

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL

**Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board
(CCWIAB)**

CHARTER

I. MISSION

The Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB), chartered under the Office of the United States Surgeon General (OSG), employs the voluntary service of United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps officers to advise the OSG on issues affecting women officers serving in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

The mission of the CCWIAB is to identify and analyze key issues that impact women Public Health Service officers and develop policy recommendations and action plans to address such issues.

II. RELATIONSHIP OF THE CCWIAB TO THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Over half of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is comprised of women officers; however, issues of concern to women officers have never been systematically reviewed or addressed. Therefore, USPHS Commissioned Corps leadership lacks baseline data necessary to address possible issues and to develop responsive initiatives.

Other uniformed services and most civilian agencies address women's issues through specific internal programs or committees. In 2011, under then Surgeon General (SG) VADM Regina Benjamin, CCWIAB was founded to support objectives of the White House Council on Women and Girls established by a 2009 Executive Order. Objectives of the Council included reviewing and recommending changes to policies that have a distinct impact on women in the federal workforce. At the time CCWIAB was established, priority issues impacting women Public Health Service officers that were identified included leadership opportunities for women officers (Flag/Senior Executive Service), distribution of women in certain professions, harassment and discrimination in the workplace, interpersonal violence, and important work-life issues, including pregnancy and breastfeeding. CCWIAB continues to research and address issues affecting women officers who serve in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the CCWIAB operates as a resource in an advisory capacity and provides subject matter expertise to the OSG (SG and Deputy Surgeon General (DSG)). It does not substitute for line management or in any way exercise the

prerogatives of the respective operating programs. While CCWIAB members are chosen from the respective HHS Operating Divisions (OPDIVs), Staff Divisions (StaffDIVs), and Non-HHS organizations, they neither represent their organization's management, nor speak for the organization. CCWIAB membership is reserved to active-duty USPHS Commissioned Corps officers only.

III. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the CCWIAB is to serve in a resource and advisory capacity to assist in the development, coordination, and evaluation of activities related to women officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps with specific objectives to:

1. Identify and analyze key workforce-related and other issues impacting women Public Health Service officers and provide recommended actions to the OSG;
2. Keep the OSG and partners informed about the activities and priority issues for women in uniform from other services, the White House, and veterans' organizations;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of special emphasis activities conducted to support women officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps;
4. Support fellow women officers to lead well-balanced lives upholding the USPHS Commissioned Corps core values of leadership, service, integrity, and excellence.

IV. FUNCTIONS

In carrying out its mission and objectives, the functions of the CCWIAB shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Identify key workforce-related and other issues that impact women officers and recommend appropriate actions by:
 - a. Participating in official and ad hoc committees of the OSG and providing advice, comments, and recommendations on identified issues;
 - b. Communicating regularly with the OSG and ensure dissemination of pertinent information to women Public Health Service officers;
 - c. Serving as force multipliers to promote SG priorities directed by the OSG; and

- d. Promoting and coordinating information, reports, and position papers related to women Public Health Service officers to the broader HHS community through the OSG.
2. Keep the OSG and partners informed about the activities and priority issues for women in uniform from other services, the White House, and veterans' organizations by:
 - a. Regularly conducting environmental scans (i.e., pertinent websites, news articles, peer-reviewed literature, etc.);
 - b. Attending pertinent conferences, meetings, and other activities sponsored by other uniformed services, the White House, and organizations; and
 - c. Disseminating information via white papers or other communication, as appropriate.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of special emphasis activities by:
 - a. Developing survey instruments to assess the effectiveness of special emphasis activities related to issues relevant to women Public Health Service officers; and
 - b. Analyzing survey results, preparing reports of findings, and providing pertinent recommendations.
4. Support fellow women officers by:
 - a. Providing a forum for women officers from all categories to come together in a supportive environment to share ideas and experiences in support of the overall development and well-being of women Public Health Service officers via the Women's Leadership Support Group (WLSG).

V. VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Initial membership of the CCWIAB shall consist of an Executive Chair at the Flag grade, a Chair, a Chair-Elect, an Executive Secretary, and twelve voting members representative of the USPHS Commissioned Corps from OPDIVs, categories, and non-HHS entities.

In addition to the Executive Chair, Chair, and Chair-Elect, the twelve voting members shall be appointed by the Executive Chair and will include, at a minimum, members from each USPHS Commissioned Corps category, including Dental, Dietician, Engineer,

Environmental Health Officer, Health Services Officer, Nurse, Pharmacist, Physician, Scientist, Therapist, and Veterinarian, and at least one officer from an agency/OPDIV with underrepresented women (e.g., National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard).

Board members are expected to attend meetings (in-person or virtually); Chair, Co-Chair, or lead at least one committee or initiative; review and provide feedback on identified issues; and participate in the drafting of reports and recommendations.

CCWIAB relies heavily on non-voting member volunteers to assist with committees and initiatives. Non-voting member volunteers can be involved in various CCWIAB committees and initiatives to meet the needs of those committees and initiatives. Certain non-voting members that have contributed significantly to CCWIAB committees and initiatives may be eligible to serve as a Chair, Co-Chair, or lead of CCWIAB committees or initiatives at the discretion of the Executive Chair.

Special consultants shall be appointed to provide expert information on identified legal matters. Consultants shall have an open invitation to attend meetings and may be invited to provide presentations on special topics.

VI. VOTING MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION PROCESS

Four to six months before a current voting member is expected to roll off, the CCWIAB will solicit nominations (self-nominations are accepted) for vacancies from all eligible individuals. CCWIAB Executive Chair, Chair, and Chair-Elect will review all nominees to identify highly qualified candidates to fill the anticipated vacancies. CCWIAB will transmit the names to the nominee's respective agency USPHS Commissioned Corps liaison for endorsement. The CCWIAB Executive Chair will finalize the list of new voting members and submit the voting membership nomination package to the OSG for consideration no less than 60 calendar days prior to the expiration of the seats.

VII. TERM OF APPOINTMENT

1. Voting Members will serve a 3-year term.
2. Attendance: Meetings shall be conducted monthly or as needed by the Executive Chair or Chair. Any voting member of the CCWIAB who frequently misses meetings without just cause, does not vote on CCIWAB business items, does not participate in required activities, or does not complete assigned tasks at the discretion of the CCWIAB Executive Chair, will be asked to voluntarily resign from the CCWIAB, or the CCWIAB Executive Chair can initiate a request to OSG to terminate the officer's voting membership.
3. Removal: A voting member may be removed from the CCWIAB at the request of the Executive Chair for just cause (non-attendance, disciplinary action, etc.). In such

case, the Executive Chair will request the voting member to step down. If needed, the Executive Chair can also make a recommendation to the SG for removal of the voting member. In that case, the SG will make the final determination of removal of the CCWIAB member.

VIII. EXECUTIVE CHAIR

Executive Chair

1. The Executive Chair shall be appointed by the SG for a term of 3 years.

Chair

1. The CCWIAB Chair shall be selected as the Chair-Elect by the Executive Chair in the year prior to serving as Chair.
2. If the Chair-Elect is unable to progress into the role of Chair, the Executive Chair and CCWIAB Voting Members may choose to select a Chair without serving first as Chair-Elect.
3. Alternately, the Executive Chair and CCWIAB Voting Members may choose to select an incumbent Chair if the Chair-Elect is unwilling or unable to progress to the Chair in the subsequent year.
4. Under no circumstances will any officer be allowed to serve more than two (2) years as CCWIAB Chair.
5. If the term of the Chair coincides with the expiration of that individual's voting membership to CCWIAB, the Chair may serve one (1) additional year as an ex-officio member of CCWIAB provided the individual's supervisor is informed and concurs with the extension.

Chair-Elect

1. The CCWIAB Chair-Elect shall be selected by the Executive Chair and CCWIAB Voting Members.
2. There will be an annual selection for Chair-Elect position.
3. The Chair-Elect serves a two-year term (first year as Chair-Elect, the second as Chair) and must be a CCWIAB Voting Member.
4. There is no re-selection of the Chair-Elect position.

Executive Secretary

1. The CCWIAB Executive Secretary shall be selected by the Executive Chair and CCWIAB Voting Members.
2. The CCWIAB Executive Secretary serves a one-year term and must be a CCWIAB Voting Member.
3. There will be an annual selection of the Executive Secretary position.

4. The Executive Secretary supports the Chair in preparing meeting agendas, recording all meeting discussions, preparing meeting minutes, maintaining permanent files of CCWIAB minutes and reports, and keeping attendance of all meetings.

IX. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. The CCWIAB shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (e.g., Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures).
2. The Executive Chair or Chair shall present at the monthly SG/Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), Chief Professional Officer (CPO)/PAC, or SG Chartered Advisory Group leadership meeting(s).
3. The CCWIAB shall submit regular progress reports to the OSG. Reports should include:
 - a. A review of new or ongoing issues with recommendations on how best to address the concerns.
 - b. Annual report and other reports, as indicated.
 - c. New and/or revised policy drafting, as identified.
 - d. Position papers with recommendations, as identified.
4. Quorum: A quorum consists of at least 50 percent of the CCWIAB voting membership.
5. Voting: Where voting is required or as appropriate, action will be determined by the simple majority of those voting members present.
6. Committees: Where CCWIAB elects to establish standing or ad hoc committees, said membership may include CCWIAB non-voting members (e.g., non-voting volunteers).

X. COMMITTEES

The CCWIAB has the following committees currently:

1. **Reproductive Health Committee:**
Mission: To identify and analyze key issues surrounding reproductive health, family planning, pregnancy, and the postpartum period that impact women Public Health Service officers. The group strives to promote the awareness of reproductive health, family planning, pregnancy, and postpartum-related resources and guidance, as well as USPHS Commissioned Corps policies and procedures that are applicable to women officers.
2. **Gender Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment Committee:**
Mission: To identify and address concerns of gender bias and discrimination among women Public Health Service officers while stationed at their OPDIVs and while deployed. In addition, this committee will assess existing discrimination and harassment policies and trainings (including sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace); and develop action plans to address officer concerns relating to

experiences of gender bias, discrimination, and harassment at duty stations and while responding to public health emergencies, with the aim of improving opportunities, access, and equality for women officers in the USPHS.

3. **Officer and Family Health and Well-being Committee:**

Mission: To address emerging issues affecting the health and well-being, including physical and mental health issues, of women Public Health Service officers and their families. This includes advancing policies to bolster family supports and career progression of women officers, including dual-service couples, family leave policies, childcare, sabbaticals, and healthcare issues, access, and availability for women and their families.

4. **Communication and Dissemination Committee:**

Mission: To serve as a communication link and information resource for women officers. This includes, but not limited to, increasing awareness of CCWIAB, managing the internal and external-facing CCWIAB website, overseeing the CCWIAB listserv, coordinating and advertising CCWIAB listening sessions, and conducting outreach at USPHS Commissioned Corps events (e.g., CCWIAB exhibit booth during the annual USPHS Symposium, Officer Basic Course Open House events).

5. **Awards and Membership Committee:**

Mission: To maintain all awards and membership documentation for CCWIAB. This includes, but not limited to annually coordinating the CCWIAB voting member solicitation, selection, and submission process, including promotion of CCWIAB voting member vacancies through informational presentations and materials; annually preparing CCWIAB nomination packages, which include appointment letters for the Executive Chair, Chair, Chair-Elect, and all voting members and submitting to the Executive Chair and Chair who shall forward them to the OSG for final approval; annually preparing the Special Assignment Award nomination package and submit to the Executive Chair and Chair who shall forward them to the OSG for final approval; annually coordinating Letters of Appreciation for all CCWIAB voting members and committee members and submit to the Executive Chair and Chair who shall forward them to the OSG for final approval; and identifying, maintaining, and helping administer a CCWIAB awards program.

6. **Women's Leadership Support Group (WLSG):**

Mission: To provide a forum for women officers from all categories to come together in a supportive environment to share ideas and experiences in support of the overall development and well-being of women PHS officers, including career progression and leadership development. Although WLSG was initiated separately from CCWIAB, due to the shared interests of CCWIAB and WLSG, WLSG is a committee under CCWIAB. WLSG Chair and Co-Chair are not required to be CCWIAB voting members.

