



U.S. Public Health Service

Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)

Meeting #199 Minutes, December 12, 2016

**I. Call to Order 1300 EST**

EHOPAC Chair, CDR Carrie Oyster, called the meeting to order. Roll call was held for members in attendance.

**EHOPAC Members Present**

CAPT Alan Parham, CPO	CDR Chris van Twuyver
CDR Matt Albright	CDR Elena Vaouli
CDR Darren Buchanan	LCDR Travis Bowser
CDR Katie Hubbard	LCDR Matthew Deptola
CDR Monica Leonard	LCDR William Fournier
CDR Derek Newcomer	LCDR Chyla Hunter
CDR Carrie Oyster, Chair	LCDR Carla Tuite
CDR Stephen Piontkowski	LT Daniel Malashock
CDR Jill Shugart, Vice Chair	

**EHOPAC Members Absent**

CAPT David Cramer, Ex-Officio	CDR Jasen Kunz (Excused)
CAPT John McKernan (Excused)	CDR Jamie Mutter, Secretary/Treasurer (Excused)

**EHOPAC Alternates Present**

LCDR Daniel Adams (for CAPT McKernan)	
---------------------------------------	--

**EHOPAC Liaisons Present**

CAPT Lauralynn McKernan, CCWIAB Liaison	
---	--

## II. Chief Professional Officer Update – CAPT Alan Parham

### *Report*

- Thank you to outgoing PAC Chair, CDR Carrie Oyster.
- CPO Board Meeting scheduled for the week of December 19<sup>th</sup>. Will be in DC area for that meeting
- Thank you to LCDR Jessica Otto for organizing EHO social in D.C area on December 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 2016 EHO's in action photobook is complete. Thank you to CDR Eva McLanahan for her assistance. Book was produced through Shutterfly and a link will be sent out if you would like to purchase a book.
- LCDR Otto will have new EHO coins at the social on December 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Maternity leave policy – CAPT Laura Lynn McKernan is part of CCWIAB and was instrumental in this new policy. CAPT Parham thanked the CCWIAB for their work on this issue.
- CCHQ updates
  - Slowly filling vacancies at CCHQ
  - CCMIS system is back up
    - eDoc system is not operating flawlessly. The system is currently overloaded. Please log off when you are done uploading document.
    - If you are not up for promotion, please hold on submitting documentation.
    - If you find errors, first work through your agency liaison and then let CAPT Parham know if there is no resolution.
- Expected to open applications again in the May/June 2017 time frame. Currently working to board applicants that applied in the last open cycle.
- Awards: One issue that is a priority for CAPT Parham is the fact that Agency deployments don't get credit for FMRB. CAPT Parham has gotten more visibility at CPO Board and RedDOG with this issue.

## III. Q&A Session

- Q. How can the PAC work with Commissioned Corps leadership to promote improvements in the awards system? Specifically, working to improve transparency, efficiency and timely review in a work process.
- A. PAC will be able to funnel issues through the PAC Chairs group so CPO's can be aware of specific issues. CAPT Parham coordinates the CPO board review which is all the category specific awards, non-agency awards and has been valuable to see how the system is working. CDR Ball has done a good job with communication and her goal is to make things more transparent. It is a big issue with the CPOs and they will continue to keep working on those issues.
- Q. Has there been any additional information on the Ebola award shared with leadership and when it may be available? For those who have put in a Foreign Duty Service Award, is there any update on when that might be awarded?
- A. RedDOG is going through a transition; however, the CPO's are getting weekly updates from RedDOG and they have recently started to work on these awards. CAPT Parham

said that they are expected to be in the system in time for promotions. Hopefully in the next couple of months.

- Q. Now that the CV cover sheet is back, I would like to see the official CV coversheet align better with the benchmarks for promotion and the DCCP deployments to be included.
- A. CAPT Parham stated that the CV coversheet is really designed for the promotion board and we did try and align it with the benchmarks as best we could. The goal was not to use the space on the coversheet with items that could be found in your PIR. The coversheet also models the CV as it is the coversheet for the CV. The inclusion of deployments was discussed, but for a couple of reasons we decided not to include. You could add a deployment under Officership if you wanted to highlight the deployment.
- Q. Will the coversheet eventually be merged with the CV so we can upload it as one document?
- A. Save each document separately as a PDF. Then in the PDF program, you can merge the two documents into one and save as new document and then scan the merged document into your eOPF without a problem.
- Q. There seems to be some ambiguity regarding required licensure for EHO's as well as the process for submitting supporting documents for certification and registration. Since the EHO category does not require licensure, what utility does this licensure outlet serve and is it specifically for officers who come in with a license? Is there a policy that governs how EHOs should be submitting supporting documents to CCHQ for registration and certification?
- A. For most EHO's, our registration or certification is not a requirement of being in the category or the Commissioned Corps. Right now, CCHQ, wants all registrations and certifications. CCHQ is only showing one certification in your PIR. CAPT Parham is hoping in the future that there will be another set of documents. Long term fix is that the officer will be able to update registrations and certifications into the eDocU system and the officers will determine where it goes. Currently, CDR Ferrell wants all licenses to go through the licensure line so she can track them and keep a record of it. Officers will need to fax all certifications and registrations to the licensure line. CAPT Parham suggested putting a note on the fax that this is your primary certification and should be placed in your PIR. If it is the secondary certification, please say it should be put in your eOPF.
- Q. Is there a formal USPHS orientation for the new administration led by the Assistant Secretary for Health and the Surgeon General and does this also happen through COA and other stakeholder organizations?
- A. Yes, however, CAPT Parham does not know details about the orientation or who is doing the orientation. He mentioned briefing materials were put together about the Corps. CAPT Parham stated that COA will be doing similar outreach on the Corps.
- Q. Several officers have not been able to get their flu shots into their eOPF and are wondering what actions they should take.

- A. CAPT Parham recommended officers discuss the problem with their Agency liaison. However, if the problem persists, please let CAPT Parham know. CDR Oyster mentioned her liaison told her that there was a backlog of immunizations and they should be tabulated by the end of February.
- Q. As a new officer, what are some opportunities available to officers in the Corps who are in multidisciplinary positions and would like to maintain their knowledge in the EHO field. For example, shadowing other environmental health officers. Are there any available positions in the PAC or other EHO related organizations that they might be able to take part in?
- A. CAPT Parham thinks this would be worth discussing further if there are officers willing to let officers shadow them and the agency agrees as well.
- Q. Since CCMIS came back on line, the billet search function was removed which now only liaisons have access to. Is it possible for the EHOPAC to provide the category with some of this data, specifically a summary of the EHO billets by agency and location?
- A. Yes, the PAC can accommodate this request. CAPT Parham will also check with CCHQ to see if this is permanent or temporary.
- Q. What is the length of time one can serve on a subcommittee? Once you rotate off, how long before you can rejoin a new subcommittee or rejoin the subcommittee you rotated off of?
- A. CDR Oyster stated that an officer can serve on a subcommittee for 3 years and then they rotate off. The year they rotate off, they can apply for a new subcommittee. Every January, there will be a call for volunteers for subcommittees that have openings. After that email notification, you should submit a CV and a statement of interest to the POC identified in the email. This will serve as an application for a position on that subcommittee. You are only able to serve on one subcommittee at a time for a three year period. You can rotate off and go to another subcommittee or reapply to be accepted back into the original subcommittee. We would also encourage you to try several different subcommittees.

#### **IV. EHOPAC Chair Report – CDR Carrie Oyster**

##### *Report*

- 2016 Administrative Successes
  - Standardized recordkeeping – developed formal SOP & workplan templates
  - Internal EHOPAC website established to house historical records
  - Created a quarterly EHOPAC Newsletter
  - Implemented an anonymous Q&A website
  - Modernized meeting format by having four quarterly all-hands meetings a year
    - Increased participation from field category officers

- Allowed the PAC to use the monthly voting member meetings for internal PAC projects.
  - Successfully transferred PAC data to CCMIS server from the legacy EHOPAC.org website (to include fully integrating DHHS compliance)
  - Added two additional seats on the EHOAPC: And 2<sup>nd</sup> At-Large seat and an Open Agency seat
- Additional Administrative Upgrades
  - Created a Liaison position
  - Introduced a CPO-led senior leadership training to equip mentors reviewing bottom quartile officer files after promotion season and eOPFs during end-of-year file reviews
  - Successfully migrated the Communications working group into formal EHOPAC COMMs Subcommittee
  - Implemented an annual treasury audit by an outside entity
- Farewells
  - CAPT John McKernan, EPA: Career Development, 2015-2016
  - CDR Derek Newcomer, At Large (NIH): Policy & Standards, 2011-2016
  - CDR Jasen Kunz, CDC Agency rep 2016
  - LCDR Bill Fournier, DOI: Mentoring & Orientation, 2014-2016
  - LCDR Chyla Hunter, FDA: History and Awards & Recognition, 2016

## V. EHOPAC Vice Chair Report – CDR Jill Shugart

### *Report*

- Hails for 2017
  - **EHOPAC Voting members:**
    - CDR Jamie Mutter, ATSDR (Open-Agency Seat)
    - CDR Michael Quinn, DOI
    - CDR Luis Rodriguez, CDC
    - LCDR Daniel Adams, EPA
    - LCDR Jessica Otto, FDA
    - LT Erin Kincaid, USDA (At-Large)
  - **Vice Chair:**
    - CDR Chris van Twuyver, FDA

## VI. EHOPAC Treasurer Report – CDR Jamie Mutter

### *Report:*

- Notable News for 2016
  - Sold 275 new coins and we are in the process of ordering more new coins. Currently, there are 19 coins in the inventory.
  - Current financial status: \$1,275.34.
  - Will need to reconcile the books before new Treasurer takes over in 2017.
- Goals for 2017
  - Implement audit of EHOPAC financial accounts

## VII. Subcommittee/Workgroup Reports

### A. Awards and Recognition – CDR Katie Hubbard

- Year in Review: Accomplishments
  - Thank you to CDR Mike Box and LCDR Chyla Hunter for their help on the subcommittee.
  - Another successful EHOPAC Awards cycle for 2016!
    - John G Todd Award: CAPT (Ret) Richard Turner (IHS)
    - Edward (Ted) Moran Award: CDR Lisa Delaney (NIOSH)
    - John C. Eason Award: LT Katie Lynn Bante (IHS)
    - Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award: CDR Vincent Garcia (IHS)
    - 2016 EHO Responder of the Year: CAPT Calvin Edwards (FDA)
  - Established the “Awards Corner” in the EHOPAC Quarterly Newsletter to recognize our officers who have received organization/committee/agency awards.
  - Awards Overview Packet created
    - Redacted awards nominations provided with instructional guide on how to write award nominations
    - Awards template created to assist with award writing
    - Moving forward
      - Need additional agency-specific awards for review and publication
      - Review and approval by EHOPAC for publication
      - Add as Appendix F to “The Environmental Health Officer Survival Guide”
- Goals for 2017
  - Clarify and revitalize EHOPAC award criteria
  - More resources to make award writing easier for our officers
  - Need additional successful Agency awards to use as templates

### B. Career Development – CAPT John McKernan and CDR Piontkowski

- Notable News 2016
  - PY17 Benchmarks
  - CV Cover Sheet
- PY2017 Priority Goals
  - PY18 Benchmarks
  - Review/Revise CV as needed

### C. Communications– CDR Vaouli and LT Malashock

- 2016 Workgroup Accomplishments
  - Identified and addressed communication needs.
    - Launched communication needs assessment survey
    - Used innovative and multiple communication channels
      - Social media, newsletters, Q/A at open meetings
  - Created and implemented policies for improved management of EHOPAC communication resources.
    - Social Media Policy & SOP
    - EHOPAC Listserv Posting Policy
- 2017 Workgroup Top Goal

- To continue expanding and improving our EHOPAC communications efforts by engaging other EHOPAC subcommittees and USPHS groups.
- 2016 Liaison Accomplishments
  - EHOPAC Newsletter
    - Development & Implementation
    - Expanded Scope & Participation
    - To date, three editions released
  - Anonymous Q&A Feedback System
    - Developed & Implemented System
    - To date, received 16 submissions
- 2017 Liaison Top Goal
  - Identify opportunities to expand the EHOPAC's engagement and coordination with organizations internal (e.g., other PACs) and external (e.g., academic institutions, COA, NEHA) to the USPHS, to develop collaborations and information sharing.

#### **D. History – CDR Matt Deptola**

- 2016 Accomplishments
  - Started the Organization and Filing of 1030 past files on the APAN Website
  - Created Operational Teams and Processes for Future Initiatives
- 2017 Initiatives
  - Finalize APAN organization and complete all outstanding 2016 Initiatives

#### **E. IT – CDR Darren Buchanan**

- 2016 Accomplishments
  - New PAC site as primary information point
    - Focusing information to common points
    - EHOPAC.ORG redirects to new site
  - Adoption of APAN site
    - Contacted by EPAC and VPAC
  - Awareness of 508 compliance
- 2016 Issues
  - Loss of the CCMIS and PAC websites from September 26<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>
    - Operations still shaky even after the November 18 CCMIS activation
    - PAC websites not online until November 21<sup>st</sup>
    - New modifications have made our EHOPAC websites not editable, as a results any updates/changes must be submitted to CCHQ for uploading
  - Alternative sources of information to share urgent information to the category?
    - Listserv
    - Listserv archives
- 2017 Goals
  - Recruitment of subcommittee members with very specific skillsets:
    - Graphics manipulation
    - HTML and CSS
    - 508 remediation (PDF, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
    - Proper 508 document design
    - Database and data parsing techniques
  - Documentation of all IT operations and data resources

## **F. Marketing and Recruitment – CDR Matt Albright and CDR Monica Leonard**

- Notable News
  - 2016 General Active Duty Process
    - 54 eligible applicants
  - Recruitment webinar
    - Accrediting Schools and Students
  - Successful transition of AAP and RAE
- Major 2017 Goal
  - Revision of the Applicant Assistance and Placement Tool

## **G. Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Bill Fournier**

- Notable News
  - Subcommittee members met with 25 EHO OBC grads in 2016
  - Paired 10 mentors with protégés
  - Updated mentoring guidelines

## **H. Policies and Standards – CDR Derek Newcomer**

- Notable News
  - Subcommittee reviewed ABET, EHAC and CEPH accreditation criteria.
  - Completed review of ABET, EHAC, and CEPH accreditation criteria. Recommended changes to the EHO appointment standards were approved by Voting Members.
  - Published the EHO Survival Guide:  
<https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/documents/TheEnvironmentalHealthOfficerSurvivalGuide.pdf>
- **2017 Goals**
  - Develop references for Appointment Board members to ensure the best of the best candidates are recommended for commission into the EHO category.
  - Guidance for evaluating the merit of EHO applicants through tailored interview questioning
  - Flow chart / decision tree for vetting academic and professional certification qualifications
  - Guidance to appropriately calculate training and experience credit based on professional “work experience”

## **I. Readiness – CDR Chris van Twuyver**

- Year in Review: Accomplishments
  - Completed review and update of the following documents:
    - EHO Deployment Checklists
    - EHO Utilization Handbook
    - EHO Deployment Pamphlet
    - Environmental Health Readiness Guide
  - Contacted EHOs who were projected to not meet basic readiness requirements to offer assistance
  - Shared deployment narratives, and lessons learned during deployments on the EHOPAC website and the EHOPAC Facebook page.
- Goals for 2017
  - Complete the update of the Environmental Health Officer Deployment Resource CD

- Convert the EHO Deployment checklists, Utilization Handbook, Deployment Pamphlet, Environmental Health Readiness Guide and the Deployment Resource CD to an ePub format to allow Officers to download these documents to a smartphone

#### **J. Training – LCDR Carla Tuite and LCDR Travis Bowser**

- Notable News from 2016
  - Successful COA Category Day
  - Planning process changes and recommendations currently under way for 2017
  - Training Subcommittee to be renamed to “Training and Events” Subcommittee for 2017
  - With this update, the Subcommittee will also change from 2 Voting Member chairs to 1 voting member chair
- Goals for 2017
  - Develop necessary workgroups
    - Category Day, Events, Calendar, etc.
  - Training Calendar
    - Workgroup to develop and maintain Google calendar for EHO related trainings, events, CEUs, timelines, etc.

#### **VIII. Open Discussion**

- Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board – CAPT Lauralynn McKernan - Maternity leave update
  - On December 5, 2016, an email was sent out announcing maternity leave had been increased from 42 – 82 days.
  - The new policy allows for 84 consecutive or 12 weeks of leave for any post-partum recovery after delivery.
  - Maternity leave begins the day after hospital discharge.
  - New Commissioned Corps instruction. Pay special attention to Section 6.3, part E.
    - The officer should notify her supervisor as soon as possible after she knows she know she is pregnant for necessary staffing and adjustments for the health and safety of the officer or fetus.
  - Our civil service colleagues do not have the same benefits as Commissioned Corps so please be sensitive when discussing this new policy.
- Immunization reminder - upload immunization record using eDocU. Select immunization.
- Can you include January work in the 2016 OS and ROS statements because the due dates are extended through January? CDR Oyster stated, per verification from CAPT Parham, you can include January 2017 information on the 2016 documents.
- Is there a mechanism in which an officer can volunteer for a subcommittee? CDR Oyster said that at the beginning of 2017, CDR Shugart will get a tally of the number of new officers needed on each EHOPAC Subcommittee. She will send an email on the listserv with the contact for subcommittee POCs and how many volunteers are needed. Officers should then reach out to the subcommittee chair(s) via email and include their CV and a Statement of Interest. The Chairs will then make a decision by February regarding positions for Subcommittee volunteers. Everyone who applies for a Subcommittee position will be notified Yes or NO

regarding their application. In addition, please remember you can't serve on two subcommittees at the same time.

- Next open meeting will be March 14<sup>th</sup> at 1300 EST.