



U.S. Public Health Service Environmental Health Officer

Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) Meeting #211 Minutes, September 11, 20

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 Member Attendance Status: Present, Absent, Excused

Last Name	First Name	Rank	Status	Name of Alternate in Attendance
Bales	David	LCDR	Present	N/A
Bowser	Travis	CDR	Present	N/A
Deptola	Matthew	LCDR	Present	N/A
Hensley	Jessica	CDR	Absent	N/A
Hubbard	Katie	CDR	Present	N/A
Kinkaid	Erin	LT	Present	N/A
Kupper	Drew	LCDR	Excused	Krista Ferry
Leonard	Monica	CDR	Present	N/A
Malashock	Danny	LCDR	Present	N/A
Merritt	Steven	LT	Present	N/A
Mutter	Jamie	CDR	Present	N/A
Otto	Jessica	CDR	Present	N/A
Oyster	Carolyn	CDR	Present	N/A
Piontkowski	Stephen	CAPT	Present	N/A
Quinn	Mike	CDR	Absent	N/A
Rodriguez	Luis	CDR	Present	N/A
Shugart	Jill	CAPT	Present	N/A
Valenti	Elizabeth	CDR	Excused	Monique Lester
van Twuyver	Chris	CDR	Present	N/A
Vaouli	Elena	CDR	Present	N/A

III. Chief Professional Officer Report – RADM Kelly Taylor

- We are preparing for the 2019 Promotion Year. If you look at the Officer Secure Area (OSA) you will see if you are eligible for promotion.
 - Over 50% of EHOs are up for temporary or permanent promotions this year. Just know not everyone is going to make it, but there are things you can do to be as prepared as possible.

- To put yourself in the best position possible, pay close attention to the requirements. You must be basic ready (it is pass-fail for promotion). If you do not have your medical information up to date you can also be removed from the pool.
- If you have been in the lowest decile for the past three cycles you will be sent to a retention board for review.
- Utilize the promotions tab on the Commissioned Corps Information Management System (CCMIS). It has all the information on deadlines and checklists to help you navigate the process.
- The Chief Professional Officers (CPOs) have asked for more information on recruitment issues and onboarding of candidates. Most of the questions center around medical review. For EHO's there are 53 applicants somewhere in the system. Most of them are in "pending" status, which means they have not completed their entire review (security, medical, boarding, nomination, or other).
 - If you have been helping an applicant through the process, just know the process is slow and that you must pay close attention to the information coming out from CCHQ for any additional information or clarifying information.

IV. Chair Report – CAPT Jill Shugart for CDR Chris van Twuyver

- The PAC is in the process of updating appointment standards and benchmarks. There is also a supplemental guidance for the benchmarks, developed by the Career Development Subcommittee. They will cover this more in-depth later in the call.
- We'll be hearing from the PACE program and the REP! program later today too.
- The PAC is currently developing a survey for capabilities, competencies and experience as an EHO. This data will be presented to CCHQCCHQ to showcase our value to the Corps. Please participate when the survey is sent out.
- The COA Symposium planning is underway, and we hope you consider coming to Minneapolis May 6-9, 2019.

V. Chair-Elect Report – CAPT Jill Shugart for CDR Michael Quinn

- There is an exciting opportunity coming up to be a voting member on the PAC. We will have one at-large position open. It is for officers that are stationed at an OpDIV that does not have a standing seat on the PAC. There will be an email forthcoming on the listserv with more details. Officers are highly encouraged to apply for the position and help represent this important segment of our category.
 - It is for a 3-year term, and applications are due September 28th, 2018.

VI. Ex-Officio – CAPT Jill Shugart

- The Summer EHOPAC Newsletter released on September 10. Thanks to the Publications Workgroup of the Communications Subcommittee for keeping us informed of PAC happenings.
- Finalizing comments on EHOPAC charter to align the document with EHOPAC bylaws. Working closely with Policy and Standards Subcommittee to achieve updates. Will provide a final draft at VM meeting in October.
- EHO appointment standard recommendations were submitted to leadership.
 - Appointment Standards Overview
 - 2013- Policy and Standards tasked with reviewing standards and pushed out a category survey
 - 2015- EHOs were the first category to screen applicants for CCHQ during open window.
 - 2016- Policy and Standards tasked with reviewing standards and researching best way forward for category
 - White paper vetted with EC
 - 2018- Updated appointment standards submitted to CCHQ by July 31, 2018

- Dinner with a Captain is an opportunity for a small group of officers to have dinner with a Captain. The EC was notified that no EHOs have signed up to participate. If you are an EHO at O-6 or above please consider signing up. Captains are needed across the country. Cycle four will occur between October 1 and December 15.

VII. Secretary/Treasurer Report – CDR Jessica Otto

- Held a vote to approve the August PAC minutes. The minutes passed and will be processed for posting to the EHOPAC website.
- If any voting member or their alternate changes duty stations or agencies please let CDR Otto know so that she can keep the website and our alternate forms up to date.
- Coins are still available, you can visit the EHOPAC website for more information.
- Our online secure file share system (APAN) recently underwent a migration to a new server and voting members have been reporting issues logging in. To fix this, you may need to delete your bookmark, clear your cookies, and sign in again. The system will likely prompt you to change your password too. Sorry for the inconvenience.

VIII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LCDR Danny Malashock

- We have developed a Commissioned Corps Overview and Resources for Civil Service Supervisors PowerPoint. It was recently updated and expanded. It will be a valuable resource for explaining our awards, promotions, performance rating, leave, and other key topics.
 - You can print or save a copy at <https://goo.gl/do4u8z>, and an updated copy will be posted on the PAC website and the listserv.

IX. Subcommittee Briefings

Career Development- CAPT Stephen Piontkowski and CDR Travis Bowser

- Career Development revised the following documents this past summer.
 - PY2019 benchmarks- no significant changes
 - CE Summary Template- no significant changes
 - Officer Statement Example- no significant changes
 - Reviewing Official’s Example- no significant changes
 - CV Cover Sheet Template- no significant changes
 - CV Template- the Officership section was moved down in the template.
- A reminder, the target audience for these documents is the promotion review board. It is important to follow the guidance provided.
- eOPF review
 - Each fall the Career Development Subcommittee offers an eOPF review for promotion eligible officers.
 - Monitor the listserv for details on how to sign-up, likely October.

Readiness – LT Krista Ferry and LT Steven Merritt

- Two new volunteers joined in the last couple months: CDR Ritter and LT Otto.
- Retention Weight Standards- Personnel Operations Manual 821.66
 - Submit PHS-7044-1 by 2359 hrs on September 30, 2018 via the “Readiness” category in e-DOC-U.
 - Any officer failing to submit by deadline will be marked “Not Basic Ready” on October 1, 2018.
 - Officers will not be penalized and there will be no impact to the promotion eligibility for PY2019, regardless of weight, if the PHS-40-7044-1 is received by deadline. See the newsletter for additional detail or the Retention Weight Standards page on CCMIS.
- Readiness of Duty Requirements Commissioned Corps Instruction

- Incorporates physical readiness and updated training/professional competency standards
- References requirements of conditions of service
- Outlines and reiterates the complete revision of Retention Weight Standards
- Reminder- log into the Readiness Self Service area on CCMIS website and update your deployment role.
- Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT) Personnel Operations Memorandum
 - References the reporting requirements contained in Retention Weight Standards
 - Mentions new allowances for medical waivers of individual APFT exercise
 - APFT- from October 1, 2018 the requirement is for a Physical Readiness Standards Report, PHS-4077-1 to be submitted along with the APFT (PHS-7044)
 - All other APFT requirements remain the same
- EHO Readiness Trends
 - Achieved our highest percentage of readiness in 2018 this month (95.06% are basic ready)
 - Behind only engineers and dieticians
 - Upload a Verified Weight Report and get your flu shot to maintain an upward trend.
- Proposed Changes to Medical Readiness Requirements
 - Medical Affairs Branch gave an update at the National Disaster Medical System Training Summit
 - Proposed changes include:
 - Use of Medical Readiness Categories to characterize an officer's ability to deploy
 - Revamped waiver system, including weight waiver
 - Annual Period Health Update (PHU)
 - Physical examination with diagnostic/laboratory testing
 - Dental examination
 - Behavior health screening
 - Preventative medicine screening tests
 - Updated Medical Review Board procedures

Policy and Standards- CDR Katie Hubbard and LCDR Drew Kupper

- EHO screening data- over the last couple years more EHOs have been commissioning with CEPH degrees in comparison to the past when most EHOs commissioned with under EHAC degrees.
- Objective: recruit practitioners into the category whom possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to competently and ethically practice the scientific, technical, and regulatory aspects of disciplines related to environmental health.
 - Industrial Hygiene
 - Health Physics
 - Occupational Safety
 - Environmental Health
- Current Appointment Standards (i.e. accepted EHO degrees)
 - Environmental Health
 - Occupational Health
 - Industrial Hygiene
 - Health Physics
- Accrediting Bodies (degrees must be accredited by one of these bodies)
 - Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET)
 - Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH)
 - National Environmental Health Science and Protection Council (EHAC)
- Previous Appointment Standards
 - Bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in the curricular areas of industrial hygiene, safety, or health physics accredited by ABET;

- A master's degree or doctoral degree with a specialization in environmental health, occupational health, or industrial hygiene from a school of public health accredited by CEPH; or
- A bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in any field and one of the following: (a) Certification as an industrial hygienist by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene; or (b) Certification as a health physicist by the American Board of Health Physics.
- Rationale for updated standards
 - Environmental Health field is in constant flux
 - New and emerging public health issues and intervention strategies
 - Academia has adapted
 - Curricula are further influenced by accrediting bodies (ABET, CEPH, EHAC) that accredit public health programs
 - A broadening definition of Environmental Health has been adopted across academia
 - In recent years, evaluating EHO applications against our accredited degree standards has become increasingly more challenging
 - Most evident with CEPH applicants that appointment board members are responsible for reviewing. Board members have questioned the academic fitness of applicants possessing CEPH accredited degrees.
- Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET)
 - Accredits applied science programs under its Applied and Natural Science
 - Bachelor's and master's degree in:
 - EH, OH, and Safety, IH, and Health Physics
 - Previously, ABET grouped programs under one general science-based criteria, now programs are accredited by distinct discipline criteria
 - Need for appointment standard language to follow suit
 - Distinct Accredited Programs under ABET's Applied and Natural Science Program include:
 - "Environmental, Health, and Safety Similarly Named applied and Natural Science Programs"
 - No "health" degrees as suggested by comma
 - "Health Physics and Similarly Named Applied and Natural Science Programs"
 - "Industrial Hygiene and Similarly Named Applied and Natural Science Programs"
 - Review by previous P&S Subcommittee determined ABET's organizational change to discipline specific criteria includes the necessary courses for occupational health and safety
 - Students pursuing a degree under these programs would have the knowledge to perform as an EHO assigned to a health and safety billet
- ABET Updates
 - Current: A bachelor's or master's, or doctoral degree in curricular areas of industrial hygiene, safety, or health physics accredited by ABET.
 - New: A bachelor's or master's degree from a program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in environmental health, occupational health and safety, industrial hygiene or health physics.
- Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
 - CEPH is an independent agency that accredits public health degrees
 - CEPH criteria are performance-based, meaning the accrediting organization does not prescribe a required curriculum. Instead the academic institution is responsible for showing that in their coursework, however they chose to apply it, provides the graduate with knowledge, skills, and competencies established under their accrediting criteria.
- CEPH Accreditation Criteria

- The school shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals, leading to the Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent professional master's degree in at least five areas of knowledge basic to public health.
 - Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health, Health Services, Social and Behavioral Sciences
- The program of study for each concentration, specialization or track within each degree, including those designated as "generalist" shall provide sufficient depth of training in the designated area through required coursework and other experiences.
- For each degree program and area of specialization within each program identified in the instructional matrix, there shall be clearly stated competencies that guide the development of degree programs.
- Limitations of CEPH accredited degrees
 - Graduate degrees with a connection in EH are offered in a variety of EH related disciplines
 - Large variances between academic program curriculums
 - CEPH- performance based
 - No set curriculum
 - Determining "specialization" becomes subjective for the reviewer
 - Occupational Health for Nurses, Urban Design and Environmental Health?
 - Degree title presented on candidate's transcript does not match the title on the CEPH website
 - Transcripts are not reliable for validating academic qualifications
 - University's program name differed from what was on CEPH's website
 - Transcripts do not always state "environmental health concentration"
 - Reviewer must verify with school to validate qualifications
 - More burden on the reviewer (time consuming verification process)
 - EH, OH, or IH "specializations" may not adequately prepare candidates for field duties expected of EHOs.
What is our identity?
- CEPH Updates
 - Current: A master's degree or doctoral degree with a specialization in environmental health, occupational health, or industrial hygiene from a school of public health accredited by CEPH
 - New: A master's degree or doctoral degree with a specialization or concentration in environmental health, occupational health and safety, or industrial hygiene from a school of public health program accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and a current certification as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) or REHS/RS-In Training by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA).
 - (i) Applicants must provide confirmation indicating the CEPH accredited degree met the school's requirements for a specialization or concentration in environmental health, occupational health and safety, or industrial hygiene on an official transcript. If this information is not on the official transcript, confirmation should be made on school letterhead and signed by the director or chair of the degree program. The confirmation shall state the candidate graduated from a CEPH-accredited program having a concentration or specialization in environmental health, occupational health and safety, or industrial hygiene.
 - (ii) A state issued RS or REHS is acceptable if the credential is eligible for reciprocity from NEHA.
 - REHS/RS, REHS/RS- In Training Requirement
 - Serves to justify that the applicant has secured a basic skillset to work in the field as an EHO
 - EHOs foundational identity
 - Deployment capability

- Serves a metric that the applicant is committed to the practice of environmental health. Once commissioned an officer will not be tracked to ensure they obtain the credential.
 - Transcript Requirement
 - Places the burden back on the applicant to prove degree meets the specialization requirement
- Practitioner Track
 - A bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in any field and one of the following: (a) Certification as an industrial hygienist by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene; or (b) Certification as a health physicist by the American Board of Health Physics.
 - No longer an appointment option
 - Lower number of candidates
 - Low candidate success with boarding
 - Historically, short lived officer longevity
- Once CCHQ approves the updated appointment standards Policy and Standards will develop a one-page summary for distribution.

X. Liaison Reports

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

- No report.

Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board – CDR Monica Leonard

- CDR Leonard will announce upcoming leadership webinars.

Environmental Health Accreditation Council – CAPT Donald Williams

- Annual EHAC meeting was held in Anaheim before NEHA AEC. CDR Vaouli and CDR Quinn provided COSTEP and EHOPAC updates.
- Schools had questions about:
 - Physical exam
 - Application process
 - Decline in applicants/application process
 - Mental health screening and denials
 - Requested a breakdown of accepted student for 2018
- Reaccredited EH Programs
 - Boise State University- 6 years
 - University of Georgia- 6 years
 - University of Illinois MPH- conditional for 2 years, 6 years after conditions are met
 - Mississippi Valley State University MPH- 6 years
 - East Carolina University BS, MPH- 6 years
 - University of Findlay BS, MPH- 6 years
 - Eastern Kentucky University BS, MPH- BS conditional for 2 years, 6 years after conditions are met; MPH- 6 years
 - East Tennessee State University BS, MPH- BS conditional for 2 years, 6 years after conditions are met; MPH- 6 years
- Category representation: CAPT Don Williams, CDR Jason Lewis, CDR Chyla Hunter (spelling?)
- Recurring themes
 - CEPH is hurting EH programs

- Programs are forced to drop classes to meet CEPH requirements; conflicts with EHAC
- CEPH does not prepare student for the REHS/RS exam
- What to expect in 2019
 - 50th anniversary of first EHAC Accreditation
 - NEHA conference will be in Nashville, TN
 - Encouraging posters from accredited programs
 - Would like to include EHOPAC- M&R Subcommittee is already planning

Junior Officer Advisory Group – LCDR Beth Osterink

- JOAG's operational year starts October 2019- this is a great time for junior officers to get involved. Volunteer requests will be going out through the listserv in October, but some Committees are already filling vacancies. If you have interested in serving on a particular committee contact the Committee Chair(s) with contact info provided on the JOAG website.
- Thank you. This is my last call as the EHOPAC Liaison to JOAG. LCDR Beth Wittry will take over in October 2019.

XI. Open Discussion

The following questions were submitted to the anonymous feedback system, and answers were offered on the call:

Q: Can the EHOPAC provide more clarification on the guidance on the revised Continuing Ed. Summary Sheet and what actual certificates we should submit to the Certificate of Completion section on the eOPF?

A: There is supplemental guidance available on the PAC website, it will be sent via the listserv too.

Q: At the PHS symposium, it was mentioned that there would be changes to the 5 year physicals, but no details were provided. Are there any updates as to what the changes will entail? Thank you!

A: CCHQ will make announcements as information becomes available. The PAC has no further information at this time. There may be more requirements coming down the pipeline depending on your deployment role, but please stand by for more information.

Q: What are the certification requirements when you have multiple degrees and/or joined the CORPS as a mid-level professional (8-10yrs+ post grad) focused on a non-traditional environmental public health discipline. How is the PAC leadership addressing this as it relates to promotion of they category of officers?

A: Look at supplemental guidance on benchmarks, certifications assist in ensuring deploy ability. Keep in mind there are other ways of demonstrating promotion readiness

XII. Adjournment – CAPT Jill Shugart

The meeting was adjourned at 1459.