



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



Meeting #232 Minutes, 14JUL20

I. Call to Order – CDR Elena Vaouli, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1300 ET.

II. Roll Call – CDR Jessica Havranek, 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	CDR	Present	N/A
Bird	Bill	CDR	Present	N/A
Bowser	Travis	CDR	Present	N/A
Darr	Charles	LCDR	Present	N/A
Deptola	Matthew	CDR	Present	N/A
Dittrich	Michelle	CDR	Present	LCDR Corey Butler
Erling	Doug	LCDR	Present	LCDR Sarah Maynard
Frank	Samuel	LCDR	Present	N/A
Havranek	Jessica	CDR	Present	N/A
Hunter	Candis	CDR	Present	N/A
Kupper	Drew	CDR	Present	N/A
McLanahan	Eva	CDR	Present	N/A
Merritt	Steven	LCDR	Present	LCDR John Skender
Otto	Jessica	CDR	Present	N/A
Quinn	Mike	CDR	Present	N/A
Smith	Martin	CDR	Present	N/A
Valenti	Elizabeth	CDR	Present	N/A
Vaouli	Elena	CDR	Present	N/A
Williams	Racquel	CDR	Excused	N/A

Voting Guests and Attendees Present

Last Name	First Name	Rank	Organization Represented
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

III. Chief Professional Officer Report – RADM Kelly Taylor

- Still on alert for COVID-19. Thanks for all for being flexible and resilient.
- Promotions – This year’s rates are in line with other categories. Previous years (2017) for EHOs are a little higher but not drastically different. The current rates are going to stick around for a while.
- Counselling – Will be reaching out to senior officers to counsel those in the lower quartile.
- Recruitment activities are getting close to having a standardized template, and we will be able to determine what we can do and when we can recruit. Boarded 12 applicants recently. Determining what the CPO and the PAC can do to support.
- All hands for Corps toward the end of the month probably covering Ready Reserve, COVID-19, suspension of voluntary retirements and separations, and promotion rates.
- Ready Reserve – How it will impact Corps and who can join. Open to public health professionals/mission driven clinical individuals. Not full-time positions but will be able to deploy or backfill as needed.
- USPHS.gov website and survey of questions. Only way CCHQ is going to receive comments. Everyone should complete the survey. It appears fragmented and could be difficult for potential EHOs to know if they are eligible.

IV. Chair Report – CDR Elena Vaouli

- Half-way through 2020
- EHOPAC Chair’s Vision Statement - *To be the most visible and valued PAC that successfully empowers EH professionals to be the best PHS Officers they can be.*
- The EHOPAC will actualize this vision through:
 - strategic collaborations,
 - targeted training,
 - active and adaptive advertising, and
 - fostering a knowledge sharing culture.
- Notable News – Corps-wide (since last EHOPAC meeting)
 - No new Voluntary Separation/Retirements – 7/2
 - Public announcement of Ready Reserve Corps – 6/30
 - Redesigned PHS website soft launched – 6/26
 - Temp Grade Promotions announced – 6/26
 - Retention weight standards reminder sent – 6/25
 - Training opportunities announced – 6/17
 - Spring/Summer UOD authorized – 6/15
 - Mandatory daily ODU wear relaxed – 6/12
 - PHS COVID-19 Protection Measures, 3rd ed. Released – 6/10
 - SG announces AMSUS 2020 info, co-hosting – 6/10
- Notable News - EHOPAC
 - Good news & appreciation
 - Promoted VMs:
 - CDR Michelle Dittrich
 - CDR Candis Hunter
 - LCDR Sam Frank*
 - Welcome back from deployment CDR McLanahan, EC Liaison
 - Happy (milestone) Birthday – CDR Havranek

- Welcome Baby Emmett Ray – CDR Kupper
 - Baby Otto on the way – CDR Otto
 - Looking forward to September 2020
 - Virtual Training Week confirmed, Sept 8th -11th
 - ASH confirmed as guest speaker, Sept 8th
 - Proclaiming September as Environmental Health Month
- 2020 Major Initiatives
 - Recent Actions, Activities, Accomplishments
 - Strategic Collaborations
 - JOAG, COA – EC Liaison report
 - Combined PAC Chairs, EHAC – Ex-Officio report
 - Targeted Training
 - Virtual Training Week – T&E SC with Readiness & CD
 - Awards brief by COAP – Awards SC
 - Active & Adaptive Advertising
 - Anticipated VM & EC vacancies – Chair-Elect
 - COSTEP open window, Recruitment Webinar – M&R
 - *EHO Assessment* August edition in the works – COMMS
 - Knowledge Sharing
 - Proposals for EHOPAC funds & coins – Secretary/Treasurer
 - Upcoming OBC – M&O
 - Electronic Journal in the works – History SC
 - 2021 Benchmarks update – CD SC
 - Website updates made/in progress – IT SC
 - Appointment Standards review in May, retiree recognition in the works – P&S SC
 - Voting Member Spotlights
 - CDR Candis Hunter – CDC
 - CDR Matt Deptola – NIH
 - CDR Betsy Valenti – FDA
 - CDR David Bales - IHS
 - How else can we spotlight our EHOs?
 - Virtual Training Series
 - Awards Ceremony
 - Career Development Talk
 - JOAG Koop Panel
 - Recruitment Webinar
 - Reach out to an EC member if you have other ideas

V. Chair-Elect Report – CDR Jessica Otto

- Reminders:
 - Extension consideration and requests for VMs who have completed their first term
 - VM solicitations in the fall
 - EC officer solicitations also in the fall. Please consider one of these roles.

VI. Ex-Officio – CDR Michael Quinn

- 2021 NEHA Spokane, WA
- EHAC Updates – Attended annual Meeting virtually. 6 programs renewed: Cal State Northridge, East Central, Missouri Southern, Westchester, Old Dominion,
- AHAC Updates – Looking to reestablish Student Environmental Health Assoc at universities -possibly recruitment activities. Lots of interest in PHS careers. All programs happy with shift in COSTEP application window (June 1 – Sept 30). Interested in revision of appointment standards which are waiting final approval by OSG. Interested in recruitment presentations.
- CPCG Updates – Common issues across all categories. Working to find role for PACs in addressing these concerns. Concern about promotion rates and process. Advocating to HQ to provide stats about promotions. Concern about new website, PACs didn't get chance to review prior to launch. Concern about new POM for awards processing and timeline. Instructions were given to use new form but the form was not provided. Finalized letter of support for change in procedure for new applications to apply before completing education or training program. Physician and dental category testing it currently. It will put people into pipeline earlier. Meeting coming on this.

VII. Secretary/Treasurer Report –CDR Jessica Havranek

Secretary Updates

- May Minutes Voting Window Closed 15JUN
 - Yes:16/No:0/Abstained:0/Didn't Vote:3
- June Minutes Voting Window Closed 30JUN
 - Yes:17/No:0/Abstained:0/Didn't Vote:2
- BIG THANKS TO IT! All minutes were posted to the EHOPAC website and sent via the Listserv.

Treasurer Updates

- Account Balance - \$3,184.98
- Total Coin Balance 79

VIII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – CDR Eva McLanahan

- JOAG
 - EHOPAC asked to participate in virtual Koop Seminar panel; CAPT Ritter will participate in September
 - EHO Liaison selection pending; will start 01 OCT 2020
- AMSUS
 - Annual meeting December 6-10 at National Harbor in MD
 - Abstract submission for posters – due 7/20 for PHS Abstract Committee review
 - Questions? EHO representative on AMSUS Planning Committee LCDR Latasha Allen (Latasha.allen@hhs.gov)
- NEHA will host a virtual town hall on Tuesday, July 28 from 2-3PM MDT for NEHA members. They will discuss how they are working to aid members and managing the pandemic's financial impacts to protect the association. More details to come from NEHA soon. Submit pressing questions to our NEHA Liaison, Jonna Ashley (jashley@neha.org).
- Working to re-establish an anonymous feedback system

IX. Business Items

Spend Down Proposal – CDRs Vaouli and Havranek

- PACs are being encouraged to remove funds from and dissolve arrangements with COA for holding treasury. Also, we are no longer permitted to use government emails when making requests for reimbursement, disbursement, and vendor payments as of July 1, 2020. Other PACs have been spending down their treasuries.
- EHOPAC Treasury Balance - \$3,184.98
- Proposal for spend down:
 - ~\$700 to purchase 2020 awards and pre-purchase 2021 awards. This would include 10 awards (~\$400), shipping of 10 awards (~\$200), and other costs (certificates, covers, unexpected @ ~\$100).
 - \$300 to purchase two EHOs in Action Photobooks for 2018-19 and 2020 from Shutterfly. Shutterfly gift certificates come in five denominations from \$10 to \$100, and do not expire. Shipping is often free with promotion codes. ~30, 12x12" lay flat pages costs ~\$100, when purchased during a sale. \$300 offers flexibility, and any remaining funds can be used for future years since Shutterfly gift certificates do not expire.
 - ~\$2,000 to purchase coins for retiring EHOs and new call to duty EHOs. Currently have 79. 200 coins costs \$1110. Purchase 50 prepaid mailers at \$7.75 for flat envelopes (best for 1-2 coins) and 50 at \$8.40 for padded (best for multiple coins).
 - Purchase supplies for M&O Folders. M&O is working on an estimate.
- Will be sending a request(s) for votes on spending
- Discussion
 - What will be done for awards for 2022 and beyond? All PACs are having same problem. Hoping for broader solution. CPO or agency could purchase awards, or OSG is discussing with AMSUS to possibly handle awards. But EHOPAC has awards named for individuals that we don't want to lose.
 - How big are the prepaid mailers for coins? Could they be used for sending retirement letter to retirees? Mailers fit a regular sheet of 8 ½ x 11 paper, so that should work.
 - Another expense in past has been category day speaker gifts. Can offer coins and a letter, if we don't have means to purchase those.

Proposal to find alternative seller of EHO coins – CDR Vaouli

- Purpose:
 - Find alternative to EHOPAC selling EHO coins
- Problems:
 - EHOPAC can't sell EHO coins
 - Demand still high for acquiring EHO coins
- Proposed Solution:
 - Negotiate with non-PHS entity (e.g. USEHA) to produce and sell EHO coins
 - CDR Valenti suggested to consider American Academy of Sanitarians
 - EHOs could potentially purchase coins directly from production company
- Will discuss again in August business meeting. Send other ideas to CDRs Vaouli and Havranek

September EHOPAC Events – CDR Vaouli, all SCs/Training & Events Subcommittee – CDR Raquel Williams and LCDR Sam Frank

- **EHOPAC Virtual Training Series:** September 8-11th, 2020 (1300 – 1500 Eastern)
 - Announcements coming soon with more details

- Special Guest Presentation: ADM Brett P. Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health, accepted our invitation to present the keynote address.
- EHOPAC Awards Presentation (EC & Awards SC)
- Presentation on Mentoring Program w/ Q & A (Career Development SC)
- Back up presenters (T&E will work with Readiness SC)
- Any specific IT needs/requests for presentations, please contact LCDR Samuel Frank

X. Open Discussion

Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Candis Hunter and LCDR Charles Darr

- Mentoring Program Evaluation Results: Participant Characteristics (n=73)
 - Mentors (n=36)
 - Proteges (n=37)
 - Communications
 - 64% of mentors and 60% of proteges indicated that they made contact with mentees about 1-2 times/month.
 - On average, estimated contact time was 30 minutes to an hr.
 - Mentors (94%) and proteges (100%) indicated that the communication with each other met their needs.
 - Mentoring Topic Discussion & Resources
 - Most participants indicated they sought mentoring for career development, support issues, personnel issues, and career progression.
 - About 58% of mentors attended a formal mentor-training program.
 - Program Satisfaction
 - All survey participants indicated willingness to serve as a mentor again or continue with their current mentor in the program.
 - Improvement Areas
 - 58% of mentors participated in training and expressed need for more training resources/check-in
 - Mentoring Moment of the Month
 - Beginning year training and mid-year check in webinar
 - Revise Mentoring Topical Guide
 - Some participants commented that they would like to keep their match longer than a year
 - Yearly agreement for formal mentor program
 - Encourage long-term informal mentorship

Marketing and Recruitment – CDR David Bales

- The COSTEP program has open enrollment for 2021 until September 30, 2020
- Only two EHO JRCOSTEPS are on assignment this year due to COVID -19
- An EHO Recruitment Webinar is being planned for August 28, 2020, pending approval of the presentation from CCHQ
- Four new adopt-a-school representatives were recently added
- Three adopt-a-schools are open for a representative. Contact Dustin Joplin (dustin.joplin@ihs.gov) or CDR Bales (david.bales@ihs.gov).

Readiness – LCDR Steven Merritt

- Secure area has a new module for weight standards

IT – LCDR Sarah Maynard for LCDR Doug Erling

- IT SC is finally at full strength with volunteers and most, if not all, members have returned from deployments
- All minutes from Nov 2019-Jun 2020 are posted to the website
- June EHO Assessment posted to website; July issue pending upload
- EHO Welcome Packet update was uploaded for sync yesterday
- Readiness Resources section of the website update request complete
- Please send open update request reminders to LCDR Erling to ensure the EHOPAC Website Workgroup is tracking on completion
- Developing training webinars for commonly asked questions to be posted on APAN

Communications Subcommittee Update – LCDR Michelle Dittrich (not presented during the meeting)

- 2020 Major Initiatives
 - EHO Assessment distribution every other month
 - Officer Leader Profiles
 - EHOs in Action photobooks
 - Social Media postings
 - LinkedIn (7/15 meeting to transition from CDR Otto to COMMS)

History – CDR Matt Deptola (not presented during the meeting)

- Further identified roles and responsibilities, ongoing tasks, and document management under each team leader position
- Identified a new position (history recorder) and compiled roles and responsibilities, ongoing tasks, liaison expectations and document management for this position
 - All above information will be recorded into our SOP for future reference/use
- Finalizing a plan for transitioning the leadership roles as we will have a substantial turnover at those levels after this operational year
- Working on the EHO history electronic journal including format, details, design, chapters, content, etc.

Policy & Standards – CDR Kupper (not presented during the meeting)

- First draft of retirement letter and SOP to capture retiring EHO officers has been completed and currently undergoing internal review. Deadline for review is 7/24 and anticipate proposed final draft to the EC by end of July or early August.

XI. Adjournment – CDR Elena Vaouli

The meeting was adjourned at 1503 ET.