



U.S. Public Health Service Environmental Health Officer

Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) Meeting #206 Minutes, 13 March, 2018

I. Call to Order – CDR Chris van Twuyver

The meeting was called to order at 1300 EDT.

II. Roll Call – CDR Jessica Otto, Secretary/Treasurer

Roll call was performed; a quorum was confirmed.

Voting Members Present

Rank and Name	Rank and Name
LCDR Daniel Adams	CDR Jamie Mutter
LCDR David Bales	CDR Jessica Otto
LCDR Travis Bowser	CDR Carolyn Oyster
LCDR Matthew Deptola	CAPT Stephen Piontkowski
CDR Katie Hubbard	CDR Mike Quinn
LT Erin Kincaid	CDR Jill Shugart
LCDR Drew Kupper	CDR Elizabeth Valenti
CDR Monica Leonard	CDR Chris Van Twuyver
LT Danny Malashock	CDR Elena Vaouli

Voting Members Absent

CDR Luis Rodriguez (excused)

CDR Jessica Hensley (excused)

Alternates Present

CDR Aimee Treffiletti

LCDR Scott Daly

CDR Leslie Jackaniz

III. Chief Professional Officer (CPO) Update – RADM Kelly Taylor

- RADM Taylor serves on a Symposium Leadership Panels workgroup. Two panels are planned, one with junior officers and another with CPOs. The theme is *Lead From Where You Are*. Applications were received from 23 junior officers, none were EHOs. In an effort to include EHOs, the deadline to apply was extended to COB on March 13, 2018. Contact LCDR Mark Liberatore or LCDR Chitra Mahadevan if you are a junior officer interested in joining the panel on June 4, 2018 at the Symposium.

- RADM Taylor confirmed with the American Academy of Sanitarians that they will again host a reception for the Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award and will include the EHOPAC awards on the first day of the NEHA conference- June 23, 2018. All EHOs are invited to attend.
- Mr. Ronald Lamb, Chief of the Compensation Branch at DCCPR conducted a presentation to the Nurse PAC on the blended retirement system. If there is interest, the EHOPAC can arrange for a similar offering. CPOs were told that 20 officers from across all categories have opted into the blended system. Beginning on January 1, 2018 all new Calls to Active Duty service members will enter the blended retirement system.
- Several questions were received through the EHOPAC anonymous feedback system regarding current number of active duty EHOs vs. those retiring, and whether changes at DCCPR might affect the overall number in the category. RADM Taylor and the EC looked at trends over time. A summary of this conversation is in the Executive Committee Liaison Report below.

CAD for 2015-2017 vs. retirement for that same period. We averaged 15 CADs and 13 retirements. But if you look at the individual numbers we probably had 6 more CADs than retirements. The highest number of CADs was in 2016, with 16. 16 also had retirements that same year. Net gain of 6 officers over those years.

Readiness data- officers must update RedDOG Self-Service by March 19, 2018, especially if they are up for promotion this year. They will run another readiness check at the end of March to finalize the April report. Officers will not be responsible for any technical system errors beyond their control. Additionally, CPOs have been receiving regular updates from RedDOG detailing what officers are lacking to meet basic readiness requirements. Once the data is finalized, which is anticipated to be by April 1, 2018 RADM Taylor will share the list with the EHOPAC Readiness Subcommittee.

IV. Chair Report – CDR Chris van Twuyver

Goals for 2018:

- 1. Focus on supporting our fellow EHOs**
 - Career Counseling
 - Mentoring and Orientation
 - Training and networking events
- 2. Increase opportunities for EHOs to volunteer with the EHOPAC volunteers**
 - 16 new volunteers in total
 - Added six volunteers to help us staff our IT Subcommittee, the remaining volunteers were split amongst each of the remaining Subcommittees and Executive Council. We are seeking one additional volunteer to assist with the IT Subcommittee
 - Several of the volunteers were assigned to help the Mentoring and Orientation SC manage the Officer Basic Course. We currently have sufficient volunteers to help us manage the graduation ceremony, but are still seeking volunteers to help us staff the OBC open house. If you are interested please contact LT Malashock by email at malashock.daniel@epa.gov.
- 3. Continue to improve our internal processes and procedures**
 - IT Subcommittee- we will be working hard this year to overcome past challenges which prevented us from updating the EHOPAC website. For an extended period of time, we were unable to update material on the EHOPAC website due to system issues. Thanks to the efforts of CDR Jessica Hensley and CDR Buchanan we are now able to update our website, but we have a large backlog of material to upload to the website.
 - We also had difficulty in the past recruiting EHOs with IT experience resulting in staffing issues so we developed an IT sustainability plan which called for the creation of three new IT Subcommittee workgroups. The first workgroup will manage the All Partners Access Network (APAN) site. This site is used to maintain EHOPAC working documents and historical records, we also formed a Website

Workgroup which will maintain the EHOPAC Website and we also have a 508 workgroup which will ensure that all material posted to the website meets 508 requirements. We identified six new volunteers to staff these workgroups and CDR Hensley will be implementing a training plan for these volunteers. We expect that the addition of the new volunteer members and implementing our sustainability plan will allow us to update and maintain the EHOPAC website in a sustainable manner in the future. The EHOPAC will be using the Listserv to communicate important updates, job postings, training and events while we work on training our volunteers.

V. Vice Chair Report – CDR Michael Quinn

- Still in the beginning processes of formulating workplans for the year for the PAC. Primary responsibility is to support Chair as Chair Elect.
- We are transitioning from the oral history of the EHOPAC to electronically documenting.
 - Looking for ways to collaborate with other categories.
 - Looking at leadership and mentoring for EHOs. How can we improve that?
- Update from PAC Chairs meeting: Monthly meeting. There are two CPOs that sit on that group (therapist and veterinarian).
 - There is a discussion of looking at current deployment team structure. Teams have been in effect for 10 years now (NIST, RIST, RDF). We seem to have a lot of structure, but have not actively deployed teams in these structures in recent times. Is there a better way to structure teams? DCCPR and RedDOG will be discussing.
 - Health professions specialty pay issues- lot of attention on social media. Please maintain professionalism and patience.
 - Implementation of the height/weight standard is coming. Nothing is final. Weight and pregnancy is being discussed- especially post- pregnancy.
 - Blended Retirements System- opt-in system has not been fully delineated. Concern that officers that wait until later will miss out on the TSP match contribution. The PAC Chair group and CPO Board is providing as much feedback as we can to DCCPR regarding all of these issues.

CDR Quinn understands that this is a transitional time-period, he's been in uniform for 26 years. Change is constant, and it may not be comforting, but it means things are moving along.

VI. Ex-Officio – CDR Jill Shugart

- The Ex-Officio role helps ensure continuity between operational years. CDR Shugart's 2018 special projects include work with two different subcommittees.
 - Serve as the EHOPAC Executive Committee liaison to the Communications and Publication Workgroup, including article contributions for the quarterly EHOPAC Newsletter.
 - Assist the Policy and Standards Subcommittee to align the EHOPAC charter with the bylaws that were updated in 2017, and updating the category appointment standards.

VII. Secretary/Treasurer Report – CDR Jessica Otto

- An email will go out today for the voting members to vote on finalizing the February minutes. Please forward this email to your alternate in the event you are unable to vote.
- An email will go out today to vote on the purchase request to restock the EHOPAC coins.
- We will be holding an overall budget discussion and looking at the awards committee and other funding requests in a separate meeting.

VIII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LT Danny Malashock

- Questions from the anonymous feedback system were discussed.
- Q During the SG's All Hands I heard a lot about physical standards, but nothing about Program Support in terms of at least time for Physical Training. Prior service officers know that the military typically provides 2 hours per day during duty hours for PT. Since weight standards are now so important, when will Commissioned Corps officers be provided time for PT?
- A Meeting height and weight standards are a condition of service and are the responsibility of the Officer, Officers have the option of discussing scheduling needs with their supervisor as necessary, but are ultimately responsible for meeting height and weight standards.
- Q What are the EHO call to duty and retirement numbers over the last 24 months and how are we trending? Are we keeping up our numbers or are we shrinking to the point where we will no longer be a category or worse – rolled into the HSO category.
- A We are not aware of any discussions regarding merging or removing categories. We have maintained an average strength of 350-360 EHOs since the 1990s. Some of the variances in EHO numbers can be attributed to agency budgetary increases and decreases over time. We continue to receive more applicants than we can find positions. In 2016 and 2017 we were able to board 50 applicants of which 18 were commissioned after locating jobs. We believe that more officers could have been commissioned during this time frame if the agencies had elected to hire additional officers. In short we are not aware of any discussions regarding eliminating the EHO category or merging the EHO category with Health Services. We continue to receive and board more applicants that can be hire by the agencies. We are planning to post the current EHO numbers in the “Hail and Farewell” section of our newsletter for awareness.
- Q Has anyone looked at the projected retirement numbers due to the enforcement of the height/weight standards? We had a pile retire when we ‘up armored’ the PHS CC in 2000 so it stands to reason that some will choose to retire vs. doing the weight loss and PT.
- A We are unaware of anyone researching this topic. It would be impossible for us to research this at the PAC level due to the limited information available.
- Q The lack of new Officers over the past 3 years and the calls to get rid of or phase out the CC seems to be a recurring trend that cuts across Administrations. What or better yet who drives this issue?
- A The SG has been a strong advocate of the Corps, marketing our utility to the public, current and past leadership has also marketed the utility and accomplishments of the Corps. Most notably the Ebola and hurricane responses. As a Corps we should take every opportunity to market our capabilities and service to the public to increase awareness.

The following comment was also posted to the anonymous feedback system: What we do isn't driven by profit - it's about prevention and I've always found it odd that Public Health and the Medial Industrial Complex get lumped in together. Perhaps that's why there is such a recurring interest in getting rid of PH Professionals and programs. There is more profit to be made in treating disease than preventing it.

IX. Subcommittee Briefings

Marketing and Recruitment– CDR Elena Vaouli and LCDR David Bales

- The Marketing & Recruitment Subcommittee (M&R SC) manages a heavy and varied workload to support the category’s marketing and recruitment efforts. This workload necessitates ample volunteer support to meet its objectives.

- M&R comprises 28 active duty EHOs from over 7 different agencies and located across the country, including Alaska. M&R offers many leadership opportunities.
- M&R's primary objectives are achieved by its four main WG: AAP, RAE, JRCOSTEP and M&M. M&R engages with a wide audience, including hiring officials and agency liaisons, students, accrediting bodies, DCCPR and other PACs.
- The 2018 general duty open window closed on 2/28/18. Applications are being screened by P&S. M&R awaits receipt of the results so AAP can begin its process.
- The 2017 general duty open window closed on 5/15/17. 42 viable applicants were identified. Boards did not begin until January 2018. To date, 40% of applicants have been reviewed.
- As of 3/6/18, 19 viable JRCOSTEP applicants are under review. Most JRCOSTEP placements are with Indian Health Service.
- M&R still seeking representative for Mississippi Valley State University.
- For 2018, M&R aims to:
 - a. Sustain wide-reaching and highly visible recruitment efforts by presenting at NEHA 2018, and holding the annual Fall Recruitment Webinar.
 - b. Improve engagement with boarded applicants by surveying former boarded applicants to identify areas of improvement, and by developing a webinar for pre-boarded applicants.
 - c. Increase EHO visibility.
 - d. Update and improve recruitment materials.
 - e. Ensure consistency in EHO recruitment messaging by increasing outreach and training of Adopt-a-School reps.

Policy and Standards – CDR Katie Hubbard and LCDR Drew Kupper

- The Policy and Standards Subcommittee:
 - Establishes and develops revisions of EHO appointment standards;
 - Coordinates annual EHO applicant review process with DCCPR, Request volunteers for call center;
 - Makes recommendations for professional registration and certifications appropriate for the EHO category;
 - Assists CPO, Appointment Boards, applicants, and general EHOs with questions about appointment standards, including qualifying degree eligibility and work experience credit;
 - Reviews and revises the EHOPAC Charter and Bylaws;
- EHO Application window 2018 was February 1 – 28
 - Seven EHO's volunteered at call center to assist DCCPR
 - CAPT Pfister, CAPT Vazquez, CDR Pharo, LCDR Lester, LCDR Tuite, LCDR Darr, LTJG Forche
 - Coverage for 14 of 20 days
 - 171 calls received at DCCPR Call Center
 - 66 applicants determined to be eligible
 - ~60 candidates have submitted CVs/Personal Statements for review
 - 37 ineligibles, vast majority due to degree not qualifying / not accredited by required organization
 - 68 calls regarding general information
- P&S initial review of ~ 60 applicants ongoing
 - ~30% of applicants not meeting standards
 - Degree not conferred, degree not accredited
 - Applicant deadline for submitting documents 3/17
 - Senior review to begin approx. 3/26
 - Final applicant list to DCCPR due 4/23

Training and Events – CDR Elizabeth Valenti, CDR Eva McLanahan

- The Training and Events (T&E) Subcommittee (SC) consists of three workgroups: Events, Training, Category Day Planning

- The first EHO networking event planned by the SC was in Atlanta, Dec 2017
- Future events for 2018: NEHA AEC (Anaheim, CA), June; Atlanta, Fall; D.C., Winter
- The Training workgroup maintains the Training link on the EHOPAC site, which consists of EHO focused Credentialing, Graduate Certificates, and Online Training Resources. Please contact us with additional resources that may be included.
- A Leadership Corner with leadership resources will be coming to the EHOPAC website in the coming months.
- There are three EHO Category Day Planners for the COF Symposium: 3rd year: LCDR James Gooch, 2nd year: LCDR Beth Wittry, and 1st year: LTJG Sam Frank
- 2018 Category Day Highlights:
 - Conference registration – early bird deadline April 9
 - EHO Mentoring (Spectrum Room B), Tuesday, June 5th, 0800-0900
 - EHO Category Social (Lazy Dog Restaurant and Bar), Tuesday, June 5th, 1945-2200
 - EHO Category Day (Room TBD), Wednesday, June 6th, 0800-1730
 - EHO Awards Luncheon
 - The Agenda was finalized and can be found in the next EHOPAC newsletter or at <https://www.phscof.org/uploads/1/0/5/1/105160231/2018ehoagenda.pdf>
 - There is no keynote speaker this year, instead there will be a panel regarding recent hurricane deployments

X. Open Discussion

- CDR Monica Leonard is the EHOPAC representative on the Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board. The Board and JOAG are updating the *Resource Guide for USPHS Officers Getting Married or Getting Divorced, and for Dependents Surviving the Death of a USPHS Officer*. An update should be available sometime this summer.
- The EHOPAC Executive Committee will advocate for open application windows that better align with graduation dates.
- CDR Vaouli asked for advice and wisdom on what EHOs can or should do to ensure we remain relevant and needed on Tier 1 rosters. CDR Quinn responded EHOs’ strength is that we are a “jack of all trades” and can competently and expertly fill whatever need exists on deployment teams, whether it be in a traditional EHO role, as safety, in other support sections (LOGS, ADMIN/FINANCE), and especially in high-level leadership roles like Team Commander/Deputy (and he named several EHO leaders including Fanaselle, Dellapena, Kunkel, Edwards as examples). He encouraged us to seek out whatever opportunity and need existed, as we can contribute to Tier 1 RDFs in so many different and valuable ways, and not just in traditional EHO roles. (Maybe ask Quinn to clean up some of my paraphrasing).

XI. Adjournment – CDR Chris van Twuyver

The meeting was adjourned at 1423 EST.