



U.S. Public Health Service Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)



Meeting #216 Minutes, 12MAR19

I. Call to Order – CDR Michael Quinn, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1300 EDT.

II. Roll Call – LCDR Michele Dittrich, Administrative Team

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
Bird	Bill	LCDR	Present	N/A
Bowser	Travis	LCDR	Present	N/A
Deptola	Matthew	LCDR	Present	N/A
Hensley	Jessica	CDR	Excused	CDR Leslie Jackanicz
Hubbard	Katie	CDR	Present	N/A
Kincaid	Erin	LT	Excused	LCDR Fortenberry
Kupper	Drew	LCDR	Excused	LT Ferry
Leonard	Monica	CDR	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	Present	N/A
Rodriguez	Luis	CDR	Present	N/A
Shugart	Jill	CAPT	Present	N/A
Valenti	Elizabeth	CDR	Present	N/A
Van Twuyver	Chris	CDR	Present	N/A
Vaouli	Elena	CDR	Present	N/A

Voting Guests and Attendees Present

Last Name	First Name	Rank	Organization Represented
None	N/A	N/A	N/A

III. Chief Professional Officer Report – RADM Kelly Taylor

- Changes in CC Leadership
 - New PDASH, RADM Sylvia Trent-Adams
 - Deputy Surgeon General, RADM Erica Schwartz
 - Chief of Staff, CAPT Joel Dulaigh
 - Director of CCHA, RADM Susan Orsega
 - Chair CPO, RADM Edward M. Dieser
- Symposium Pre-conference Leadership Workshop- Monday May 6
 - Email sent on listserv on strategic leadership framework called the Four Disciplines of Execution
 - CPO Panel and Keynote panel from senior leadership
- Battle of the Categories Blood Drive at Symposium on Tuesday, May 7 from 0800-1800 CST.
 - Email sent on listserv. Both live and virtual component.
- EHO Recruitment Changes-Messages about recruitment needs to be consistent
 - Initial call to duty, candidates can only be hired at IHS, BOP, DHS (including CG, FEMA, ICE and DHS HQ). Can convert to other agencies at a later date.
 - The application window for EHOs is not open. Currently boarded applicants need to be placed prior to another EHO open application period.
 - EHO COSTEPs no longer have the ability to apply through the constant open application pathway. Questions can be made to M&R, the CPO, or the Executive Committee (EC).

IV. Chair Report – CDR Michael Quinn

- 2019 Chair Priorities
 - Assess, evaluate, and track EHO professional competencies
 - Support EHO professional development by providing training opportunities and resources
 - Provide timely updates regarding changing policies and the status of the Corps
 - Promote engagement and partnerships with professional organizations
 - Increase EHO visibility and provide information that demonstrates the importance of the category as a Corps and national asset
- EHOPAC Meetings
 - Quarterly Open Meetings
 - 3rd Month: March, June, September, December
 - 2nd Tuesday – 1300-1500 EST
 - Significant updates, guest speakers, & PAC questions
 - Leadership & Readiness Presentations
 - Under development
 - May occur during quarterly calls or as stand-alone events
- Recent Activities
 - RedDOG EHO Deployment Specialties
 - Commissioned Corps Town Hall/All-Officer Survey
 - EHO Modernization Feedback/Questions
 - EHOPAC Awards – in process
 - EHOPAC Subcommittee Volunteers - due **3/20 to CDR Holly Miller**
 - COF Symposium Planning – in process

V. Chair-Elect Report – CDR Elena Vaouli

- 2019 Focus Areas
 - Prepare for service as Chair
 - Chair/EC Support
 - PAC Priority Tasks (RAIL)
 - Special Requests
 - EHAC 50th Anniversary Celebrations / JRCOSTEP history
 - Engagement with the Joint PAC Chairs Group
 - Subcommittee support
 - Awards
 - Marketing & Recruitment (M&R)
 - Sustain wide-reaching and highly visible recruitment efforts.
 - M&R & EC to represent EHOPAC at NEHA.
 - M&R to hold annual Fall Recruitment Webinar in the Fall.
 - Improve engagement with boarded applicants.
 - The Adopt-a-School Program is in constant contact, helping applicants navigate policy changes.
 - Special projects.
 - Increase EHO visibility.
 - M&R collaborating with EC/Liaison.
 - M&R exploring ways to communicate EHO value and contributions.
 - Update and improve recruitment materials.
 - M&R updating print and web-based content.
 - Ensure consistency in EHO recruitment messaging.
 - The Recruit and EHO to increase outreach and training of Adopt-a-School Reps.

VI. Ex-Officio – CDR Chris van Twuyver

- Primary role this year will entail serving as an EHOPAC Executive Committee Liaison to the Readiness Subcommittee and the Training and Events Subcommittee, I will be attending their routine meetings, and helping with projects including training, presentations, etc. Both Subcommittees have been working hard to offer training events such as CAPT Edwards Leadership training that is being offered today. I will take this opportunity to thank CAPT Edwards for presenting today.
- Our next planned training event is being offered by LT Steven Merritt from the Readiness Subcommittee. His training entitled "Risky Business: Operational and Deployment Risk Management Tools for EHOs", is expected to be offered in April, an announcement for this training will be sent out soon. The Training and Events Subcommittee is working hard to prepare for the upcoming symposium, I hope that many of you will make it out to attend the Symposium. The Readiness Subcommittee has also developed a survey for EHOs related to the REHS/RS exam, the survey is intended to collect information to help identify barriers and challenges that EHOs face when preparing for this exam. The data will be used to develop a newsletter article and or aids to help EHOs take this exam in the future. The link for this survey will be distributed soon via the EHOPAC Listserv.
- Lastly, I am working with CDR Quinn, CDR Vaouli, CDR Gibbs, LCDR Bird, and LT Kristy Ferry to develop and provide an overview of EHO deployment skills which will be provided Monday May 6, 2019 to the Nursing Category as part of their clinical skills preconference training. The training will involve 6 – 50-minute training sessions with a hands-on training component. If you are interested in participating, please contact me by COB 3/15/2019.

VII. Secretary/Treasurer Report – CDR Jessica Hensley

- Secretary Updates
 - December Minutes: Yes - 12/No - 0/Abstained – 0/Didn't Vote - 7 (as of 6 MAR)

- Alternates - (due 25 FEB): Missing 5 confirmations (1 awaiting Chair/CPO concurrence)
- Website update reminder: Received no updates for VM contacts
- Conducted Vote on February Minutes during the call (technical problems caused the vote to be invalid)
- Volunteer Solicitation/Placement is being managed by LCDR Holly Miller.
- LCDR Michelle Dittrich and LCDR Corey Butler are primary back-ups and assistants for EHOPAC meetings and minutes.
- Please remember to provide bullets for presentations to CDR Hensley within the week of meetings.
- Treasurer Updates
 - New coin order placed 26 FEB for 200 coins
 - Current balance of coins is 0.
 - Coin Votes to reorder:
 - Order Coins Vote: Yes - 17/No - 0/Abstained – 0/Didn't Vote - 2
 - Coins will be managed by CDR Brian Cook
 - Updating the Coin Order Form to be posted to website to reflect change
 - Year End Audit in process

VIII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – CAPT Jill Shugart

- Overarching Activities
 - Link between PAC and external and internal organizations
 - Manage Anonymous Feedback System
 - Assistance to Policy and Standards and Communications Subcommittees
 - Revamp of EHOPAC Newsletter
- EHOPAC Liaisons
 - **Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG)**
 - LCDR Beth Wittry
 - (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/JOAG/>)
 - **National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC)**
 - CAPT Don Williams
 - (<https://www.nehspac.org/>)
 - **American Academy of Sanitarians, Inc. (AAS)**
 - CAPT (ret) Gary Noonan
 - (<https://aaosi.wildapricot.org/>)
 - **Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB)**
 - CDR Monica Leonard
 - (<https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/ccwiab/>)
 - **RedDOG**
 - CDR Robert Horsch
 - (https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/DCCPR_readiness_and_deployment_m.aspx)
- Permanent Promotion Information
 - 2017 EHOPAC newsletter article:
 - (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/ehopacnews.aspx>)
 - 2017 March EHOPAC PPT on ACA and P Grades:
 - (https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/documents/EHOPAC_ACA_and_PGrade.pdf)
 - HSO Promotion Calculator:
 - (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/hso/sub-careerdev.aspx>) (Quick Links)
 - Temporary and Permanent Promotion Calculator:

Anonymous Questions for March EHOPAC Meeting (March 12, 2019)

1. **(Question) Before there was a sanitarian category, industrial hygiene had a long history in the USPHS. For example, see the 1917 AJPH article "Relation of the Public Health Service to Problems of Industrial Hygiene" (<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.7.9.776>) by ASG J.W. Kerr. Corps industrial hygienists and industrial hygiene engineers from CDC NIOSH played a key role in the responses to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the anthrax attacks because of their skills and training. Industrial hygienists and engineers developed building vulnerability documents after the attacks. Recently, during the Ebola response, CDC NIOSH industrial hygienists played a key role in developing PPE and decontamination protocols and in assessing hospital preparedness. Unless the case can be made that American Workers Are an Underserved Population, I'm concerned that in a few years the 100+ year old role of the Commissioned Corps industrial hygiene research and practice, particularly at CDC NIOSH, will soon come to an end and those industrial hygiene skills and talent will not be available when needed in an emergency response. Can I rely on the EHOPAC leadership to make that case to the SG and the ASH?**

(Answer) Occupational health and safety and industrial hygiene are definitely an important part of the EHO category. The EC has included these skills sets when advocating for the category, including when amending the EHO appointment standards and as we assist RedDOG with defining the different roles our category can fill during deployments. There is no question that industrial hygienists belong in the EHO category and we have not heard differently. Just because a newly boarded EHO must start their career in either the IHS, BOP or DHS right now for their first assignment, does not mean that they cannot work for CDC (including NIOSH) or any other agency that does this work (i.e. USCG, FOH, DOI) for their second and onward assignments.

2. **(Question) Since CC officers are being held accountable to US Army weight standards, will we be provided with program support similar to the Army (i.e. facilities and especially time)? Please note that time is paramount. The military typically provides 2 hours per day for Physical Training, although this may include an officer's lunch and coffee breaks.**

(Answer) We do not have any indication that the USPHS will allow officers specific time during the work day to meet the current readiness requirements, including weight standards. However, if anyone wants to work out to meet these standards during some portion of the work day, we encourage you to work with your supervisor to see if you can reach an agreement. There also may be other organizations you can join to support you in these efforts, such as your local COA branch or other organization. It is up to each officer how they reach and maintain the readiness requirements.

3. **(Question) CC Modernization Question: After watching the town hall, it seemed CCHQ really focused on the clinical categories and the value they bring. How can EHOPAC leadership better highlight the value EHOs bring to CC, especially in light of changes proposed under the CC modernization? For example, % of EHOs who Primarily Serve Underserved and Vulnerable Communities or Mission Critical billets?**

(Answer) EHOPAC EC and especially the CPO have been continually advocating for all aspects of the EHO category. The CPO and EHOPAC EC were involved in multiple initiatives during the past year to highlight the value and skills that EHOs bring to deployments. These efforts continue and are being planned for the upcoming year. One of the best ways individual EHOs can also advocate for the category is to do the very best job they can each and every day while wearing the uniform with pride. By being visible, being of service, and providing excellence we all can show our agencies, our CC leadership and all our colleagues our value and all the unique roles we can play in our everyday jobs and while deployed.

4. **(Question) Due to financial reasons, a reviewing official within my agency may be inclined to submit "not recommended for promotion" since they currently have an O-5 in an O-6 billet and a promotion would be an increase to the budget. Does this repeated (twice) "not recommended for promotion" by the agency reviewing official have the same impact as the board "not recommended for promotion" thus leading to involuntary separation?**

(Answer) Hopefully, an officer is not being penalized by their reviewing official and not recommended for promotion based on performance and not on budget. If an officer is concerned about this, they need to talk with their supervisor, their mentor, their agency Liaison and they can also contact the CPO to discuss in more detail. By the reviewing official not recommending an officer for promotion on the ROS, this will have a negative impact on the promotion board when they review that officer's file because this means that the reviewing official is not confident the officer is ready for the next grade. The Involuntary Separation Policy, CCD 123.01 EFFECTIVE DATE: 7 September 2018, states that if officers in a restricted category (e.g. EHO, etc.) are not recommended by the promotion board twice, their commission can be terminated by the ASH in accordance with this policy. The policy is available for review on the CCMIS website.

5. **(Question) Will the slides from the town hall be made available to officers?**

(Answer) The slides are available to all officers by logging in to your eOPF and clicking on "Commissioned Corps Modernization" on the left side in the blue box under the "officer" category. Note that these slides are marked "for official use only" and should not be shared widely.

6. **(Question) The science of environmental health is the foundation of public health and an imperative driving force to the health status of all inhabitants of the planet Earth. How will the EHOPAC modernize to ensure that this fact is clearly understood by Corps leadership and reflected by the caliber of officers within the PAC? I think we need to move beyond the classic description of an EHO or common certifications and toward one who shows leadership in the field of public health utilizing their distinctive foundation in environmental health science. We as environmental health science professionals have an expertise in one of the core areas of public health. This expertise provides us with a specialized analytic skill as a public health service officer that spans from being public health generalists to highly specialized scientists who can deploy in many roles. We are the only category of public health professionals who have the skill to provide a holistic assessment of the environment and the potential effects on the human and animal population. It's a very unique profession and we need to be sure that we communicate and socialize this among Corps leadership throughout this modernization process.**

(Answer) This question is similar to #3 above. The EHOPAC EC and especially the CPO have been continually advocating for all aspects of the EHO category, including the various leadership roles EHOs have in the diverse range of agencies (HHS and Non-HHS) where we work. The EHOPAC EC and the CPO extensively marketed the skills and knowledge that EHOs bring to our day jobs and during deployments over the past year. These activities continue and are being planned during the upcoming year. One of the best ways individual EHOs can also advocate for the category is to do the very best job they can each and every day while wearing the uniform with pride. By being visible, being of service, and providing excellence we all can show our agencies, our CC leadership and all our colleagues our value and all the unique roles we can play in our everyday jobs and while deployed. We too feel strongly about the EHO category and think we all play a critical role in public health and in the USPHS.

7. **(Question) Involuntary Separation Policy - Can EHOPAC leadership please explain the implications for EHO category, as it relates to the FAQs and restricted categories. If EHOs are considered restricted, would we not**

face involuntary separation for failure to promote to P-04, under the policy CCD 123.01, Subsection 6-2.p.(1) d? Please clarify. Thank you.

(Answer)

(1) An officer who after having been twice examined for promotion and fails to be promoted to the permanent Full grade will have his/her commission terminated. A Regular Corps officer whose commission is terminated pursuant to this subsection will be paid 1 year of basic pay and allowances in accordance with 42 U.S.C. §211(g)(2).

(2) Subsection 6-2.o.(1) does not apply to failures of promotion when the ASH or his/her designee has restricted promotion to the permanent Full grade for a specific category. However, such an officer after having been twice examined for promotion and fails to be recommended may have his/her commission terminated in accordance with policy issued by the ASH.

*Similar to the above question #4 – if an EHO fails to be recommended twice by the promotion board to permanent O4, their commission can be terminated.

IX. Liaison Reports

RedDOG – CDR Robert Horsch

- This month EHOs are third in line for readiness at 97.0%. The EHOPAC Readiness Subcommittee is doing an excellent job distributing readiness updates.
- Requirement for clinical hours do not pertain to EHOs yet, but in the future RedDOG will be looking at competencies that keep officers relevant in their respective category. Individuals not practicing their craft will be expected to find another avenue to meet the requirements. As of now RedDOG does not have the ability to capture this for EHOs and a timeline for these projected requirements is not determined.
- There are two ways officers can fail to meet readiness standards (consecutive and non-consecutive months). As officers fail to maintain readiness there are increasing adverse actions.
- CCHQ is still working on a notification system that will alert officers if they are projected to fail readiness compliance standards. The goal is to forecast 90 days in advance.
- An upgrade is underway for the RedDOG secure area to better determine which item(s) puts an officer out of compliance. Timeline TBD.
- ASPR asked RedDOG to develop a Safety Officer Cadre of primarily Tier 3 officers to fulfill the role on NIST Teams. Two Safety Officers will be assigned to each team. Nearly all individuals are from the EHO category.

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

- The 2019 American Academy of Sanitarians Wagner and USPHS Service Honor Awards Ceremony will be held during the National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in Nashville, TN. We will be joined by the Uniformed Services Affiliate. The event will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Conference Center in room Davidson A on the Magnolia Mezzanine Level on July 9 from 1930-2200 EST. It is our understanding the RADM (Ret.) John Todd and CAPT (Ret.) Craig Shepard will be in attendance.

Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB) – CDR Monica Leonard

- The first meeting of the year is scheduled for March 13, 2019 at 1300 EST.
- CCWIAB will be updating the [Resource Guide for USPHS Officers Getting Married or Getting Divorced, and for Dependents Surviving the Death of a USPHS Officer \(Version 2.0, May 2018\)](#)
- CDR Leonard will rotate off the board this year. Information about an opportunity to serve on CCWIAB is forthcoming.

National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) – CAPT Donald Williams

- Every fall schools applying for accreditation or reaccreditation submits an exhaustive self-study before a site visit. In January-February the site visits are conducted, and schools have the month of March to address any deficiencies. An annual meeting occurs two days before NEHA conference each year and the site visitors make a recommendation for full 6-year accreditation, 2-year conditional accreditation, or deny accreditation. Dr. Dyjack, NEHA's Executive Director, has asked EHAC representatives to have a meeting with Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) representatives at the NEHA annual conference.

Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) – LCDR Beth Wittry

- The JOAG call for nominations for voting membership is open through 4/8/2019 and there are six at large openings. If you have questions about being a JOAG Voting Member contact LCDR Wittry (xks5@cdc.gov).
- JOAG volunteer opportunities will be available during the Symposium. See forthcoming emails about volunteer opportunities at the Uniform Inspection Booth, Career Enhancement Booth, and the General Merchandise Booth, as well as at the Community Service Event.
- A JOAG General Meeting will be held at the Symposium on May 9 from 0700-0900 CST.
- JOAG created a room and ride share program. If you need a roommate or want to carpool, see the information that was distributed on the EHOPAC listserv.

X. Open Discussion

N/A Technical difficulties

XI. Adjournment – CDR Michael Quinn

The meeting was adjourned at 1500