



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



## Meeting #249 Minutes, 08MAR2022

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### I. Call to Order – CDR Erin Evans for CAPT Jessica Havranek

The meeting was called to order at 1300 ET.

### II. Roll Call –LCDR Corey Butler, 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	Click or tap here to enter text.
Bird	Bill	CDR	Excused	CDR Rob Gibbs
Butler	Corey	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Darr	Charles	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Dittrich	Michelle	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Erling	Doug	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Evans	Erin	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Frank	Samuel	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Ferry	Krista	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Galvez	Steven	LCDR	Excused	CDR Matt Albright
Havranek	Jessica	CDR	Excused	CDR Leslie Jackanicz
Hickey	Braden	LT	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Hunter	Candis	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Kupper	Drew	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
McLanahan	Eva	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
McNamara	Kathryn	LT	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Merritt	Steven	LCDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Otto	Jessica	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Quinn	Mike	CDR	Present	Click or tap here to enter text.
Smith	Martin	CDR	Excused	CDR Greg Calvert
Williams	Racquel	CDR	Excused	LT Aubree Kelly

### III. Chief Professional Officer Report – CAPT Timothy Jiggins

- Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ)
  - Policies and proposals continue to be under discussion – ongoing between CCHQ and CPOs
    - Some policies were released and presented at the recent AMSUS conference
  - The current SG has not released a strategic plan for the Corps
    - Recommendation for individual officers is to create your own strategic plan and be ready

- Recruitment
  - Increase in outreach to bring in more officers
  - CPOs are working with CCHQ to define the needs of different categories
- CPO tour
  - Please reach out if you are interested in having CAPT Jiggins visit your location to meet and discuss the needs of EHOs
- Categories
  - There is overlap between different categories based on education (i.e. HSO and EHO)
- Education from an accredited program is required to qualify as an EHO
  - CEPH programs may not qualify unless the applicant also has an RS/REHS certification
- Questions: Many agencies are returning officers to the workplace. Is PHS providing guidance to officers on return to work?
  - No information on CCHQ specific information for officers returning to work at this time. Please follow your agency specific guidance

#### **IV. Chair and Chair-Elect Report – CDR Erin Evans for CAPT Jessica Havranek**

- CDR Evans acting on behalf of CAPT Havranek JAN-MAR
- Special Recognition:
  - Congratulations to LT Braden Hickey – IHS Environmental Health Specialist of the Year
    - LT Hickey was nominated by the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, Division of Environmental Health Services for the 2021 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year. LT Hickey is assigned to the Taos-Picuris Service Unit in the Area's Northern District. LT Hickey also serves as the principal EHO for the Zuni Service Unit, providing essential comprehensive Environmental Health services to a total of six tribal communities. LT Hickey is heartily commended for her outstanding leadership, professionalism and dedication to native communities and the professional assistance she provides to her teammates. She consistently demonstrates a steadfast commitment to the mission of IHS through maintaining high quality service while volunteering to take on additional roles, providing support during staffing shortages and spearheading national level-projects. LT Hickey is a highly valued member of the DEHS team and consistently serves as a role model to the Area's EH Specialists. We're proud to have her serving the EHOPAC as a Voting Member. Please take the time to congratulate LT Hickey on this well-deserved recognition!
  - Congratulations to The Medication Disposal Team – Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award
    - EHOs: CDR Casey Crump, CDR David Bales, LCDR Isaac Ampadu, LCDR George Chung, LCDR Kathryn Pink, LCDR Martin Stephens, LCDR Andrea Tsatoke, LT Zachary Hargis, LT Braden Hickey, LT Patricia Wrona, and civilian colleagues Ms. Sherry Chase and Mr. Daniel Dicks. This award recognizes the performance of special efforts and contributions in the field of injury prevention that have resulted in a significant impact and led to improved public health for American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Medication Disposal Team consisted of twelve staff from the Bemidji, Oklahoma City, and Phoenix Areas. The team is recognized for:
      - 1) Utilizing an applied public health approach to raise awareness, provide education and improve prescription drug disposal practices by pilot testing two innovative drug disposal systems
      - 2) Facilitating the drop box project and writing a manuscript for publication
      - 3) Facilitating a community-based drug deactivation project with assistance from community partners
      - 4) Receiving 1,700 drug deactivation bags for distribution at no cost to IHS and participating tribes through partnerships with state entities
  - Congratulations to CDR Katherine Hubbard – Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award

- CDR Hubbard distinguished herself as a Senior Institutional Environmental Health Consultant at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium supporting Tribal Health Organizations statewide. Safe Patient Handling and Mobility (SPHM) involves the use of assistive devices to ensure that patients can be mobilized safely while reducing a healthcare provider's risk of injury from performing high-risk manual patient handling tasks. CDR Hubbard provided key leadership and advocacy as the Chair of the SPHM Committee at the Alaska Native Medical Center, a multidisciplinary group with the overall goal of becoming a no-manual-lift hospital.
- Reminders:
  - Please consider nominating a colleague, mentor, or self-nominate for the EHOPAC Awards: Eason, Moran, Todd, and Crow Award nominations due 11MAR2022 (extended to 21MAR2022)
  - The Combined PAC Chairs Group (CPCG) is proposing the formation of a cross-PAC group focused on mental health/well-being. The Environmental Health Category has been asked to provide names for 1-2 volunteers to help draft a charter. The EHOPAC Executive Committee considers this initiative and the focus on mental health and well-being of all officers to be very important. If you are interested in volunteering to help draft a charter for this initiative, please submit your name and a brief statement of interest (1-2 concise paragraphs MAX) to LCDR Corey Butler at [corey\\_butler@ios.doi.gov](mailto:corey_butler@ios.doi.gov) and CDR Erin Evans at [isb5@cdc.gov](mailto:isb5@cdc.gov) 11MAR2022.

## USPHS Ready Reserve – CAPT Christye Brown

- The ready reserve was created by the CARES act signed in 2020. The ready reserve is now an appropriated line item
- Why was the ready reserve created?
  - Backfill active-duty officers and increase the number of deployable assets available to assist deployed active duty officers in the field
- What is some additional information about the ready reserve?
  - Full-time civilian employees with 6-year service obligation
  - Protected by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
  - Paid and provided benefits based on time worked
    - Train full time one weekend per month and two weeks per year
  - Eligible for pension after 20 years based on time worked – based on points system – earn 50 points per year based on time worked
  - Serve in one of ten regions
  - Active duty can convert to ready reserve
  - Currently recruiting
  - [Website](#) is current and has FAQs

## Public Health Emergency Rapid Strike Team (PHERST) – CAPT Wanza Bacon

- Full-time active-duty officers that are ready to deploy within 8 hours for an extended duration (between 30-90 days)
- Function to provide rapid response to determine validation of deployment need prior to rostering a larger team – Will augment with active duty or ready reserve if needed.
- Currently recruiting from existing officers and new recruits. Goal of 100 officers within PHERST by 2024.
- PHERST has already deployed 49 times to date.
- There are 2 EHOS on each PHERST team, but the majority of the team is clinical in nature.
- For more information: CAPT Wanza Bacon [Wanza.bacon@hhs.gov](mailto:Wanza.bacon@hhs.gov) or LCDR Daveta Bailey [Daveta.bailey@hhs.gov](mailto:Daveta.bailey@hhs.gov).

## V. Immediate Past Chair – CDR Jessica Otto

- 2022 roles and responsibilities:
  - Serving in advisory and mentor role to EC
  - Priorities and Special Projects:
    - Dissolve P&S as a standing committee and assisting with the transition of volunteers (complete)
    - Updating bylaws to align with new Model Charter
      - Primarily operational changes
    - Revising each subcommittee's SOPS
    - Awards drafting and submission
- Kudos!
  - EH Month, LT Stephanie Bridges
    - During SEP 2021 we held our first ever Environmental Health Month. We hosted a virtual hike challenge to keep officers moving and connected. LT Stephanie Bridges from NPS hiked 40.6 miles during the challenge! After delays from a PCS and loss of my household goods she's finally been mailed a congratulatory EHO coin. Great work LT Bridges!
  - M&R for turning on a dime
    - Marketing and Recruitment Subcommittee was able to compile a backgrounder for our CPO on two days' notice so he could thoughtfully and strategically engage in a recruitment planning meeting with CCHQ.
  - History contributions to PHS book
    - The History Subcommittee has been engaged with a group of retirees who are compiling a new history of the Corps. This document will help fill the gap since the publishing of Plagues and Politics and will be an excellent opportunity to chronicle our contributions and leadership to public health, our service, and our nation.
  - Awards Subcommittee
    - The committee has worked tirelessly to revamp the EHO Responder of the Year, including amending and honing the criteria. The award was given to LCDR Danny Malashock after a nearly two-year hiatus from giving the award.
    - The nominations for the other PAC Awards (Eason, Moran, Crow, Todd) are out and due the 11<sup>th</sup> of March.
  - CDR Evans
    - I'd like to give kudos to CDR Erin Evans for her fearless leadership in CAPT Havranek's absence. She has provided smooth and steady leadership and excellent organizational skills to keep the PAC moving forward in 2022.
  - Finally, I'd like to welcome our newest Jr. PAC member, Calvin John Havranek! He decided to make a surprise early appearance in the middle of a severe weather outbreak on December 15th. Mom and baby are doing great, and CAPT Havranek will be returning from maternity leave next week. We are already planning on a slow and easy transition back to PAC life for her and appreciate your support and patience.

## VI. Secretary/Treasurer Report –LCDR Corey Butler

- Meeting minutes 2022 will be posted soon
  - January minutes out for vote
  - February minutes out for review
- Volunteer solicitation process complete-
  - We placed everyone, thank you for volunteering
  - Thank you CDR Jeffery Conner for coordinating this process

## VII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LCDR Steven Merritt

- Reminder: EHOPAC Anonymous Feedback System

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NDXMFWX>
- Link is also found in the footer of every EHOPAC LISTSERV message.
- Feedback is monitored by the EHOPAC Executive Committee and discussed at least once per week.
- All EHOPAC Voting Members, please include the link in your signature block!
- Please spread the word to colleagues about this virtual EHOPAC “suggestion box.”

## Liaison Reports

- LCDR Merritt reviewed the current slate of liaisons to the EHOPAC, as follows:
- Commissioned Officers Association – LCDR James Gooch
- American Academy of Sanitarians – CAPT (Ret.) Wendy Fanaselle
- National Environmental Health, Science and Protection Accreditation Council –CAPT Michael Quinn
- American Industrial Hygiene Association – CAPT Bradley King
- Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board – CAPT Carolyn Oyster
- Junior Officer Advisory Group – LCDR Sandra Carpio
- National Environmental Health Association – Eileen Nelson and Heather Folker

## Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS (COA) – [LCDR James Gooch](#)

- Website: [www.coausphs.org](http://www.coausphs.org)
- 55th Annual USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium is 23-27 May2022 in Phoenix, AZ
- Free Registration for O-3 and below by 24MAR22
- COA legislative agenda will release in April
- Major re-branding occurring in 2022, stay tuned!
- Committee and board nominations starting July

## American Academy of Sanitarians – [CAPT \(Ret.\) Wendy Fanaselle](#)

- Website: [www.sanitarians.org](http://www.sanitarians.org)
- The American Academy of Sanitarians is dedicated to improving the practice, elevating the standards, and advancing the profession of Environmental Health. Diplomate status represents the highest certification available in the field of environmental health
- Who Can Become a Diplomate?
  - Membership covers the breadth of the environmental health profession. Certification by the Academy is a peer-reviewed process and is open to persons who have attained high professional stature through leadership and environmental health accomplishments.
  - For more info, please download this brochure on the AAS:
  - <http://www.sanitarians.org/resources/Documents/JEH%20Columns/AAS%20brochure%20October%202021.pdf>
- *Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award*
  - The Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award represents the highest honor the American Academy of Sanitarians bestows upon a Diplomate. The Award is conferred for exceptional leadership ability, professional commitment, outstanding resourcefulness, dedication, and accomplishments in advancing the Sanitarian profession and public health programs. The awards consist of an individual plaque and a perpetual plaque that is displayed in the NEHA office lobby.
  - Award nominations are due each year by April 15th.
- Please contact the 2022 Awards Committee Chair, Diplomate CAPT Wendy Fanaselle (Retired) for more information at [wlfanaselle@comcast.net](mailto:wlfanaselle@comcast.net).

## National Environmental Health, Science and Protection Accreditation Council –

### CAPT Michael Quinn

- Website: [www.nehspac.org](http://www.nehspac.org)
- NEHSPAC, also known as EHAC, is the only non-profit organization in the United States that accredits stand-alone Environmental Health Academic Programs. EHAC accredits programs providing applied, STEM based professional degree programs.
- Benefits of Attending an EHAC Accredited School:
  - Eligibility to participate in the US Public Health Service (USPHS) sponsored JRCOSTEP internship program.
  - Exclusive access to the National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA) National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP)
  - Eligibility to compete for scholarships and internships provided by EHAC's sister organization, the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) and NSF International.
- Plans for 2021-2022:
  - Work with Policy Committee to create a position statement acknowledging EH's intimate connection with environmental injustice and how EHAC addresses this connection in accreditation criteria and other policy updates
  - Maintain quarterly meetings with Committee Chairs with reports to Board.
  - Continue work on Graduate Guidelines revisions with estimated implementation date of Fall 2022
  - Review Undergraduate Requirements with estimated implementation date of January 2023
  - Continue to refine program mentorship process and train volunteer mentors. National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council
  - Continue realignment EHAC policy document with UG Requirements and Graduate Guidelines.
  - Strengthen effectiveness of partnerships with AEHAP, NEHA and the EH & Equity Collaborative and broaden partnerships to develop EH awareness, degree program and student recruitment strategies, and funding options

## American Industrial Hygiene Association – CAPT Bradley King

- Website: [www.aiha.org](http://www.aiha.org)
  - AIHA is the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) in the workplace and community. More than half of AIHA's nearly 8,500 members are Certified Industrial Hygienists, and many hold other professional designations. AIHA serves as a resource for those employed across the public and private sectors and the communities in which they work.
  - Registration for the 2022 American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Expo (AIHce) is open. The conference, scheduled for 23–25MAY2022, will be held in-person in Nashville, TN, but all General Sessions, education sessions, poster sessions, and the Exhibit Hall will also be offered virtually.
  - <https://www.aihceexp.org/2022/register-2022>
  - AIHA invites EHOs who are early career professional members to apply for a sponsorship to attend AIHce either virtually or in-person
  - Early-bird registration rates for all registrants are available until 20MAR2022
- AIHA membership comes with free access to a mentoring program. Through this program, EHOs who may be looking for industrial hygiene mentorship can connect with a seasoned mentor who can help navigate the professional waters.
- AIHA encourages and seeks members to become to participate in and provide leadership for the association's volunteer groups and technical committees. Committees looking for members include:

- Finance Committee, Standards of Care Advisory Group, Improving Exposure Judgements Advisory Group, session moderators for AIHce, and others
- More information can be found on AIHA's Open Calls webpage

### **Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board – [CAPT Carolyn Oyster](#)**

- Website: [dcp.psc.gov/OSG/CCWIAB](http://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/CCWIAB)
  - CCWIAB identifies and analyzes key issues impacting women in the USPHS and develops action plans to address these issues
  - The Executive Chair, Rear Admiral Kelly Taylor, retired & CCWIAB is looking for new Senior Advisor
  - CCWIAB will begin utilizing the Max.Gov website to share publications with USPHS officers.
- In the future officers will be able to find products by enrolling using CAC/PIV and searching for CCWIAB.

### **Junior Officer Advisory Group – [LCDR Sandra Carpio](#)**

- Website: [dcp.psc.gov/OSG/JOAG](http://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/JOAG)
- New Announcements:
  - JOAG Practicing Wellness –Understanding High Stress and Building our Emotional Resilience
  - Virtual 5K Run/Walk: Social Work Month
  - Virtual 10K Walk/ 5K Run: National Walking Day
- Volunteer Opportunities:
  - Outreach Committee requests for volunteers
  - Membership Committee seeks officers to serve as Meet and Greet (M&G) Regional Leads
  - Ongoing Announcements:
    - JOAG Call for voting member nominations is open
    - JOAG Communications & Publications Committee is requesting *Junior Officer Chronicles Spring 2022 Edition* article submissions from JOs
- The JOC will also include JO spotlights and nominations are always being accepted
- Peer-to-Peer Network Program is seeking both mentors and mentees for JOs
- Readiness and Deployment Committee is seeking deployment narratives from JOs

### **National Environmental Health Association – [Eileen Nelson](#) and [Heather Folker](#)**

- Website: [www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org)
  - The National Environmental Health Association serves over 6,500 members, offers 6 credentialing programs, provides training and continuing education opportunities, publishes the Journal of Environmental Health (10 issues/year), hosts an Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, and is an advocate on behalf of EH professionals.
- Discussed environmental health credentialing opportunities for EHOs via NEHA, including:
  - Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS™)
  - Certified Professional –Food Safety (CP-FS™)
  - Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS)
  - Certified Foodborne Outbreak Investigator (CFOI)
  - Certified Food Safety Supplier Auditor (CFSSA™)
  - Registered Food Safety Supplier Auditor (RFSA)
- Highlighted the REHS/RS credentialing requirements:
  - Environmental Health degree (Bachelor's, Master's or PhD) from an Environmental Health, Science, and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) school and do not need proof of work experience.
    - OR

- Bachelor's, Master's or PhD degrees with a minimum of 30 semester hours of basic science, life sciences, natural sciences, physical sciences and health sciences, college-level math classes, and 2 or more years of relevant work experience
  - Those with Bachelor's degrees but less than 2 years of experience may apply for REHS/RS In-Training credential
- NEHA Membership includes resources for Credential Holders, significant discounts on credential study materials, testing, and renewal fees, FREE access to our online continuing education library, which is essential to maintaining your credentials, opportunities to present at the AEC and discounts when you register, and connection to EH professionals across the country
- The 2022 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) and Exhibition will be in-person for the first time since 2019 in Spokane, WA from 28JUN – 1JUL2022. There will be virtual and in-person registration options, enabling participants to network with more than 1,000 EH professionals from around the globe
- Participation in the AEC allows EHOs to earn CE contact hours sufficient to meet your full 2-year NEHA professional credential requirements. Squad Reports

## **VIII. Open Discussion**

- **Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Ferry and CDR Hunter**
  - Sent welcome emails and updated subcommittee volunteer information in APAN for 6 new M&O volunteers
  - Reviewed Executive Committee comments on Welcome letter that will be sent to new OBC graduates
  - Convening meetings with workgroup leadership to advise on SOP and yearly activities/goals
  - Scheduled M&O All Hands Meeting for all volunteers on 14MAR2022

## **IX. Adjournment – CDR Erin Evans for CAPT Jessica Havranek**

The meeting was adjourned at 1453 ET