



# U.S. Public Health Service Environmental Health Officer

## Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) Meeting #208 Minutes, 12 June, 2018

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### 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 David Bales	CDR Jessica Otto
LCDR Travis Bowser	CDR Carolyn Oyster
LCDR Matthew Deptola	CDR Mike Quinn
CDR Jessica Hensley	CDR Luis Rodriguez
LDCR Drew Kupper	CDR Jill Shugart
CDR Monica Leonard	CDR Elizabeth Valenti
LT Danny Malashock	CDR Chris Van Twuyver
LT Steven Merritt	CDR Elena Vaouli

#### Voting Members Absent

CDR Katie Hubbard (excused)  
LT Erin Kincaid (excused)  
CDR Jamie Mutter (excused)  
CAPT Stephen Piontkowski

#### Alternates Present

CDR Michael Box  
LT Gamola Fortenberry  
LCDR James Gooch

#### Other Attendees

LT Krista Ferry

### III. Chair Report – CDR Chris van Twuyver

- Awards
  - CAPT Kenny Hicks received the Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award
  - CDR Bryan Christensen received the Edward (Ted) Moran Award
  - CAPT David Cramer received the John G. Todd Award
  - LT Steven Merritt received the John C. Eason Award
  - LCDR Brian Czarnecki received the EHO Responder of the Year Award
- EHOPAC Subcommittee Summaries
  - Awards – CDR Mutter instituted a new award submission and tracking process in accordance with a new SOP generated by CPO Board.
  - Career Development – CAPT Piontkowski and LCDR Bowser
    - Completed the benchmark, OS, and ROS update. Also completed training for officers conducting mentoring sessions and career counseling.
  - Communications – CDR Rodriguez and LT Kincaid
    - Working on the most recent edition of the newsletter. They also manage the social media presence on Facebook. Just created a “Share your Story” initiative for EHOs to share duties and accomplishments.
  - History – CDR Deptola
    - Creating a summary document that will be presented with EHO coin at the Officer Basic Course. Also working on PAC summary that will be incorporated into the EHO Survival Guide.
  - Information Technology – CDR Hensley
    - APAN – Platform used by the PAC to store vital documents.
    - Website – LCDR Erickson.
    - 508 Compliance – CDR Woodlee.
  - Marketing and Recruitment – CDR Vaouli and LCDR Bales
    - Recruiting, DCCPR support during EHO open season, COSTEP Program and manage and track EHO applicants
  - Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Oyster and CDR Leonard
    - Developing a new program to develop a new program for support in the OBC Open House and Graduation Ceremony, Orientation packet, and mentor program
  - Policy and Standards – CDR Hubbard and LCDR Kupper
    - Manage screening of applicants to ensure that they meet our appointment standards, charter update and minor revisions to the bylaws.
  - Readiness – LT Merritt and LT Ferry
    - Readiness guidance, updates to the readiness subcommittee website
  - Training and Events – CDR Valenti and CDR McLanahan
    - EH and IH training materials, leadership training into the T&E section of the EHOPAC web site, symposium, general events.
- General Initiatives
  - Continue to strengthen and enhance EHOPAC operations implemented in 2016 and 2017.
  - Subcommittee strengthening, refinement, and clarification
  - Update the charter and bylaws
- Volunteers: 89 total volunteers supporting EHOPAC operations!
- Currently, we have 346 EHOs across 16 agencies with the bulk in FDA, IHS, and CDC.
  - Since 1992 forward, we’ve had about 350 officers.

- Call to duty in 2017
  - 14 total: DHS (2), FDA (4), CDC (1), IHS (6), and CMS (1)
- Call to duty in 2018 (through May 29, 2018)
  - 8 total: CDC (1), IHS (6), and EPA (1)
- CY 17: 6 eligible candidates are still available for hire and 17 boarded candidates were not hired.
- CY 18: 16 eligible candidates are still available for hire
  - The 2018 EHO Open Season ran from February 1-28.
  - Once candidates are boarded, they are put into a cohort that have a year to be hired.

#### **IV. Vice Chair Report – CDR Michael Quinn**

- Appreciates all the work being done by the subcommittees. Specifically called out:
  - IT (CDR Hensley)
  - Readiness (LT Merritt and LT Ferry)
  - Training and Events (CDR Valenti and CDR McLanahan)
- Trying to reengage with liaison groups (LT Malashock) and professional organizations.
  - Examples are AIHA, NEHA, ASSP
  - He had a good meeting last week with the president of the Uniformed Services Environmental Health Association.
  - He wants the PAC to maintain these relationships.
- Process Management and Sustainability
  - Great progress so far.
- The PAC’s roll in highlighting the importance of Environmental Health
  - We’re a little like Rodney Dangerfield ... “no respect”
  - Consider ourselves ambassadors to EH!
  - RADM Taylor does this very well

#### **V. Ex-Officio – CDR Jill Shugart**

- 2018 Special Projects Update
  - Making sure the EHOPAC charter is in accordance with the bylaws.
- Editing the spring EHOPAC newsletter
  - Big thanks to the Communications subcommittees and Publications workgroup.
- EHO Appointment Standards and P&S position paper.
  - HQ is requesting that appointment standards updates are put forward in July. CDR Shugart will be pushing this soon.

#### **VI. Secretary/Treasurer Report – CDR Jessica Otto**

- “Thank you” to those who attended category day at the Symposium.
  - Coin sales were good. Piloting Venmo and PayPal.
- Took a vote to finalize May minutes. Motion carried unanimously, the minutes will be posted to the EHOPAC website.

#### **VII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LT Danny Malashock**

- EHO Directory tool report
  - Originally scheduled to be a replacement for the blue book. Went offline about 1.5 years ago.
  - This new tool will provide added security measures. In the meantime, the directory will be offline.

## VIII. Blended Retirement Presentation – Mr. Ronald Lamb, Chief of Compensation Branch, DCCPR

- See slides attached

## IX. Subcommittee Briefings

### Marketing and Recruitment – CDR Elena Vaouli and LCDR David Bales

- 10 EHO JRCOSTEPs selected for 2018
  - IHS (9) and CDC (1)
  - Lower than prior years, but they are working with HQ to address some of the JRCOSTEP application drops
- JRCOSTEP materials updated and shared
  - Preceptor guide is completed.
  - Benefits of hiring a JRCOSTEP (in progress)
  - Tips (in progress)
- New anticipated application windows for JRCOSTEP 2019
  - EHO and ENG application windows will be twice a year
- Call center contact information has changed
  - New number: 888-225-3302
  - [cchelpdesk@hhs.gov](mailto:cchelpdesk@hhs.gov)
- General duty open application windows suspended for 2018
  - Last open EHO window was in February. Others haven't had windows either.
  - Continuously open categories remain open
  - Also open to former CC Officers. Possible that some inter-service transfers can happen.
- HQ releases new accession standards
  - Includes medical, mental health, and substance abuse.
- Medical clearances
  - Transitioning to new medical screening process
- Sustain wide-reaching and highly visible recruitment efforts
  - M&R & EC to represent EHOPAC at annual EHAC meeting
    - Saturday, June 23, 2018 in Anaheim, CA
  - M&R & EC to represent EHOPAC at annual NEHA conference
    - Wednesday, June 27, 2018
  - M&R to hold annual Recruitment Webinar in the Fall 2018
    - Target date is mid-October 2018
- Improve engagement with boarded applicants
  - Actively collecting input from former boarded applicants to improve our processes
  - Providing assistance with selection notifications for Feb 2018 applicants
  - Developing pre-boarded applicant webinar
- Increase EHO visibility
  - Updating & improving recruitment materials (print and web-based)
  - Supporting EHO-led presentations in the field. Giving data, as needed, to support these presentations.
- Ensure consistency in EHO recruitment messaging
  - Recruit an EHO (RAE) to increase outreach and training of Adopt-a-School Reps.
- Jobs
  - 30 EHO professionally boarded applicants seeking positions. 19 still need positions.

- Adopt-A-School Reps
  - 3 needed: Fort Valley State (GA), Old Dominion U (VA), Mississippi Valley State (MS). Contact Samuel Rudnitsky.
  - Also need reps for OBC. POC is Mentoring and Orientation SC (Leonard and Oyster).
- CDR Quinn acknowledged the SC's work.

## Readiness – LT Steven Merritt and LT Krista Ferry

- Former Readiness Chair LCDR Daniel Adams stepped down due to agency constraints. LT Steven Merritt and LT Krista Ferry are serving as Co-Chairs. There are 12 officers on the Readiness Subcommittee, organized into two workgroups: Officer Readiness and Resources. The Readiness Subcommittee helps keep EHOs basic ready. The Readiness workgroup focuses on compliance while the Resources workgroup focuses on providing references for deployment. Legacy documents are being combined into one resource, and the website is being updated.
- Recent Readiness Changes:
  - Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) 18-002 Exceptional Proficiency Promotion (EPP). In order to be eligible for EPP, an officer must demonstrate compliance with force readiness standards for every quarter in the previous fiscal year. *Moving forward officers will need to meet readiness standards at all time to be eligible for EPP.*
  - Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) 18-001 Promotion Precept Weights. Officers in a “not ready” status at the 31 December readiness status report prior to the promotion year will have their records reviewed by the next Retention Review Board. In addition, officers in a “not ready” status at the subsequent 31 March status report, who were otherwise successful, will be removed from both the temporary and/or permanent grade successful list. Officers are required to maintain basic readiness at all times.
  - CCD 111.03 Conditions of Service
    - Deployment Readiness. All officers are required to continually meet the Corps’ basic force readiness standards established by the ASH, absent a waiver under policy established by the ASH, an officer who has a permanent medical condition that prevents him/her from being deployed, or a condition that prevents the officer from engaging in the physical activities associated with deployments, that officer does not meet the deployment readiness requirement.
    - Weight Standards. All officers are required to maintain the Corps’ weight standards established by the ASH.
  - Any officer not meeting basic readiness may face administrative action such as referral to a retention board or an involuntary separations board. Every officer is responsible to maintaining basic readiness for monthly readiness checks.
  - In May, 90.64% of EHOs were basic ready, ranking 6 out of the 11 categories. The most common reasons for non-compliance were an expired APFT or BLS.
- Readiness Subcommittee Initiatives
  - Sustain >90% of EHOs meeting basic readiness standards every month
    - Readiness WG to continue e-mail notification and technical assistance to EHOs
    - Assisting newly commissioned EHOs to get “basic” ready ASAP
    - Alert EHOs to all readiness-related DCCPR guidance via LISTSERV immediately
  - Update and improve EHO Readiness Guide and Readiness SC website
    - Finalize edits and align content with RedDOG and DCCPR
    - Incorporate upcoming height/weight standards policies into resources
  - Advocate for use of APHTs and unique EHO capabilities on deployments
    - Complete edits to EHO Utilization Guide and get posted to website
    - Gather new EHO deployment narratives and publish them widely
    - Help EHOs get plugged into PHS response teams and/or PHS deployments

- Update and improve deployment resources with EHO feedback
  - Resources WG streamlining deployment resources and web-based content
  - Finalize EHO Post-Deployment Survey to capture feedback and lessons learned
- Increase collaboration and communication
  - Renewed engagement with EHOs, RedDOG, CReW, and Team Commanders
  - Ensure regular cross-talk between Officer Readiness WG and Resources WG

### **Training and Events – CDR Elizabeth Valenti and CDR Eva McLanahan**

- Update from 2018 USPHS Symposium
  - Largest attendance of EHOs for the last three years
  - 49 attended category day
  - 25 attended the social
  - 12 junior officers were mentored by 6 senior officers
  - 4 served as aide de camp for RADM Taylor and RADM Meeks
  - Category Day- 7 presentations by 10 EHOs
  - Thank you category day planners: LCDR James Gooch, LCDR Beth Wittry, LTJG Sam Frank; led by CDR Eva McLanahan. A lot of work goes into planning. Thank you for hosting a successful day!
- Training and Events is supporting the FDA Commissioned Corps Awareness Day.

## **X. Liaison Reports**

### **American Academy of Sanitarians – CAPT (Ret.) Gary Noonan**

- No report

### **Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board – CDR Monica Leonard**

- CDR Monica Leonard is the EHOPAC representative. The Women’s Leadership Support Group is hosting a podcast series. The first will feature RADM Pamela Schweitzer, Chief Professional Officer of the Pharmacy Category. She will share insight into career decisions she made and how those decisions impacted her professionally and personally. Listen through Max.gov or YouTube with the links shared in the EHOPAC listserv announcement, or contact CDR Leonard: zgf7@cdc.gov.

### **Environmental Health Accreditation Council – CAPT Donald Williams**

- This has been their busy time of the year, doing site reviews of schools.
  - 7 were up for re-accreditation this year.
  - 16 officers conducted the reviews.
- He visited Mississippi Valley State. He encourages to engage that school through Adopt-a-School.

### **Junior Officer Advisory Group – LCDR Beth Osterink**

- JOAG creates a lot of publications. Recent ones include
  - Tips
    - Personality typing for success
    - Emotional Intelligence.
  - Cyber-Grams
    - Common mistakes saluting
    - Recognition for Excellence in Physical Fitness (REP) Program
  - With Pride and Distinction
    - Uniform Ordering and Your Uniform Closet

## **XI. Open Discussion**

**Q: With the current emphasis on physical standards for retention, is there any consideration of giving program support for obtaining these physical standards? This would need to be endorsed by the PAC and the surgeon general.**

**A:** This is a work in progress by HQ. With the implementation of the new conditions of service policies that went into effect in March, any sort of program could impact the officers and their individual agencies. While the PAC is endorsing this, release time would not be coming in the near future. These conversations have been going on for quite a while now.

**A:** Deployment Readiness and Conditions of Service Policy addresses this. There is some good information about expectations of PHS, including deployment readiness, which is a component of basic readiness. All PHS officers must follow those conditions of service. Readiness subcommittee is there to support us during these changes and feel free to reach out to them.

**Q: When will supervisors be held accountable when officers they supervisor do not meet readiness standards?**

**A:** While this is an interesting idea, the PHS set up may not be conducive for something like this this. The DOD setting, with line authority, is different from the current PHS system. Disciplinary action against civilian supervisors is not likely a plausible action.

**Q: What is the PAC effectively doing to support Environmental Health Officers when they deploy without orders in hand, have to pay up-front for meals and incidentals, and wait months to be reimbursed for the costs incurred to support PHS deployments?**

**A:** ASPR and DHHS resources were stretched very thin this year. While it is not unique, but we were able to work through it. The engineering PAC was able to get feedback on additional information from those officers who experienced delayed payment. This will be presented to the CPOs for further discussion. HQ and leadership is aware of it, and while it is unfortunate, we are working on it and will share updates.

**Q: To the best of our knowledge, some PHS Officers cannot participate in the Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS). While we are just detailed in the position, we are fully integrated into the agency, thus we should be able to participate. Can this be addressed and can we provide feedback like other employees do?**

**A:** While certain agencies have developed work arounds for this, PAC leadership was not aware of the extent of this, especially within HHS agencies. Additional information about the agencies where this is occurring would be useful to move forward.

**Q: What is the EHOPAC 5 year plan, specifically goals and milestones?**

**A:** This is a tough question. The PAC doesn't have a five year planning period. Operationally it's difficult. What has historically happened is to improve the PAC is:

The PAC has a defined set of subcommittees covering a wide range of topics that help officers. Those committees are set in place so that the VMs works on specific goals and topics throughout the year.

Currently 10 different subcommittees that address current issues and topics based on the one year plan that was developed

Over the past few years, the EC has strengthened the framework of the PAC and updated the bylaws. Also took a look at the charter and updated it as appropriate.

One idea to help improve the PAC is through listening session where members can bring ideas and projects to the VM for consideration

**Q: Recommend the EHOPAC host the webinar on GI benefits.**

A: The PAC is looking into this and will provide a date and time for this event once scheduled.

**Q: When will the next EHO category general application window will be open?**

A: Due to the capacity issues at DCCPR, this is unknown. Hopefully it will be at a different time of the year that is more conducive for newly graduated students. As soon as the EC knows, they will let the PAC know.

**Other:**

Promotions are out. Congratulations to the Officers who were promoted. Rates were very low this year.

For those Officers interested in being a mentor, information is on the EHOPAC website.

For those Officers going to NEHA, if there is a way to get a list out so we can support each other that would be useful. An EHO social will occur during the conference as well.

Next open PAC call is scheduled for September 11, 2018.

## **XII. Adjournment – CDR Mike Quinn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1350.

## **Appendix: Blended Retirement System Presentation**