

## December 2020 EHO Assessment



### *Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee*



# The EHO Assessment

## December 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!

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## Welcome 2021 Voting Members and Executive Committee!

The PAC is pleased to announce the **incoming 2021 Voting Members**. These new members will join the continuing voting members in January of 2021 and provide leadership to our subcommittees and representation for the agencies at which they serve. Congratulations!

- CDR Drew Kupper - CDC
- LCDRs Krista Ferry and Steven Galvez - FDA
- CDR Erin Evans - ATSDR
- LT Kathryn McNamara - NIH
- LCDR Corey Butler - OPEN II

We also congratulate the **2021 EHOPAC Executive Committee (EC)**, and look forward to keeping the category moving forward and resilient in 2021! A big thank you to the 2020 EC for their hard work.

Immediate Past Chair: CDR Elena Vaouli, EPA

Chair: CDR Jessica Otto, FDA

Chair-Elect: CDR Jessica Havranek, FDA

Secretary/Treasurer: LCDR Corey Butler, DOI

EC Liaison: CDR Eva McLanahan, CDC

There was stiff competition this year - **thank you to all officers who applied**. A solicitation for volunteers to staff the PAC subcommittees will be forthcoming, so keep an eye out if you'd like to serve!

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## EHO Winter Social

Join us for a **Virtual Trivia & Networking Event!**

**When:** December 16 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

**Where:** Zoom Meeting

**What:** Wear your best ugly sweater to show off your holiday pride. For Trivia, download the free Kahoot app from your phone's app store.

**How much:** FREE

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## Q&A with EHOPAC Leadership – REHS Certification

**Q:** I have been unable to take the REHS exam this year due to COVID-19. NEHA is delayed in processing applications and many test sites aren't even open. I also don't think it will be safe for me to sit in a testing center for hours and take the exam due to the pandemic. Will the promotion boards consider any leeway for credentials this year?

**A:** EHOPAC Leadership understands your concerns. Please remember that the REHS credential is a benchmark, not a requirement for promotion. We are hearing that many EHOs and other officers throughout the Corps are having similar challenges. Our EC Liaison, CDR McLanahan, reached out NEHA to share our concerns and to determine if NEHA has plans to address the credentialing issue. We encourage you to make sure infection prevention and control practices are in place at any testing center you consider; you should not put your health at risk to take the exam. We also encourage you to review the Town Hall materials from November 17 that covered promotions.

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## COER & Promotion

Finalized COERs are due to the Agency Liaison **by 15 January 2021**. Liaisons must submit COERs for all officers in their agency to Commissioned Corps Headquarters **by 31 January 2021**. The [COER Webpage](#) has additional information.

If you are **up for Promotion**, you have a few days left before the deadline for most of your packet - **15 January, 2021**. This is relevant for officers up for *either* Temporary or Permanent Promotion anytime from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Visit the [Commissioned Corps Promotion Checklist](#) for more information on dates and requirements. You can also view the [EHO 2021 Promotion Benchmarks](#) for guidance on a competitive promotion package.

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## Important EHOPAC Updates

### Readiness

As noted in the recent USPHS Officer town hall, the following readiness requirements will not be due until **March 31, 2021**:

- Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT)
- Basic Life Support (BLS) certification
- Periodic Health Update (PHU)

Officers are to complete these readiness requirements prior to the March 31, 2020 deadline, and can still submit their readiness information via the Officer Secure Area in CCMIS. Officers are encouraged to **check RedDOG Self-Service and the Officer Secure Area dashboard** for the latest information and ways to complete waived readiness requirements, if possible.

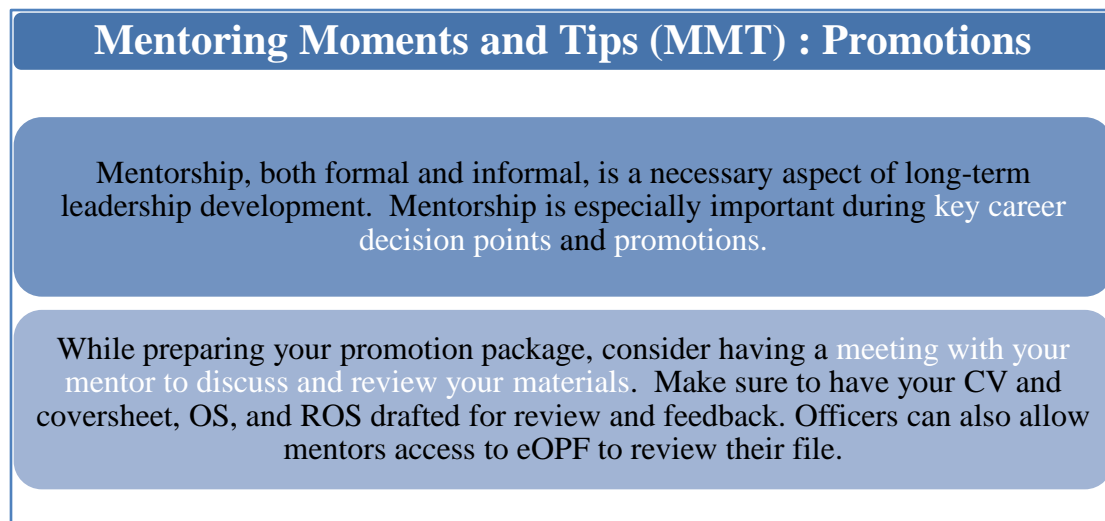
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## Mentoring and Orientation

Welcome to a newly commissioned EHO from the recent OBC Class 120!

- LT Madeline Lydon
- Duty Station: National Institutes of Health, Division of Occupational Health and Safety

In addition, here are the Mentoring Moments and Tips for December:



**Mentoring Moments and Tips (MMT) : Promotions**

Mentorship, both formal and informal, is a necessary aspect of long-term leadership development. Mentorship is especially important during key career decision points and promotions.

While preparing your promotion package, consider having a meeting with your mentor to discuss and review your materials. Make sure to have your CV and coversheet, OS, and ROS drafted for review and feedback. Officers can also allow mentors access to eOPF to review their file.

Figure 1. Mentoring Moments and Tips for December

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## Career Development

EHOs up for promotion should review and utilize the most recent versions of the CV Template, CV Cover Sheet Template, CV Cover Sheet Supplemental Guidance, and Continuing Education Summary Template.

These documents can all be found on the [Career Development Subcommittee Resources](#) page. There is even an example of an Officer's Statement and Reviewing Official's Statement, courtesy of the Career Development Subcommittee!

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## Officer Leader Profile

We are introducing our first **Officer Leader Profile**, spotlighting fearless leaders in our category!

**CDR Danielle Shirk Mills, Health Service Administrator**  
**ICE Health Service Corps**  
**Berks Family Residential Center – Pennsylvania**

*I serve as the Health Service Administrator for the Berks Family Residential Center where I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility. I supervise a multidisciplinary staff of 25 and cover two separate facilities. Working in the frontline during the COVID-19 Pandemic has afforded me the opportunity to apply the most recent infection prevention guidance in the facility. It has been rewarding to explain the proper use and limitations of PPE and provide guidance to ease the fears of the staff and the population we serve.*

*My favorite Leadership book is Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box. I love the book because it offers solution to a central problem with leadership in the form of a story. Whether at work or at home, self-deception obscures the truth about ourselves, corrupts our view of others and our circumstances, and inhibits our ability to make wise and helpful decisions. To the extent that we are self-deceived, both our happiness and our leadership are undermined at every turn.*

#### **Career Highlights/Accomplishments**

- "Building Environmental Public Health Framework for Chemical Emergencies." Journal of Environmental Health. Vol. 77, No. 3, October 2014.
- "Now What? A tool to Help Commercial Fishermen Encountering Sea-Disposed Chemical Munitions" Journal of Environmental Health. Vol. 81, No. 4, November 2018

#### **Education/training**

- BS Environmental Health Science - Bowling Green State University in 2003
- MPH Public Health Practice, Infection Control - University of South Florida in 2011
- Doctoral Degree in Healthcare Administration - Franklin University anticipated 2023.

#### **Professional associations**

- American Industrial Hygiene Association
- National Environmental Health Association



Figure 2: CDR Shirk Mills

*"A good leader leads the people from above them. A great leader leads the people from within them." -- M.D. Arnold*

## **Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) Updates**

Because of the critical need for Public Health Service officer expertise and skillsets, the Commissioned Corps has **extended the temporary pause** on 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 through **March 31, 2021**. CCHQ hopes to start accepting requests for Voluntary Separation/Resignation of Commission and Voluntary Retirements for officers between 20 to 30 years of active duty service starting January 1, 2021 for a separation date no earlier than April 1, 2021.

CCHQ Leadership hosted a **Tactical USPHS Commissioned Corps Town Hall** on November 17. The town hall focused on Promotions, providing updates and clarifying the promotion process. Officers will be

notified when the recording and written responses from the session are available in the [Commissioned Corps Management Information System \(CCMIS\) Officer Secure Area](#).

As noted in the November Town Hall, HQ recently released a **USPHS Communications Toolkit**. The toolkit can be accessed under the “Communications Tools and Resources” tab in the [CCMIS Officer Secure Area](#). Officers are encouraged to use these communication materials during speaking engagements and outreach initiatives, to act as force multipliers in recruitment efforts. The toolkit provides talking points, recruitment materials, templates, and branded backdrops to use when attending virtual meetings. All hands are on deck are needed to grow our service!

The Office of the Surgeon General invites you to view the current issue of [Public Health Reports](#) (PHR), the official journal of the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service.

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## Upcoming Events

As we wrap up 2020, see below for several save-the-dates in 2021:

### USPHS Town Halls

CCHQ released the next several topics for Commissioned Corps town halls. Topics are subject to change, as are exact dates and times. However, check out this list for a preview of what is to come:

- January: Recruitment
- February: Ready Reserve
- March: Retirement
- April: Readiness
- May: Awards
- June: Pay
- July: Deployment
- August: Leave
- September: Training

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### National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Virtual Series

The **NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) and Exhibition** is transitioning to a Three-Part Virtual Series in 2021. The AEC anticipates sessions to be held in February, Spring and Summer. Dates will be listed on the [NEHA AEC Website](#) once finalized.

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### American Industrial Hygiene Association Conference

Registration for the 2021 **American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Expo (AIHce)** opened December 7, 2020. The conference will be held in person in Dallas, TX from May 24-26, 2021. A virtual attendance option includes access to all general sessions, educational sessions, poster sessions and exhibit hall, plus OnDemand access to all authorized education sessions through December 2021. See the [AIHce Registration Page](#) for more details.

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## Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)

The CSTE is currently planning for an **in-person conference in Pittsburgh, PA, June 13-17, 2021**. This conference includes environmental health, occupational health, and injury content. If interested in presenting, abstracts are due Jan 6, 2021. See the [CSTE Call for Abstracts page](#) for details.

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## Joint Service Safety and Environmental Symposium

Save the date for the **29th Joint Safety and Environmental Professional Development Symposium (PDS)** hosted by the Naval Safety and Environmental Training Center. The virtual PDS will take place **April 19-23, 2021**.

Uniformed and civilian professionals will share innovative ideas, new trends, and new information in areas of safety and occupational health and environmental protection.

This year's PDS will feature claimant meetings, keynote speakers, and breakout sessions on a variety of topics. The virtual meetings and session will provide attendees with an opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge and continuing education credits without the burden of travel or conference costs. The call for speakers closes **February 12, 2021** – visit the PDS website to submit a session proposal: <http://jointpds.adobeconnect.com/pds2021presenters/event/registration.html>

Want to catch up on last year's PDS? Use the link below to listen to the recorded sessions: [http://jointpds.adobeconnect.com/pds2020reg/event/event\\_info.html](http://jointpds.adobeconnect.com/pds2020reg/event/event_info.html)

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## Organization of the Month

The [American Industrial Hygiene Association \(AIHA\)](#) is the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) in the workplace and community. AIHA has recently gone through a brand evolution to pivot toward occupational health, with a new tagline, "Healthier Workplaces Healthier World." This is in response to a changing workplace, where the lines of work and home are blurring and research emphasizes cumulative exposures and health effects.

AIHA has developed several informational resources for COVID-19 workplace safety. The site [Back to Work Safely](#) has materials for different types of work environments, from schools to offices to construction sites and much more. The materials provide guidance and best practices for preventing COVID-19 transmission. There are also webinars, posters and other educational materials. As the winter brings uncertainty in closing of workplaces, these tools can help ensure reopening and increasing capacity are done safely.

***Have an idea for an organization to highlight? Send it to the contacts listed below and we can include it in a future issue!***

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

## For More EHOPAC Information:

Visit the [EHOPAC Website](#)

**Check out our FACEBOOK and LinkedIn pages:**

[EHO Closed Facebook Group](#)

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

[EHOPAC Open Facebook Page](#)

[EHO LinkedIn Page](#)

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Thank you for all you do,

**EHOPAC Communications Subcommittee – Publications Team**

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