



Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee



The EHO Assessment

April 2023 News and Updates

A place to learn about current events and updates from the EHOPAC

EHOPAC Leadership Message

Disclaimer: This newsletter/article is for informational purposes only and does not reflect official views of U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or USPHS Commissioned Corps leadership.

Welcome to the April Edition of the EHO Assessment!

I hope some of you were able to join the March General Meeting to learn about all the great work the EHOPAC Voting Members and Volunteers are doing. I'd like to thank CDR Tina Bryant for preparing and delivering a special presentation for the EHOPAC and addressing our Deployment Preparation Plan questions. I'd also like to thank CDRs Charlie Darr and David Bales, EHOPAC Voting Members and Co-Chairs of the Readiness Subcommittee, for their work in arranging the presentation for the category. Lastly, I'd also like to thank CDR Candis Hunter, EHOPAC Voting Member and Co-Chair of the Mentoring and Career Development Subcommittee, whose idea it was to offer this presentation. If you have any suggestions for a special presentation at our June General Meeting, please reach out to me or any of the Voting Members to share your ideas.

March was Women's History Month and while the EHOPAC was able to recognize RADM (Ret.) Taylor, we also learned about the very first female EHO to be promoted to the rank of Assistant Surgeon General – RADM (Ret.) Brenda J. Holman. RADM (Ret.) Holman was the Regional Food and Drug Director, Pacific Region, Office of Regulatory Affairs in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when she promoted to RADM. She was first commissioned in 1988 and held positions in the FDA's Boston field office, FDA Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, Detroit District Office, and New York District Office. It's inspiring for me to look back on the achievements of others, and as we honor Women's History Month, I want to thank all the women leaders past, present, and future for all that they have done and continue to do to advance our profession.

Leadership isn't just about holding a position or title, it's about inspiring others to become the best versions of themselves. Today, I encourage all of you to step into a leadership role with confidence and courage. Believe in yourself and lead by example. Show others what is possible when we come together toward common goals. Leadership isn't about self; it's about

lifting others and achieving collective success. Celebrate the victories of your colleagues and support them through their struggles. Together the EHOPAC will continue to build a culture of collaboration and teamwork in support of all of you.

In Officio Salutis,

CDR Erin Evans

CPO UPDATE

Over the last 40 years the number of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) has largely waxed and waned in step with the overall size of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, which currently stands at approximately 5,700. As the USPHS Commissioned Corps strength has swung from less than 5,500 to nearly 7,000 and back again, our numbers have increased from 278 Sanitarians in 1985 to 386 EHOs in 2009. We have since decreased 18% from that peak to 315 EHOs.

I've heard scuttlebutt that droves of EHOs are taking early retirement because of the Modernization Initiative, but that's not true. There was a spike of deferred early retirements after the COVID stop-loss order was rescinded, but the primary driver for the decrease in our category size has been the large generation before me reaching their 30-year mandatory retirement. Consider that the three CPOs before me all entered active duty within a fifteen-month period in 1990-1991, with RADM Taylor remaining in service beyond 30 years as a flag officer. Our baby boomers have aged out, and this sort of demographic swing is not without precedent. There were over 1,500 medical officers when I was called to active duty, and as this Vietnam-era generation hit 30 years the number of medical officers plummeted by a thousand.

Our accessions remained stable during much of the COVID-era, due to recruiting efforts prior to the Public Health Emergency. However, our recruitment activity slowed greatly during the pandemic, and our pipeline of new EHOs is now nearly empty. We CPOs receive a chart of quad-cleared officer candidates every month or two, and our category is consistently at the bottom because we place all our candidates as soon as they are cleared. We could place many more if we had more candidates. I repeatedly hear from agencies and Commissioned Corps Headquarters that we need more EHOs.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps authorized force strength is 8,000. As the Commissioned Corps begins its recruitment blitz to remedy the service-wide dip in accessions, we could conceivably bring aboard a thousand EHOs before the rest of the categories grow the service to 8,000 strong. I'll settle for 200 new EHOs.

The EHOPAC Recruitment & Orientation Subcommittee Recruitment and Outreach Workgroup is actively recruiting for Council for Education on Public Health (CEPH) and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) school sponsors and has vacancies for some National Environmental Health Accreditation Council (EHAC) schools as well. Junior EHOs who've come aboard these last few years have classmates at local government or private sector jobs, perhaps searching for more impactful career opportunities. Get out there and start talking to people, the USPHS Commissioned Corps needs more EHOs. After all, we are the foundation of public health and the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

CAPT Timothy Jiggins, MSPH, REHS/RS, CIH
EHO Chief Professional Officer

Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) Updates

Public Health Reports, Official Journal of the Office of US Surgeon General:

For your information and awareness, the Office of the Surgeon General invites you to view [the new issue of Public Health Reports](#) (PHR), the official journal of the Office of the US Surgeon General and the US Public Health Service.

Tax Preparation Service

Access to the TaxSlayer online tax preparation service is available through a special TaxSlayer URL provided to USPHS officers behind the [Officer Secure Area](#), under the “Commissioned Corps Modernization” tab within the “Presentations and Resources” section. Only USPHS officers are authorized to use this link and only for their own personal income taxes (either as an individual or jointly with a spouse/partner). If you file jointly, the other person named on your taxes can also use this link.

Important EHOPAC Subcommittee Updates

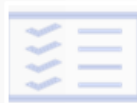
Awards and Recognition (A&R):



The EHOPAC Awards and Recognition (A&R) Subcommittee is soliciting officers to highlight in the ***EHO Assessment's Awards Corner***. The Awards Corner will celebrate EHOs who have achieved high level recognition for their recent work.



The types of awards to be featured are individual USPHS awards (Meritorious Service Medal or higher), high-level individual agency or department awards, or high-level awards from professional organizations or USPHS chartered organizations



•To be featured for a recent award achievement, please submit the following: rank/name, agency, award name, date conferred, conferring organization, and significance of the award/narrative summarizing achievements (250 words). Please include a picture of the awardee.



•Send [submissions](#) to CDR Scott Daly & LCDR Christine Lloyd, **no later than May 1, 2023** for recognition in the next quarterly issue of the *EHO Assessment*.

Information Technology:

APAN

Are you an EHOPAC Voting Member or Subcommittee Volunteer who uses APAN?

If so, please sign into your APAN account at minimum once a month (every 30 days) to maintain access. If you do not login once a month, APAN will automatically disable your account and it may take several days for your access to be restored.

Max.gov

Do you use MAX.gov? Max.gov will sunset on December 31, 2023. Users will need to make plans and transition to a new platform that will meet their technology needs. After December 31, 2023, Max.gov shared services will no longer be available. For more information, visit Max.gov.

Mentoring & Career Development (M&CD):

Mentoring Moments and Tips

[Podcast: How to Be a Great Mentor](#)

EHOs – Getting the right words of wisdom at the right time can make all the difference to your career. But how do you make that happen—both for yourself and for others around you? In this episode of the Kellogg Insight podcast, Diane Brink, a senior fellow and adjunct professor within the Kellogg School’s Markets & Customers Initiative talks about the journey from protégé to mentor. Then, Carter Cast, a clinical professor of innovation and entrepreneurship at Kellogg, describes how you can solicit advice that can help accelerate your career even in the absence of a mentor.

Please note: Due to varying Agency firewall restrictions, links might not be accessible from all Government devices

Table 1. Mentoring Moments and Tips for December.

Communications:

April is a special month for Environmental Health professionals. Earth Day is April 22nd, signifying environmental activism and sustainability. What better way to celebrate than sharing amazing action shots of EHOs in Action with Commissioned Corps Leadership and fellow officers? Thank you to everyone who has submitted photos. We look forward to seeing more. Enjoy the [2022 EHOs in Action Photobook](#) to spark inspiration (*please allow the video to buffer if photos or elements are missing*).

Please submit photos and stories of distinctive/significant work conducted in 2023. Photos can be from your duty station, deployments (PHS or agency), JrCOSTEP assignments, fitness events, volunteer work, or recruitment events. We also need photos with interesting scenery/events that may not include an officer, but represent unique work environments, an environmental health issue, or an accomplishment. The goal of the EHOs in Action photobook is to raise Commissioned Corps leadership’s awareness of the outstanding work EHOs do. ***Be creative, be proud, and have fun!***

Submit:

High resolution photos to CDR Christopher Smith nxz0@cdc.gov, LT Shelby Haddeland shelby.haddeland@ihs.gov, and LT Christina Waters christina.waters@fda.hhs.gov with “2023 EHOs In Action Photobook Submission” in the subject line.

Photo Caption:

- Officer’s Rank, First Name, Last Name
- Location (City, State)
- A succinct description (1-2 sentences) describing action in photo.
- A photo release form for images with non-PHS personnel. Forms can be requested from CDR Christopher Smith nxz0@cdc.gov or LT Christina Waters christina.waters@fda.hhs.gov.

Photos will be accepted through the end of October 2023.

Officer Leader Profile



Figure 2. Picture of LCDR Kevin Dunn

Officer Leader Profile
LCDR Kevin Dunn, MS, CIH, REHS/RS
Senior Industrial Hygienist
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

“A leader is best when people barely know they exist, when the work is done, the aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

Leadership Perspective

I am a Senior Industrial Hygienist (IH) in the Hazard Evaluation and Technical Assistance Branch (HETAB) of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in Cincinnati Ohio. NIOSH is the CDC institute charged with preventing work-related illness, injury, disability, and death by gathering information, conducting scientific research, and translating the knowledge gained into products and services.

Since 2014 I have led the NIOSH Nanotechnology Research Centers Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Field Studies Team, assessing health and safety in the production and use of advanced materials and manufacturing such as 3D printing. The team has conducted 45 site assessments, producing informational documents for workers such as “3D Printing with Filaments: Health and Safety Questions to Ask” and contributing to formal guidance such as the NIOSH Current Intelligence Bulletin for silver nanomaterials which set a REL for Silver nanomaterials.

I also supervise a group of HETAB IHs leading multidisciplinary teams (e.g., ergonomists, engineers, and occupational medicine) responding to Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) requests. An HHE can be requested for any worksite in the U.S. by employees, union representatives, or management with a concern that the work environment may be unsafe. HETAB investigations can take many forms, from a literature review/informational letter to multi day onsite investigations collecting environmental and biological samples as well as observations, questionnaires, or program reviews. I have had the opportunity to complete worker exposure assessments in 45 states, participate in trainings such as the Commissioned

Corps DSAFE program with University of Nebraska Medical Center, and the DARPA Service Chiefs Fellowship Program, as well as 21 emergency response deployments for CDC and USPHS from the 2001 Anthrax attacks to the Southwest Border EIS missions and most recently the East Palestine Train derailment.

“A leader is best when people barely know they exist, when the work is done, the aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

I aim to work from a service style, helping people reach their goals, with some visionary style to plan for future goals they have not yet developed. However, its necessary to be comfortable with autocratic leadership both for your team and from those above.

Career Highlights/Accomplishments

- 2022 USPHS representative to the DARPA Service Chiefs Fellowship Program
- NIOSH Health Hazard and Technical Assistance Branch Supervisory Industrial Hygienist, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Field Studies Team lead 2014-2022
- NIOSH Nanotechnology Research Center Critical Area Coordinator for Exposure Assessment 2014-2022
- Authored/co-Authored 19 publications/scientific manuscripts
- 45 speaking presentations at professional conferences
- NIOSH Science and Service Alice Hamilton awards (5) - Communication and guidance (2), Engineering and controls, COVID-19 Communication (2)
- Bullard Sherwood Research to Practice Award- (3)
- Edward J. Baier Technical Achievement Award
- 21 deployments (369 days) for USPHS/CDC
- Awarded USPHS OSM, USPHS C19PCM with Expeditionary Attachment, and Air Force Commendation medal for COVID response work 2021

Education/training

- Master of Public Health, Environmental Health (MPH)
- Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS/RS)
- Diplomate of American Academy of Sanitarians (DAAS)

Professional Associations

- Diplomate in the American Academy of Sanitarians
- American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
- AIHA Nano and Advanced Materials Working Group Chair Elect
- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH)
- Commissioned Officers Association
- Military Officers Association of America

Upcoming Events

Save the Date for the following activities:

- USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Events

- Mentoring Session: Tuesday, May 9, 7:30 AM - 9:30 AM (CT). Proteges can sign up for a 30 min mentoring session here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0944AEAC28A3F58-ehopac>
- Professional Development Updates for Environmental Health Officers: Wednesday, May 10 4:45 PM - 5:15 PM (CT)

Organization of the Month

Organization of the Month: ATSDR's Land Reuse and Health Program

[The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's \(ATSDR's\) Land Reuse and Health Program](#) helps communities incorporate health considerations in land reuse decisions. People can turn vacant or under-used land into places that benefit the whole area. ATSDR works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), state and local officials, developers, and communities to include health in these types of projects. As such, through its Land Reuse and Health Program, ATSDR works to conduct the following activities:

- promote a well-rounded approach to redevelopment,
- include health as an important part of redevelopment,
- grow community resources to promote health,
- measure changes in community health,
- encourage early community involvement in decision making,
- restore and revitalize communities in a way that is fair to all community groups,
- promote relationships among, agencies, partners, and communities,
- improve ways to talk about health and environmental risks.

****Do you have an 'Organization of the Month' you'd like to see highlighted?** The organization can be local or national but should provide resources applicable to all EHOs. Please share your organization and a summary of its resources with your EHO Assessment Team!**

About EHOPAC News

Do you have a news story to share? Submit your *EHOPAC News* stories or questions for inclusion in a future edition to LT Stephanie Bridges, Stephanie_Bridges@nps.gov, LT Stephen McLane, Stephen.Mclane@fda.hhs.gov, and LT Phillip Mathis, Phillip.Mathis@fda.hhs.gov

For More EHOPAC Information:

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[EHO Closed Facebook Group](#)

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Thank you for all you do,

EHOPAC Communications Subcommittee – Publications Team