 Assist the BCOAG Chair in communicating with other agencies and the media as requested.
- 5.5 Monitor public information on Black affairs.
- 5.6 Maintain BCOAG calendar events to include the social media platforms;
- 5.7 Plan Black History Month celebration social media activities.
- 5.8 Create the BCOAG end of year newsletter.
- 5.9 Identify and organize at least one (1) committee project per year to enhance the visibility of BCOAG by interacting with the PACs, CPOs, minority communities, and other agencies.

## **6. Community Outreach Committee (COC)**

The COC shall:

- 6.1 Develop and coordinate opportunities for BCOAG members to actively engage in activities that protect, promote, and advance the health, safety, and wellness of Black and other minority communities where we live and work.
- 6.2 Increase the visibility of USPHS and BCOAG by participating in community outreach activities.
- 6.3 Serve as an advocate for black and minority communities by offering our innovative expertise through presentation and activities.
- 6.4 Provide guidance to OSG and the BCOAG general body on public health issues related to Blacks and other minority communities.
- 6.5 Encourage BCOAG participation in activities that support SG goals and objectives.

## **7. Health Disparities Committee (HDC)**

The HDC shall:

- 7.1 Increase awareness about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for the prevention of chronic disease.
- 7.2 Educate about the warning signs, symptoms and risk factors of chronic



disease through early detection and screening.

- 7.3 Provide resources and educational materials to empower the Black community to take charge of their overall health and well-being.
- 7.4 Develop culturally-appropriate informational tools, using existing resources from various government and/or private entities.
  - 7.4.1 These tools will focus on diseases that disproportionately affect the Black community; in addition, the tools will be disseminated at community events and other venues (i.e., churches, health fairs, county health departments, community centers, sororities/fraternities, and family reunions); the committee will also develop additional health-related informational tools as needed.

Identify opportunities to partner with the BCOAG Community Outreach Committee to expand efforts and increase awareness of health promotion behaviors.

## **8. Historian Committee**

The Historian Committee shall:

- 8.1 Assist with documenting BCOAG activities by archiving related and relevant articles and/or pictures.
- 8.2 Plan Black History Month, Juneteenth, and Kwanzaa celebration activities.

## **9. Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee shall:

- 9.1 Coordinate all activities related to the nomination of VMs, SA and Captains' Council to the BCOAG.
- 9.2 Solicit support and interest from the general BCOAG members in VM recruitment activities.
- 9.3 Prepare the nomination package for nominated VMs and submit to BCOAG Chair who shall forward it to MOLC by September 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year. A final list of nominees will be sent by the MOLC Chair to the OSG for approval by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year;
- 9.4 Identify and organize at least one (1) BCOAG-driven VM recruitment activity per year; and
- 9.5 Obtain an annual statistical report via MOLC on the number of Black officers serving in the USPHS, by categories, and agencies.

## **10. Recruitment, Retention, and Readiness (3R's) Committee**

The 3R's Committee shall:

- 10.1 Expand and/or support USPHS and BCOAG recruitment activities.
- 10.2 Maintain ties with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- 10.3 Represent BCOAG at the Officer Basic Course (OBC) open house and ceremonies.
- 10.4 Facilitate the transition and progression of officers through retention

- and/or education.
- 10.5 Conduct an annual survey of the BCOAG membership to obtain feedback on current services and determine areas for improvement, then report findings to the EC.
  - 10.6 Report updates on readiness and deployment to BCOAG membership;
  - 10.7 Promote activities to help ensure officers meet CC height and weight standards.
  - 10.8 Provide opportunities for officers to perform the Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

## **11. Social Committee**

The Social Committee shall:

- 11.1 Provide an avenue for BCOAG members to network and build sustained relationships outside the work setting.
- 11.2 Coordinate BCOAG sponsored events for USPHS officers that provide opportunities to build cohesiveness and enhance esprit de corps while engaging in activities with family and friends in a casual environment.
- 11.3 Host an annual social event encouraging participation from all Black officers within the USPHS.

## **D. Ad Hoc Committees**

### **1. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee**

The IDEA Committee shall:

- 1.1 Provide an avenue for BCOAG members to address issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion within the Corps and in our communities.
- 1.2 Coordinate cultural awareness efforts in BCOAG and in collaboration with MOLC.

## **VI. Operation**

### **A. Decision Making**

1. The BCOAG Chair shall convey any pertinent information or ideas related to BCOAG to the EC.
2. The BCOAG Chair shall seek input from the EC and relevant Committee Chairs as needed.
3. Committee Chairs shall seek input from committee members as needed. Committee members shall provide feedback, express concerns about BCOAG, and provide suggestions through their Committee Chairs.

4. EC members shall vote and the majority rules (51% or above). Voting will be performed only after complete and meaningful discussions have taken place. If there is a dispute among EC members and/or tie in voting, then it should be brought up to the VMs for a vote.
5. The BCOAG Chair shall announce the decision to VMs, regardless of the outcome of the vote. If a majority of all VMs agree that further discussions of the decision are necessary, then such discussions will take place.
6. The BCOAG Chair shall ask the MOLC representative(s) to share the final decision with MOLC, if applicable.

## **B. Committee Projects**

All committee projects should be related to the mission and goals commonly agreed on by the committee and the BCOAG governing body. Each committee should follow the steps outlined below for each project as a guide and make sure to keep the BCOAG leadership apprised of the current status of each project through the committee monthly report.

Committee Chairs shall:

1. Identify specific projects through collective committee member brainstorming, conferring with other PHS officers and BCOAG leadership.
2. Gather additional information as needed.
3. Review the committee's need for outside assistance.
4. Determine what assistance BCOAG or other junior officers can provide, including whether other committees or general members may be of assistance.
5. Develop annual goals and create an action plan with timeline to track progress.
6. Identify a project lead.
7. Identify and assign specific tasks.
8. Evaluate results, document lessons learned, and assign new tasks, if appropriate.
9. Keep appropriate BCOAG leadership apprised of project status.
10. Ensure appropriate and timely record keeping for each of task.
11. Repeat the above steps as needed, until the project is completed.
12. Ensure acknowledgement of project completion and project team members to BCOAG leadership and other authorities as appropriate.

## **C. Transitioning**

### **New Member Orientation**

1. Each EC member and Committee Chair should conduct an orientation for new EC members and committee chairs. This orientation should include the roles and responsibilities as outlined above and the minimum criteria for maintenance of good standing as a BCOAG VM. This is to be done as soon as possible after elections but no later than prior to the first meeting of the new VM's term which is the second Thursday of January of each year.

The following areas should be emphasized during the orientation:

- 1.1 Importance of the position.
- 1.2 All duties and responsibilities of the EC member or Committee Chair.
- 1.3 Mission and objectives of the EC position and the committee.
- 1.4 The bounds of committee activity and authority.
- 1.5 BCOAG bylaws, policy, practices, and procedures.
- 1.6 EC member or Committee SOPs.
- 1.7 Past accomplishments, lessons learned, and the current work of the committee.
- 1.8 Assignments of committee members.

## **VII. Meetings**

1. BCOAG general meetings are to be held monthly for all BCOAG voting and non-voting members. VMs are required to attend all official or scheduled meetings to ensure that a quorum is met. If a VM is unable to attend, it is that voting member's responsibility to ensure that his or her alternate is able to attend. If an alternate cannot attend for the VM, an excused absence may be requested from the Chair prior to the meeting.
2. BCOAG VM meetings are to be held at least quarterly. Only VMs are required to attend these meetings to discuss and vote on current and outstanding BCOAG business. It is necessary that all VMs try to attend these meetings to ensure that a quorum is met. If a VM is unable to attend the meeting then they need to follow the guidelines for attendance and absenteeism. Meeting dates and times will be determined by the BCOAG Chair.

## **VIII. Awards and Certificates**

### **A. Special Assignment Award**

A VM who has contributed significantly (met the requirement of 30-days of cumulative activities) may qualify to receive this award. Only one (1) award can be received per three-year term. Special Assignment Awards will be granted after officers have completed their voting membership term.

## **B. BCOAG Awards**

BCOAG offers five (5) awards annually that are presented at the annual USPHS COF Symposium: the *RADM Trent-Adams Leadership Award*, *John C. Eason Responder of the Year Award*, the *Hildrus A. Poindexter Award*, the *George I. Lythcott Award*, and the *Retired Officer Recognition Award*.

These awards honor members of the USPHS CC Officers who have made significant contributions to the advancement of the nation's health. Current VMs are not eligible for these awards. BCOAG also offers the BCOAG Chair Awards. The recipients of the Chair awards are chosen by the BCOAG Chair and are announced at BCOAG's December General Body Meeting.

### **1. RADM Sylvia Trent-Adams Leadership Award**

The candidate must meet the following criteria:

- 1.1 Any Senior USPHS Commissioned Corps Officer (Grade O-5 or O-6) with a minimum of 7 years on active duty with the USPHS.
- 1.2 Active member of BCOAG.

In addition, the candidate must meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- 1.3 Demonstrated exceptional mentorship of junior officers in support of health education.
- 1.4 Sustained high quality performance that significantly contributed to a health education program and/or agency objective.
- 1.5 Demonstrated outstanding leadership initiative and/or the application of unique skills and creativity to meet a health education program and/or agency objective.
- 1.6 Demonstrated overall work performance or contribution to a single health education activity supporting the mission of the USPHS.
- 1.7 Participated in health education activities within or outside of BCOAG that has impacted junior officers (i.e., book club, Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) mentor, Chartered Minority Advisory Group (CMAG) mentor etc.).

### **2. John C. Eason Responder of the Year Award**

The candidate must meet the following criteria:

- 2.1 Demonstrated outstanding contributions to the USPHS by responding to critical public health events either domestically or internationally.
- 2.2 Active member of a BCOAG committee.

### **3. George I. Lythcott Award**

The candidate must meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- 3.1 Made significant contributions to program and OPDIV objectives with sustained high quality of work performance.

- 3.2 Work performance or a single important achievement has been characterized by outstanding leadership initiative and/or the application of unique skills and creativity.
- 3.3 Overall work performance or a single activity has clearly contributed to the mission of the USPHS.
- 3.4 Participation in activities within or outside PHS has had a positive impact on improving the health status of the Nation's medically underserved populations.
- 3.5 Any USPHS Commissioned Corps officer (Grade O-2, O-3, or O-4) with a minimum of three (3) years of service in the Corps.

#### **4. Hildrus A. Poindexter Award**

The candidate must meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- 4.1 Demonstrated significant contributions toward improving the health of Blacks and other minorities in the United States and abroad.
- 4.2 Sustained exceptional dedication to the mission of the USPHS.
- 4.3 Demonstrated outstanding leadership (academically, administratively, programmatically, and/or internationally).
- 4.4 Demonstrated excellence in his/her professional field.
- 4.5 Demonstrated significant contributions to the community.
- 4.6 USPHS officer (with a minimum of seven (7) years of service within PHS) with outstanding service contributing to enhancing access to healthcare for underserved populations.

#### **5. Retired Officer Recognition Award**

The candidates must meet the following criteria:

- 5.1 Retired Black USPHS officer.
- 5.2 Served a minimum of 10 years on active duty with the USPHS.
- 5.3 Demonstrated exemplary service to the USPHS and the Nation.

#### **6. BCOAG Chair Awards (2)**

This award was created to recognize officers (one (1) VM and one (1) non-voting member) who provided exemplary support to the BCOAG Chair. These officers have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have exceeded expectations of the BCOAG Chair by supporting BCOAG's mission, their fellow officers, and the community at large.

#### **C. Certificates of Appreciation**

The Certificates of Appreciation from the BCOAG EC are presented annually to non-voting members who make significant contributions to BCOAG. This certificate may also be presented, as appropriate, to anyone who has significantly contributed to the mission of BCOAG. Certificates of Appreciation are prepared by the Awards Committee. Committee members are eligible to receive one Certificate of Appreciation per term for each Committee they actively participate in.

## **D. Letters of Appreciation**

1. The BCOAG Chair may present a letter of appreciation to a BCOAG member who contributes significantly to a BCOAG activity. The intent of a Letter of Appreciation is to demonstrate BCOAG's gratitude for an individual's effort in contributing to the mission of BCOAG. Such an effort can include a presentation to BCOAG committees, and/or participation in BCOAG events. Members are eligible to receive a Letter of Appreciation more than once per term. The Awards Committee Chair may nominate BCOAG members for this recognition.
2. The BCOAG Chair may also present a letter of appreciation to non-BCOAG members, civil service employees, and members of the general public who significantly contribute to BCOAG programs and activities.

## **IX. Standard Operating Procedures**

Committees and EC SOPs have been developed to provide detailed instructions on the operation of BCOAG. These SOPs provide guidance on matters not addressed by the BCOAG Charter or Bylaws. The Charter and Bylaws Committee is responsible for reviewing BCOAG SOPs and archiving to MAX.GOV. All SOPs should be reviewed annually. Committee Chairs and EC shall notify the Charter and Bylaws Committee after reviewing their SOPs if no changes were warranted. Revised SOPs should be submitted by the respective EC member, SOP Liaison or Committee Chair to the Charter and Bylaws Committee for EC and BCOAG Chair review. The Charter and Bylaws Committee will provide general guidance, assistance, and timeline for the preparation, revision, and approval processes for these documents.

## **X. Bylaws Revision**

BCOAG bylaws should be reviewed at least once every three (3) years or as needed to align with changes in Commissioned Corps policies or SG guidance. Revised bylaws should be submitted by the Charter and Bylaws Committee, approved by a simple majority vote of VMs, and signed by the Chair.

These bylaws have been ratified by a quorum of the voting membership on September 7, 2022.

## **XI. Version Control**

This is Version: September 7, 2022

Last updated: December 3, 2018

## **XII. Acknowledgement**

BCOAG Charter and Bylaw Committee members prepared this document noting that its development and maintenance are a continuous process.

## **XIII. Approval**

Submitted By:

CDR Samantha Fontenelle

Charter and Bylaws Committee

Approved By:

LCDR Kodilichi Echeozo

Chair, BCOAG