



Dental Professional Advisory Committee
of the

United States Public Health Service

Protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation

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Promotion Counselling Tips from the Mentoring Workgroup

Dear Dental Officers,

Promotions season can seem intimidating and arduous. Here are some tips that may be helpful during that time. Always remember that you may not promote on your first try, but this does not mean you were not deserving of promotion. It only means that you were below the cutoff established by OMB. Use it as an opportunity to review yourself as an Officer. Review your role within the Dental Category, your Agency, and the Corps. Use it as an opportunity for improvement.

Dental Category Promotions Tips and Tricks

Keep current with policies and guidelines.

Complete all items in a timely manner, not procrastinating until the deadlines for submission. Know the current Category Benchmarks and where you fit within them. You will not be able to meet every benchmark, but maximize the number of points possible by being a well-rounded officer.

Check Dashboards at least monthly to maintain Basic Readiness. Check your documents submitted to ensure they include the entirety. Screenshot your uploaded documents with date shown when submitting important docs. Also check the learning portal for any new required trainings.

Get involved in the dental community. Publications and activities with professional (including agency-related) dental organizations are a great way to improve knowledge and reputation in your career.

Continue learning:

Pursue CDE, a Fellowship or Mastership in the AGD, MPH, Dental Residency, etc.

Deploy:

While some duty locations are more supportive of PHS deployments than others, deployment shows fulfillment for PHS mission. If deployed at least seven days, complete the other requirements for the Field Medical Readiness Badge.

Awards:

Notifying your supervisor(s) of your achievements will provide evidence to guide them in nominating you for an award. You can also write your own award.

Mentoring:

Become a protégé or mentor. While most people have several unofficial mentors, signing up with this kind of program through DePAC, their agency, or another dental community, the mentoring program is set up to improve the dental officer's career.

PCS:

Mobility also weights in as factor, especially when changing your duty station to exert a greater role for PHS. An agency change is also nice for increased familiarity in diversity of PHS job assignments.

Get/stay in shape:

Part of PHS is the fitness test and weight standards. In our desire to improve the health of our nation, we also want to improve our own health and fitness.

Tips from RADM Ricks

1. I would encourage officers with non-Corps supervisors to share with them the supervisor's guide and explain to them in advance the importance of COERs, awards, etc.
2. I think officers should provide a 1-page summary of accomplishments to their supervisor at COER time, and strive to have a sit-down conversation with their supervisor on the COER and performance expectations. At that time, if the officer feels like he/she is deserving of an award, he/she can ask the supervisor if they would nominate the officer, and if they are willing, then the 1-page summary can serve as a beginning of an award narrative (but its primary purpose is to help the supervisor with the COER).
3. Officers should of course familiarize themselves with the benchmarks. It's important to understand that when an officer is lacking in one area, they should go above and beyond in other areas of that benchmark. For example, if they don't have post-dental residency or other training, they could compensate for it with public health training or continuing education hours.
4. All officers, even those full-time in clinical billets, should strive to get public health training of some type, even if it is just CDE. After all, we are public health officers.
5. Officers should understand that while mobility isn't as big of a deal as it used to be (it is down to 1, 2, and 3 moves, and it used to be many more back prior to 2001), it is important for officers to progress in their careers through moving and taking on greater responsibilities.
6. CVs need to be in the correct format and need to be complete. Officers shouldn't use acronyms that aren't understood across agencies. Officers should clearly explain their responsibilities, duties, and collateral duties.
7. Officers need to understand that what separates us as Corps officers is that we go above and beyond what our civilian counterparts do....or we should. As officers consider their careers and promotion, they should ask themselves, "What value do I bring to the Corps?" While there is a lot of value in providing oral health care 8 hours a day to a vulnerable population and doing nothing else, a Civil Service dentist or contract dentist can do that as well. What our officers should bring with them is an increased work ethic and going above and beyond on everything – taking on additional responsibilities, furthering their knowledge through CDE and public health training, volunteering to deploy to support our Nation, etc. Promotion is not an entitlement. We promote officers to do more, lead more, mentor more, take more responsibility, assess/evaluate more, take more risks, etc., and our promotion boards are tasked with identifying those officers who are most likely to succeed at the next level.

At your service,
CDR Joseph Collins

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