



*Environmental Health Officer  
Professional Advisory Committee*



# The EHO Assessment

**August 2020 News and Updates**

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

## **EHOPAC Leadership Updates**

Welcome to another edition of the all-digital format for EHO News and Updates!

### **Message from EHOPAC Leadership:**

We are just past the half-way mark of our operational year. We are proud of what the EHOPAC and our category have accomplished to date, and we have even bigger plans and good news to share! Read on to find out what the EHOPAC has recently done and what we have in store for the rest of the 2020. Spoiler alert – September will be a milestone month for us.

The EHOPAC is excited to announce its **2020 EHOPAC Virtual Training** the week of September 8<sup>th</sup>, including an EHO Address by the Assistant Secretary for Health, ADM Brett P. Giroir. See the “Upcoming Events” section below for more details.

**2021 Voting Member (VM) opportunities** will be announced in late August / early September via the EHOPAC listserv. We will host pop-up talks in September about EHOPAC VM duties and expectations

**Temporary-grade promotions** were announced since the last EHO Assessment edition. Congratulations to those officers who successfully promoted! It is an important career milestone that acknowledges your professional and Corps achievements. Best of luck to those who were not

successful – it was a competitive year. Please contact your [Commissioned Corps Agency Liaisons](#) if you have questions regarding results.

## Important EHOPAC Updates

### Career Development:

The **Continuing Education Summary Template, Career Progression Milestones and CV** documents have been reviewed for 2020 and there were no significant changes. The latest versions should be posted to the EHOPAC website in the near future.

### Marketing and Recruitment:

#### Adopt-A-School:

The Marketing and Recruitment Subcommittee (M&R SC) is looking for an Officer to ‘adopt’:

- Fort Valley State University – Fort Valley, GA
- Mississippi Valley State University – Itta Bena, MS
- West Chester University, Pennsylvania – West Chester, PA

If you are stationed near the school, or visit the area periodically please consider applying to become an ‘Adopt-a-School’ representative of the EHOPAC M&R SC. Officers who volunteer (e.g., adopt a particular school) are expected to serve as a point-of-contact for that institution, routinely communicate with key faculty and staff, and provide periodic recruitment representations and outreach support. If you are interested, please contact LCDR Dustin Joplin ([Dustin.Joplin@ihs.gov](mailto:Dustin.Joplin@ihs.gov)).

The EHO **JRCOSTEP application window** will be open from June 1, 2020 until September 30, 2020 for JRCOSTEP opportunities during the summer of 2021! Interested students should [submit an application](#).

Please reach out to interested students and accredited programs to share this opportunity. Students must have completed at least two years of study in an accredited baccalaureate program and be returning to school in the fall of 2021.

For more information visit our [JRCOSTEP student website](#) and the [EHOPAC’s Resources website](#). Specific questions should be directed to [costep@hhs.gov](mailto:costep@hhs.gov).

If you are interested in becoming a JRCOSTEP Preceptor in 2021, please reach out to the JRCOSTEP Workgroup. For more information, please see the [Benefits of Hiring a JRCOSTEP brochure](#) and the [JRCOSTEP Preceptor Guide](#).

### Mentoring and Orientation:

The EHOPAC Mentoring and Orientation (M&O) Subcommittee conducted an online survey to evaluate the 2019 mentoring program (Program period Fall 2018-Fall 2019). The survey

included questions to assess communication interactions, mentoring topics, mentoring program resources, and program satisfaction. Below are a few summary points from the one year evaluation survey.

**Characteristics of the Respondents: Diverse agencies, ranks, and experience are represented among mentors and mentees**

Survey respondents included 36 mentors and 37 mentees. The majority of the respondents were non-Hispanic or Latino and held the rank of CDR (72%) for mentors and LT (58%) for mentees. Eighty one percent of mentors had at least 11 years of USPHS experience, while 68% of the mentees had less than five years of experience. Fifteen agencies were represented. Most respondents were from either the southeast region or northeast region (73% of mentors and 46% of mentees).

**Communication: Mentoring doesn't take much time, and career development is primary discussion topic**

Mentors responded that they communicated with mentees by email, telephone, personal visit, and other methods (e.g., professional forums or NEHA conference).

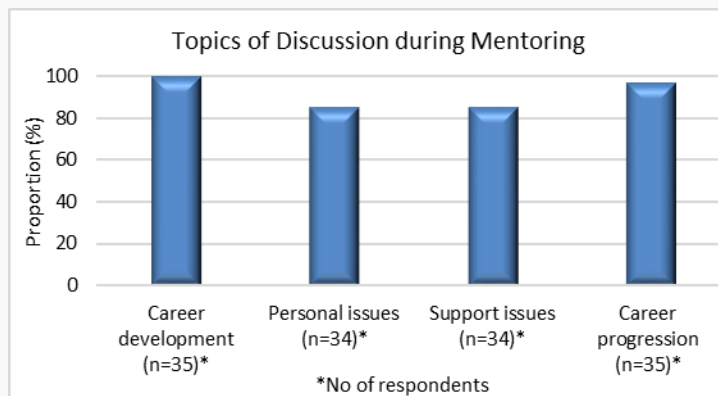


Figure 1 shows the survey results by discussion topic between mentors and mentees. Career development/progression was the most common.

Sixty-four percent of mentors indicated that they made contact their mentees about 1-2 times per month, while 30% indicated that they made contact less than once every three months. Mentees responded similarly to frequency of contact. Frequently reported discussion topics are shown in the graph. About 58% of respondents attended a formal mentor-training program.

**Program satisfaction: Overall, participants expressed high satisfaction with the program and recommended few areas for improvement**

Over 90% of mentors and mentees indicated that communication with each other met their needs. All respondents indicated that they would be willing to serve as a mentor again or continue with their current mentor in the program.

The M&O Subcommittee is planning the following program improvements

- Initiating Mentoring Moment of the Month
- Providing beginning year training and midyear check in webinar
- Revising the Mentoring Topical Guide

**In their own words: Quotes from EHOPAC Mentors and Mentees**

As a JO, this program has been extremely valuable in providing insights from a senior EHO on career development and benchmarks. Thank you for organizing!

—EHOPAC Mentee

The EHO mentoring program is an invaluable resource for junior officers who are seeking information and guidance. The program also provides the opportunity for senior officers to give back and help develop future professionals and leaders. This is one of the most important programs offered by the EHOPAC and is very much appreciated. Keep up the good work!

—EHOPAC Mentor

The mentoring solicitation period will open in August. Please be on the look out to serve as a mentor or protégé.

## Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) Updates

Since the last EHO Assessment edition, the **PHS Ready Reserve Corps** was announced. This [Fact Sheet](#) summarizes this exciting time for our service.

The **PHS public-facing website** has a new look! A product of a year-long research, testing and brand development initiative, the new website is a key component of the Commissioned Corps Modernization Initiative. See the new site at <https://www.usphs.gov/>. CCHQ welcomes any feedback and invites all officers to take a quick [survey](#). Results are anonymous and will help continue to enhance the website.

Because of the critical need for Public Health Service officer expertise and skillsets, the Commissioned Corps will **temporarily pause** both the acceptance of Voluntary Separations/Resignation of Commission and processing of new Voluntary Retirements for officers between 20 to 30 years of active duty service. Any separation/retirement paperwork (PHS-1373) with effective dates between **August 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020** will not be accepted or processed.

CCHQ will make a decision by **October 1, 2020** regarding future requests effective January 1, 2021 and beyond.

CCHQ recently **updated the awards policies**, including a new narrative format, new submissions deadlines, clarifications of awards to wear, and other revisions for clarity and consistency. Individual and Unit awards have resumed.

The new policy can be found on the [CCMIS website](#) along with a [webinar](#) and [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) to assist officers in understanding the new changes to the policy. Questions regarding awards should be sent through your liaison and agency awards coordinator.

**Welcome Aboard!**

Please welcome the following **new Environmental Health Officers** who attended the July Officer Basic Courses (OBC):

LT Keri Walker (FDA)

LT Christina Waters (FDA)

Welcome aboard!!

## Upcoming Events

### SAVE THE DATE: EHOPAC Virtual Training Series

The EHOPAC is excited to release the agenda for the upcoming **2020 EHOPAC Virtual Training Series being held September 8-11th, 2020 (1300-1500 Eastern)**. The training week will include consecutive days of updates and training on a range of environmental health topics.

Distinguished guest presentations include a special EHO Address from ADM Brett P. Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health, and the annual State of the Category and State EHOPAC speeches. A virtual award ceremony for our 2020 EHOPAC Award Winners will also be held, along with many other excited events! Access information will be sent out soon for attendees to log on to the Zoom platform for the Virtual Training Series. See below for a detailed agenda.

#### Day 1: Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>

Time	Topic	Presenter
1300 – 1310	Welcome & Introduction	EHOPAC Planners
1310 – 1400	CPO & PAC Chair Update	RADM Kelly Taylor CDR Elena Vaouli
1400 – 1420	EHO Address	<b>Assistant Secretary for Health</b> <b>ADM Brett P. Giroir</b>
1420 – 1500	Presentation of EHOPAC Awards	RADM Kelly Taylor CDR William Bird

#### Day 2: Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

Time	Topic	Presenter
1300 – 1305	Welcome & Introduction	EHOPAC Planners

1305 – 1400	Vectors & Public Health Pests During Deployments	CDR Joe Laco
1400 – 1500	Conducting EH Assessments for Food Safety in Outbreak Scenarios	LCDR Beth Wittry

**Day 3: Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>**

Time	Topic	Presenter
1300 – 1305	Welcome & Introduction	EHOPAC Planners
1305 – 1400	Overview of FDA Foodborne Outbreak Response	LT Mark Otto
1400 – 1500	HVAC Systems and Ventilation	LCDR Steven Merritt LCDR John Skender

**Day 4: Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>**

Time	Topic	Presenter
1300 – 1305	Welcome & Introduction	EHOPAC Planners
1305 – 1400	Career Development Presentation	CDR Travis Bowser CDR Martin Smith
1400 – 1500	Virtual Networking Session	LCDR Ronan King

## Organization of the Month

In this edition of the Assessment, we are highlighting one of our own! The **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)** is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Its mission is to expand and accelerate the contributions to scientific knowledge of human health and the environment, and to the health and well-being of people everywhere. From a global environmental health newsletter to grants for particulate air pollution research, NIEHS has a diverse portfolio and wealth of resources for EHOs. This includes the [Worker Training Program](#), which provides hazardous materials training courses and tools for many levels of response workers.

Under the Worker Training Program, NIEHS has developed [educational resources specific to COVID-19](#). Their clearinghouse includes PowerPoints, online lessons, fact sheets, and

checklists, many of which are available in both English and Spanish. Topics are targeted to general awareness or specific to essential workers. These resources can help workplaces of all sizes guide their employees to take appropriate precautions and corrective actions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

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## 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 Matthew Kozler at [matthew\\_kozler@nps.gov](mailto:matthew_kozler@nps.gov) and LCDR Tyler White at [tyler.j.white@uscg.mil](mailto:tyler.j.white@uscg.mil)!

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## For More EHOPAC Information:

Visit the [EHOPAC Website](#)

Check out our FACEBOOK pages:

[EHO Closed Facebook Group](#)

To join, please log in, and click the green “Join Group” button.

[EHOPAC Open Facebook page](#)

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