



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



## Meeting #256 Minutes, 13JUN23

### I. Call to Order - CDR Evans

- The meeting was called to order at 1300 ET

### II. Roll Call - LT Hickey, Executive Secretary

- 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  |
|-----------|------------|------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Annetta   | Laura      | LCDR | Excused | LCDR Ronan King                  |
| Bales     | David      | CDR  | Present | LCDR Dustin Joplin               |
| Bante     | Katie      | CDR  | Excused | LCDR Kimberly Smith              |
| Bird      | Bill       | CDR  | Excused | CDR Robert Gibbs                 |
| Butler    | Corey      | CDR  | Excused | Not available                    |
| Carpio    | Sandra     | LCDR | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Darr      | Charles    | CDR  | 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. |
| Ferry     | Krista     | LCDR | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Frank     | Samuel     | LCDR | Excused | Not available                    |
| Galvez    | Steven     | LCDR | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Havranek  | Jessica    | CAPT | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Hickey    | Braden     | LT   | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Hunter    | Candis     | CDR  | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| McNamara  | Kathryn    | LT   | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Otto      | Mark       | LCDR | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Rodriguez | Luis       | CAPT | Excused | N/A                              |
| Smith     | Martin     | CDR  | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Wittry    | Beth       | LCDR | Present | Click or tap here to enter text. |

#### Voting Guests and Attendees Present

| Last Name | First Name | Rank | Organization Represented |
|-----------|------------|------|--------------------------|
| Jackanicz | Leslie     | CDR  | Admin Team               |

### III. CPO Report – CAPT Jiggins

- Based on anonymous feedback received, information provided on the state of the category during Category Day at the Symposium was provided to call participants
- State of the Category, “Where We’ve Been”:
  - American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award: CAPT (retired) Charles S. Otto, III
    - Highest honor the AAAS bestows upon a Diplomate
    - Conferred for exceptional leadership ability, professional commitment, outstanding resourcefulness, dedication, and accomplishments in advancing the Sanitarian profession and public health programs
    - CAPT Otto led the effort to develop the modern retail food code and developed the national strategy for rolling out HACCP in retail food protection, the interstate travel program, milk safety program, and shellfish sanitation program
    - 50,000 inspectors in 3,500 jurisdictions across the U.S. looked to CAPT Otto for interpretation and application of the food code
    - CAPT Otto was a Todd Award winner during his mid-career and retired in 2017 with over 50 years of supporting the frontline of environmental health practitioners
  - Walter F. Snyder Award: CAPT Luis O. Rodriguez
    - NSF and NEHA present this award together for achievement in attaining environmental quality
    - Given in honor of NSF’s co-founder and first executive director
    - Recognizes outstanding contributions to the advancement of environmental health
  - NEHA Walter S. Mangold Award: not awarded in 2022
  - Recognition was given to CAPT Jill Shugart and the team of officers supporting the mission in East Palestine (LCDR James Gooch, LCDR Jona Johnson, LCDR Kevin Dunn, CDR Alaric Denton, LCDR Kai Elgethun)
- State of the Category, “Where We Are Now”:
  - USPHS Commissioned Corps Strength: we’re relatively the same size, with approximately 5687 officers as of 15 APR 2023
  - Retirements have continued while recruiting dropped off during COVID and deployments.
  - Recruitment will be a focus and we can place EHOs if we can make more EHOs
  - The size of our category is tracking similarly to overall USPHS Commissioned Corps size. We are sitting at approximately 290 EHOs right now
  - We have a high representation at EPA and ATSDR and there are many officers assigned to CDC, FDA, and IHS but there is a very small footprint at BOP for EHOs. We need to fill that gap and there are billets that can be filled at BOP
  - EHO Rank Distribution:
    - The promotion process will be very different next year in the new format utilizing a five-category Applied Public Health promotion board
    - Now that a number of O-6s have retired at 30 years, we have fewer O-6s and a little more junior ranks than the Commissioned Corps as a whole
    - The Corps is tracking the way it needs to with the force management model and we’re on track to be where we want to be with the five-year transition
- State of the Category, “Where We Are Going”:
  - Modernization Objectives:
    - Manage the force to meet mission requirements
      - Recruit for underserved and vulnerable missions
      - Retain and/or expand mission priority positions
      - Decrease non-mission priority positions (through attrition) once ready reserve has been implemented
    - Establish and train a Ready Reserve Corps
    - Enhance training and professional development for the Regular Corps

- Restructure CCHQ, improve processes and systems
- Mission Priorities:
  - Underserved populations
  - Clinical
  - Hazardous and health security
  - Difficult to retain
  - Deployment and leadership
- Recruiting for Underserved and Vulnerable Missions:
  - CAPT Jiggins is working to bring more EHOs into BOP
  - There is also a need for more officers with a health physics background
  - Possible sources of new officers may be returning Peace Corps volunteers, early career environmental health professionals, and EHOPAC Adopt-A-School
  - CCHQ recruitment blitz: the deployment tempo has slowed down and it is time to return to recruiting. There is a low rate of accession and it will take some time for officers to clear once they decide to join because the onboarding process is still time consuming
- Representation at COA:
  - LCDR James Gooch, Environmental Health Representative and Chair Elect for the Executive Board
  - CAPT Luis Rodriguez, Field Representative
  - LCDR Rachel Forche, Field Representative
  - CAPT (ret) Alan Echt, Retired Officers Representative
- Representation at the American Academy of Sanitarians:
  - Board of Directors: CAPT Wendy Fanaselle, CAPT Jill Shugart, CDR Jennifer Dobson, CDR Jessica Otto
- Representation at NEHA:
  - CDR Anna Khan, First Vice President
  - CDR James Speckhart, Region 8 Vice President
- Representation at the American Industrial Hygiene Association:
  - CAPT Bradley King, Vice President for 2023-2024 term

#### **IV. Special Presentation: AIHA – Laurie Mutdosch**

- CAPT Bradley King introduced the speaker and shared that this is an opportunity for officers to learn more about AIHA and what it offers to occupational and environmental health and safety professionals
- AIHA is extending the 50% military discount on membership dues to officers in the USPHS
- Laurie Mutdosch, Director of Membership and Volunteer Relations, provided an overview of the organizational structure at AIHA
- AIHA is an association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety in the workplace and community
- AIHA supports members with expertise, networks, education programs, and services that help them maintain the highest professional and competency standards
- The association is trying to bring public awareness of the profession to the general public, including students and consumers
  - There are numerous consumer health and safety resources available to include disasters, mold, pandemic, safety matters, wildfires, and many others
  - There are also free resources tailored specifically for ages 12-18
  - They advocate at the state and federal level and have a government relations committee
- AIHA Laboratory Accreditation Programs, LLC is a third party, internationally-recognized accreditation body
  - Accreditation programs include industrial hygiene, food, environmental lead, environmental microbiology, and unique scopes
- The Emergency Response and Planning Committee
  - Developed emergency response planning guidelines to protect communities dealing with exposure to hazardous chemicals caused by man-made or natural disasters

- Maintains an e-tools site with resources to ensure high quality exposure modeling, dermal exposure assessment, qualitative judgement accuracy, and statistical analysis of quantitative exposure data
- AIHA University offers numerous ways to obtain continuing education, to include: eLearning, face-to-face training, certificate programs, an extensive bookstore, and member-developed bodies of knowledge and skill outlines for professional competency
- OEHS Professional Credentialing: their registry programs recognize best-in-class asbestos analysts, safety data sheet authors, and exposure decision analysts
- Product Stewardship Society: the association serves as the association management company for a distinct society of professionals responsible for reducing the environmental life-cycle impacts of products
- Global outreach: AIHA offers training, resources, and financial support to OEHS students and professionals living in emerging economies
- AIHA Career Center: offers resources such as job postings, resume reviews, mock interviews, and coaching
- New initiatives include defining the science, standards of care, closing gaps between state-of-the-art and minimum standards of care, and improving exposure judgements
- AIHA Strategic Plan 2022-2024
  - Mission: Empowering and advancing those who apply scientific knowledge to protect all workers and their communities from occupational and environmental hazards
  - Vision: A world where all workers and their communities are healthy and safe
  - Value Proposition: AIHA members are scientists and professionals who protect the health and safety of workers and communities by reducing risks and safeguarding operations to help organizations operate efficiently and without interruption
- With approximately 68 volunteer groups, there are many opportunities to serve on technical committees, special interest groups, professional development committees, internal operations committees, advisory groups, and mentoring programs
- There are several classifications of membership, including military and public health officer (PHO)
  - USPHS officers are eligible to receive the 50% discount off full or early-career professional membership
- CDR Evans reiterated the great membership opportunity being offered and the many resources available for people in the field
- Any questions can also be submitted to [lmutdosch@aiha.org](mailto:lmutdosch@aiha.org)

## V. Chair Report – CDR Evans

- Based on anonymous feedback received, information provided during Category Day at the Symposium regarding the state of the EHOPAC was provided to call participants
- Who We Are and What We Do:
  - The EHOPAC is a chartered organization under the Surgeon General operating in a resource and advisory capacity on behalf of EHOs
  - Advises the CPO, who in turn advises the SG on matters that impact the EHO category and their professional practice
  - Consists of 20 elected voting members, their alternates, and over 100 volunteers
  - The Executive Committee and voting members were introduced, followed by a display of names and recognition for the voting member alternates and volunteers
- Updated Vision Statement:
  - To be a trusted source of high-quality resources and services that successfully empower EH professionals to be the best PHS officers they can be
- Subcommittee Descriptions:
  - Awards and Recognition Subcommittee, LCDR Beth Wittry
    - Facilitates voting for category awards, oversees retiree recognition program, special assignment awards, and EHO recognition section in the EHO Assessment
  - Communications Subcommittee, LCDR Sandra Carpio and CDR Michelle Dittrich
    - Issues the bi-monthly publication of the EHO Assessment, develops officer leadership profiles, manages social media accounts, and coordinates the EHOs in Action photobook
  - History Subcommittee, CDR Martin Smith and CDR Bill Bird

- Oversees collection, preservation, and maintenance of historical information relevant to the category
    - Currently developing the EHOPAC yearbook which will be rolling out later this year
  - IT Subcommittee, LCDR Mark Otto
    - Maintains listserv, website, and SharePoint site and ensures published materials meet 508 compliance criteria
  - Mentoring and Career Development Subcommittee, CDR Candis Hunter and LCDR Laura Annetta
    - Underwent some changes this year and reorganized as the result of some by-law revisions, which merged the two subcommittees to better align their work
    - Coordinates the one-on-one mentoring program, symposium mentoring, and mentoring roundtables
    - Develops and maintains guidance for career development, such as the new standard CV and coversheet and provides support to the CPO upon request for career counseling resources
  - Readiness Subcommittee, CDR David Bales and CDR Charlie Darr
    - Promotes readiness within the category to include readiness reminders, developing training, and participating in a cross-category readiness workgroup
  - Recruitment and Orientation Subcommittee, CDR Corey Butler and LCDR Doug Erling
    - These two committees were merged to better align work in a more logical flow
    - Develops recruitment resources, maintains relationships with various academia and environmental health organizations, oversees the Adopt-a-School program, and markets the COSTEP program
  - Training and Events Subcommittee, LCDR Sam Frank and LCDR Krista Ferry
    - Plans Category Day, develops events associated with other professional meetings such as NEHA, and coordinates social and networking events
    - Recently developed a new training listserv promoting free training opportunities
- Next general meetings are on 12SEP2023 and 12DEC2023
- Connect with the EHOPAC through the following:
  - EHOPAC website (currently under reconstruction)
  - Signing up for the listserv
  - Providing feedback in the anonymous feedback system
  - Facebook and LinkedIn
  - EHO Assessment
- CDR Evans thanked everyone for their involvement with the EHOPAC and added that it is a meaningful way to demonstrate officership and to get engaged with the category

## **VI. Executive Secretary Report – LT Hickey**

- Working to update the volunteer solicitation process
  - Moving forward, the goal will be to have one solicitation per year and have everyone start on 1 JAN
- This will roll out later this year and will be another way for EHOs to get involved with the EHOPAC

## **VII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LCDR Kimberly Smith for CDR Katie Bante**

- Anonymous feedback received during Quarter 2 was shared
  - Question 1: What action is the CPO taking to encourage eligible officers to retire?
    - Refer to the 12APR2023 email from the CPO addressing promotion and retirement concerns
    - CAPT Jiggins explained there is some misunderstanding about the how the promotion and billet processes work. Each year there is a multiplier that is applied to the category strength of candidates eligible for that promotion and retiring EHO O-6s won't actually open any additional slots. No one in a current grade is holding back an officer from promoting to that grade. As new officers come on board to affect the multiplier across the greater pool of candidates and the force management stabilizes, this will help stabilize the promotion rates

- Question 2: For officers unable to attend the Symposium, can the CPO include remarks during the June 2023 EHOPAC General Meeting?
  - These have been provided during today's meeting
- Question 3: Why was the Career Pathways document developed and how does it tie into promotions?
  - There is an FAQ that is embedded in the Career Pathways page in CCMIS which addresses those questions and a CCHQ Connect recording available within the Officer Secure Area
- Liaison Reports and Updates
  - Junior Officer Advisory Group, LCDR Sandra Carpio
    - The next Journeyman Speaker Series will be presenting on AMSUS
      - 23JUN2023 1300-1500 EDT, Presenter is CAPT David Lau
    - A reminder was given to join the JOAG listserv if interested in receiving the JOAG Biweekly Announcement, which contains a lot of information regarding JOAG activities and opportunities to get involved
    - The next JOAG General Member Meeting is 11AUG2023
  - National Environmental Health Association, Heather Folker, Director of Membership and Credentialing, and Eileen Nieson, Credentialing Manager
    - Attendance is encouraged at the 2023 AEC on 1AUG2023 to 3AUG2023 being held in New Orleans, LA. The 2024 AEC will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on 15JUL2024 to 18JUL2024.
    - Leadership opportunities in NEHA were promoted. Every year they are looking for a new Second Vice President that serves a five-year term to eventually serve as First Vice President, President, and Immediate Outgoing President. Please consider applying for that position, or one of the Regional Vice President positions. Positions open around 1 DEC every year.
    - The online NEHA community is an online portal to network and ask/answer questions
    - Membership fees are \$100 for a professional voting member and \$25 for students and those professionals in their first five years of practice
    - The Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS) credential is recommended for those officers interested in performing food safety inspections
    - Any questions on credentialing can be directed to [credentialing@neha.org](mailto:credentialing@neha.org) or 303-802-2135
  - Commissioned Officers Association, LCDR James Gooch
    - The 2024 Symposium will be held 24JUN2024 to 27JUN2024 in Jacksonville, FL
    - The "Invisible Corps" documentary can be streamed at [www.invisiblecorps.com/](http://www.invisiblecorps.com/)
    - There is a new official USPHS mascot, LCDR Abigail (two-year-old black lab) that will serve as a symbol of the service and provide therapeutic care to patients and officers
  - American Industrial Hygiene Association, CAPT Bradley King
    - The name of AIHA's annual conference is changing from AIHce to "AIHA Connect: The Conference & Expo for OEHS Professionals"
    - AIHA Connect 2024 will be in Columbus, OH from 20MAY2024 to 22MAY2024
    - The submission portal for abstracts opened on 05JUN2023
    - AIHA offers 9 hours of free online training to improve accuracy and efficiency of exposure assessment decisions, and the completion of the training will open eligibility to sit for the Exposure Decision Analysis Registered Specialist Exam
  - American Academy of Sanitarians, CDR Jessica Otto
    - Basic way to get involved is to apply to be a Diplomate
    - Please visit the website for more information: [www.sanitarrians.org](http://www.sanitarrians.org)
    - Will be engaging with the EHOPAC during Environmental Health Month
    - AAS will have a booth in the NEHA-AEC exhibit hall and will be presenting awards at AEC
    - Encourage registering for the large networking event at AEC
  - Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board, LCDR Kimberly Smith for LCDR Sarah Maynard
    - Two new resource documents are available for women officers and their families:
      - "Fertility Treatment and Deployments in USPHS": provides an overview of the fertility treatment waiver process
      - "Breastfeeding and Deployments in USPHS": describes the types of waivers available and support provided during a deployment

- Officers are encouraged to join the CCWIAB listserv

## **VIII. Squad Reports**

- **Awards & Recognition – LCDR Wittry**
  - EHOPAC award winners were announced:
    - John G. Todd Award: CAPT Aimee Treffiletti
    - Edward “Ted” Moran Award: LCDR Beth Wittry
    - John C. Eason Award: LT Sarah Hughes
    - Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award: CDR Joseph P. Laco
    - Responder of the Year Award: CDR Leslie Jackanicz
  - Soliciting officers to highlight in the EHO Assessment’s Awards Corner
    - Send submissions to CDR Scott Daly and LCDR Christine Lloyd

## **IX. Chair-Elect – LCDR Galvez**

- There will be seven vacancies for voting membership this coming year
  - Applications are due 14JUL2023
- There are by-law limitations on the number of voting members per agency (maximum of seven)

## **X. Open Discussion – CDR Evans**

- There are many opportunities to get involved
- The EHOPAC is here to help officers get engaged and involved
- LCDR Carpio encouraged officers to submit leadership profiles to the officer leadership profile work group and to submit photos for EHOs in Action photo book

## **XI. Adjournment – CDR Evans**

- The meeting was adjourned at 1453 ET