



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

Meeting #200 Minutes, March 14, 2017

I. Call to Order – CDR Jill Shugart, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1300 EDT.

II. Roll Call – LCDR Jessica Otto, Secretary/Treasurer

Roll call was performed, a quorum was confirmed.

Voting Members Present

CDR Matt Albright	CDR Elena Vaouli
CDR Darren Buchanan	LCDR Travis Bowser
CDR Katie Hubbard	LCDR Matthew Deptola
CDR Monica Leonard	LCDR Carla Tuite
CDR Carrie Oyster	LCDR Daniel Adams
CDR Stephen Piontkowski	LCDR Jessica Otto
CDR Jill Shugart	LT Danny Malashock
CDR Chris van Twuyver	LT Erin Kincaid
CDR Luis Rodriguez	

Voting Members Absent

CDR Michael Quinn (Excused)

Alternates Present

LCDR Martin Stephens

Liaisons Present

CDR Monica Leonard, Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB)

LCDR Beth Osterink, Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG)

III. Chief Professional Officer (CPO) Update – CAPT Alan Parham

- CAPT Parham will be attending the CPO Board and Combined Corps Leadership meetings on 15 March, 2017. This will be the first Combined Corps Leadership meeting since August 2016.
- EHO appointment boards will be meeting over the next few weeks. These boards will work through the remaining candidates who applied last year.
- We are anticipating another open period for EHO general duty applications this summer.

- Working through some of the unique issues that have come up this promotion cycle, specifically surrounding eDoc-U and the accuracy of officer's eOPFs. He will brief each of the promotion boards so that they know where and how to look for documents.
- We will be moving away from Direct Access. There is not any information on what system will be used to replace it or what the planned transition is. Updates will be given when information is available.

IV. Question & Answers – CAPT Alan Parham & CDR Jill Shugart

- Q. Does the PHS exemption to the hiring freeze include newly boarded EHO candidates? In other words, are agencies able to bring on newly boarded applicants seeking their first duty assignment even though they haven't officially been commissioned as an officer yet?
- A. These new candidates are included in the hiring freeze exemption, however each agency may or may not be taking on new candidates during the freeze.
- Q. After working with IHS as an EHO for 39 years, it is yet unclear to me of the requirements for new applicants to become a commissioned officer (CO). For EHOs, a bachelor degree from an accredited university. Are the IHS list and the NEHA list of accredited undergraduate degrees/institutions identical? Please distribute both lists. If an undergraduate degree is from a non-accredited university, EXACTLY which masters programs (which degrees and which institutions) will meet the requirements/qualifications to become a CO? I am guessing that any masters degree does not meet the requirements. I will be glad to provide additional detail to these questions if needed but looks like my questions to you are clear. Thanks.
- A. The appointment standards can be found on the EHOPAC website under the Policies and Standards subcommittee page. We do not maintain a separate list, but provide lists to the accrediting bodies for both undergraduate and graduate programs <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/resources.aspx#policiesAndStandards>. The qualifying degree should either be in environmental health, or if a masters or advanced degree should have a concentration in Environmental Health.
- Q. My agency is willing to pay for training and since I am in a non-EH position, I wanted to know if you all are aware of any Environmental Health related training available in the Maryland/DC Area?
- A. We recommend you reach out to your local Commissioned Officers Association (COA), AIHA or state National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) affiliate as a start to find local training resources. Also the Training and Events subcommittee are working on putting together a training calendar on the PAC website and will be developing a leadership corner on the EHOPAC website as well.

V. Chair Report – CDR Jill Shugart

- The theme for 2017 is “Building a successful EHO”. Everyone can contribute to this effort, but we are focusing on Mentoring and Orientation (M&O), Training and Events (T&E) and Career Development (CD). This theme will be used to drive our goals and objectives for the year. In past years we have done some great work with partnering and cross-category collaboration, but this year we want to focus our work in-house.
- We are working on standard operating procedures and work plans for the year. Most of them are complete and we are posting them in our All Partners Access Network (APAN) SharePoint site for better access, organization, historical archiving, and to assist with transitions from year to year.
- We are working on our Rolling Action Item List (RAIL), it captures our long term and short term goals. This is very helpful to help us manage our workload and make the expectations clear. This tool also captures ideas for

future projects that can be passed along between operational years to ensure we don't lose those great ideas we don't have time to accomplish this year.

- There is a new requirement to provide a monthly report from the PAC through the PAC Chairs Committee to the Office of the Surgeon General. This report will help improve visibility of PAC activities and to assist in streamlining efforts which might be duplicative.
- Meetings for 2017 are as follows:
 - Summer: 13 JUN 2017
 - Fall: 12 SEP 2017
 - Winter: 12 DEC 2017

Everyone is encouraged to call in and get updates on what events and projects are coming up. This schedule will follow our newsletter releases and we will share meeting proceedings through the minutes and the newsletter.

- Thank you to LT Malashock, CDR Buchanan, and CDR Woodlee on their hard work in getting the PAC Newsletter out.
- We received a briefing from CDR Farrell from DCCPR on the effects of the passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on permanent promotions at the February PAC Chairs Meeting. Kudos to CDR Oyster for pushing this issue during her term as EHOPAC Chair, and to CAPT Parham for his support in this effort. The dissemination of this information is directly due to their diligence. A large segment of officer's permanent promotions were adversely affected by the passage of the ACA. If you were on active duty on or before 23 MAR 2010, you are encouraged to look at the article in the EHOPAC Newsletter and visit our PAC website for more information: <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/ehopacnews.aspx#ACAPGrade>.

VI. Vice Chair Report – CDR Chris van Twuyver

- The EC met earlier in the year and realized the IT Subcommittee was severely understaffed (1 member, CDR Darren Buchanan). We have identified the following officers to assist with the workload:
 - CDR Jessica Hensley—IT liaison
 - CDR Charles Woodlee—508 compliance review
 - LCDR Douglas Erling—508 compliance review
 - LCDR Justin Erickson—website maintenance
- Thank you to CDR Buchanan for independently managing an overwhelming workload while we worked to get these volunteers in place. Thank you also to LT Malashock for volunteering to serve as the interim IT Liaison until one was identified.

VII. Ex-Officio Report – CDR Carrie Oyster

- CDR Oyster provided an update on the modifications to the Ex-officio position on the PAC. In 2016 the PAC developed an official position description and requirements for the Ex-officio. She created an official workplan and an SOP for the position and is wrapping up several internal EHOPAC projects from 2016.
- Will be working closely with the Policies and Standards Subcommittee to update the bylaws and charter with the changes the PAC made in 2016.
- Starting in April, she will provide oversight of the PAC newsletter publications. The EC realizes the newsletter publication process is very labor intensive, so having an EC member with oversight and senior management should be helpful to the Communications Subcommittee.
- Ex- Officio will be made available for any additional projects deemed necessary by the Chair.

VIII. Secretary/Treasurer Report – LCDR Jessica Otto

- The approximate balance of the EHOPAC account is \$2046
- We have sold 63 coins since January and currently have 148 coins available for purchase. If you are interested in purchasing a coin please visit the coin page on the PAC website at:
https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/ehocoin_pre2016.aspx.
- Work continues to draft and update the SOPs for both the Secretary and Treasurer roles.
- PAC Volunteer rosters will be updated with the new volunteers for 2017.
- Voting Member alternate paperwork is close to finalized and voting members will receive an email with their completed alternate forms when they are available.

IX. Executive Committee Liaison Report – LT Danny Malashock

- There was a great response to the January request for volunteers to staff the subcommittees for 2017. We were successful in selecting 31 new volunteers. Thank you for your support. Thank you also to those who were not selected, and hope you apply again in the near future.

X. Subcommittee/Workgroup Reports

Marketing and Recruitment – CDR Matt Albright and CDR Elena Vaouli

- The purpose of the Marketing and Recruitment (M&R) Subcommittee is to assist environmental health candidates and students in various areas.
- We have 4 workgroups: Applicant Assistance Program, JRCOSTEP, Recruit an EHO, and Marketing and Materials.
- We have 26 total members, 7 who were selected to join us this year.
- We've operationalized the theme of "Building a Successful EHO" by creating multiple leadership opportunities.
- Hiring officials - please contact LT Sarah Meehan at sarah.meehan@fda.hhs.gov if you have data points of interest to add to our tracking tool, or want to be added to the email distribution list.

Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Monica Leonard and CDR Michael Quinn

- There is an effort to revamp the mentoring programs across all categories.
- Many of the 2017 goals for the year are embracing the operationalization of the “Building a Successful EHO” theme.
- Goals for 2017 include:
 - Revise and Develop Subcommittee Policies and Materials
 - Develop and Implement a Marketing Strategy for EHOPAC M &O Activities and Programs
 - Evaluate Best Practices for Mentoring from within the PHS Commissioned Corps and Outside Organizations
 - Establish Performance Metrics and Measure the Impact of the Mentoring Program
 - Identifying the needs around a Mid-Career Mentoring Program
- 9 EHOs Completed OBC from 11/2016 to 2/2017
 - 3 - Nov 2016 (2 IHS and 1 CDC)
 - 4 - Dec 2016 (2 FDA and 2 IHS)
 - 2 - Feb 2017 (1 IHS and 1 FDA)
- Upcoming Activities:
 - Officer Basic Course
 - April 9th-21st, 2017, (Graduation 4/21)

- Re-launch of the EHO Mentoring Program. Revised procedures and guidelines will be announced via EHO listserv this Spring.

Training and Events – CDR Eva McLanahan and LCDR Travis Bowser

USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium

- EHO Category Day will be held during the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Chattanooga, Tennessee on Wednesday June 7th, 0745 – 1730. The abstracts have been selected and the agenda is finalized. The keynote speaker will be Dr. David Dyjack of NEHA.
- EHO Mentoring Session will be held Tuesday, June 6th, 2017 from 1200-1300. More details/sign-up forthcoming.
- The EHO Category Social will be Tuesday, June 6th, 2017 from 1930 – 2130 at the Chattanooga Brewing Company.
- Other dates/events of interest:
 - Poster abstract submission open – deadline March 16
 - Conference registration – early bird deadline April 10

Other Subcommittee News

- What Subcommittee? If you don't know – delete bullet Subcommittee full after new volunteers added (7 total)
- The Events Workgroup of the T&E Subcommittee will coordinate EHO events other than Category Day throughout the year in various locations where EHO's are stationed. The first event is tentatively planned for fall in Atlanta.
- The Training Workgroup is updating the PAC webpage and will be working on a training calendar in the near future. They also hope to provide resources, information on credentialing, training, and other supportive materials on the website soon.
- There will also be a Leadership Corner developed, so that you can find leadership resources on webpage
- The Subcommittee will be soliciting for ideas and suggestions in coming months via the listserv.

Readiness – LCDR Daniel Adams

- Officers need to pay attention to their readiness status and plan accordingly, especially for items that require scheduling in advance such as BLS training, medical exams, and immunizations. Current and historical readiness is important to your career in areas of promotion, deployment, awards, PAC membership, etc.
- Senior officers found “unqualified” during the 01/01/17 readiness check nearly tripled from the 10/01/16 readiness check. As a result, the EHO category readiness percentage has dropped to the lowest level in many years. Senior officers are encouraged to set the example and take an active role in ensuring readiness status is maintained.
- If you need readiness assistance, do the following:
 1. Log into the Officer Secured area of CCMIS
 2. Click on RedDOG in the left menu
 3. At the top of the newly opened RedDOG page click on “RedDOG Forms” at the top
 4. On the drop down menu, click “Readiness Assistance Form” and follow the directions.
- Make a paper trail, not a phone call when it comes to ensuring your documents are loaded properly. Mistakes are made and you may easily be able to clear up a matter with the Readiness Assistance Form.
- Please pay attention to the APFT level change in the Awards policy for the Field Medical Readiness Badge (FMRB). The old level to attain was “Level 2”, now it is “Excellent”. The standards have increased. Review the new “Excellent” APFT requirements if you want to qualify for the award.

XI. Open Discussion

Liaison Reports

Commissioned Officers Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB) – CDR Monica Leonard

- First meeting of the year will be MAR 28. Meetings will be held every other month.
- A new resource guide for officers getting married, divorced, and for dependents surviving the death of an active duty officer. It will be shared via the listserv when it is available.

Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) – LCDR Beth Osterink

- There are four open spots for JOAG voting members for the next operational year. Applications are due April 7th. Please reach out to me if interested and have questions. beth.a.osterink@uscg.mil.

XII. Adjournment – CDR Jill Shugart, Chair

The meeting was adjourned at 1437 EDT.