



NEWSLETTER



U.S. Public Health Service

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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Greetings from the Chief Professional Officer

By RADM Kelly Taylor, Chief Professional Officer

Greetings EHOs!

One of the exciting things I get to do as CPO is attend meetings – meetings, meetings, and more meetings! Just joking... checking if someone is actually reading this. The fun thing I get to do is meet with field staff who do the work of environmental health every day. Last week, I was honored to participate in the Phoenix Area Indian Health Service Office of Environmental Health and Engineering Workshop. Not only did I get to spend time with the IHS Environmental Health Specialist of 2017 (the newly commissioned LT Kate Pink) the 2018 John G. Todd award winner (CAPT David Cramer) and the 2018 Thomas E. Crow award winner (CAPT Kenny Hicks) I got to talk with all the EH staff about the positive impact they’re having on American Indian communities in the Southwest. After having been removed from the practice of environmental health for longer than I had anticipated, it was refreshing to hear from junior officers about the projects they have been working on and to hear from the more senior staff about the non-traditional environmental health projects they are getting involved in. I hear a lot about what physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and first responders are doing to address the opioid epidemic, but I haven’t heard so much from EHOs about what they are doing to address it - until I heard about the projects the Injury Prevention staff are doing in the Phoenix Area. No matter what our specialty area is, we’re all Environmental Health Officers and using the Public Health Approach is what we are so good at. We define the problem, determine the cause or risk factors for the problem, determine how to prevent or mitigate the problem, implement effective strategies and evaluate the impact. Whether it is piloting the use of medication lock boxes in elders’ homes, evaluating the use of Naloxone by first responders, or advocating for safe medication disposal, EHOs are making an impact! Let me hear more about what you are doing to improve the health and safety of the Nation. Use this newsletter to write about your work, get involved in your communities and professional organizations, present at national meetings, or write blogs for your public affairs staff and other social media coordinators. We do great work. Let’s show others what we do!

RADM Kelly M. Taylor
 Chief Environmental Health Officer

**Congratulations
 to
 EHOPAC Award
 Winners!
 (See Page 7
 for Details)**

EHOPAC Chair Report

By CDR Chris van Twuyver, EHOPAC Chair

Greetings EHOs,

I hope that you are all enjoying the spring weather! The EHO General Duty Application Window was open February 1 - 28, 2018, we received 61 applicants, and after review, 46 of the applicants were found to meet our appointment standards. Thank you to CDR Elena Vaouli and LT David Bales for leading the Marketing and Recruiting Subcommittee, and for managing the EHOPACs recruiting efforts. Special thanks to CDR Katie Hubbard and LCDR Andrew Kupper for leading the Policy and Standards Subcommittee and all the volunteers who screened the applicants.

We were fortunate to have 18 new volunteers step forward to assist the EHOPAC as non-voting members this year. We have a total of 88 volunteers who staff the ten EHOPAC Subcommittees. Volunteer participation is essential to maintain the EHOPAC operations and I thank all of our volunteers for their dedication and enthusiasm.

It was great to meet the 49 EHOs that attended the USPHS Symposium held in Dallas, Texas June 4 – 7, 2018, 12 of the EHOs participated in the EHOPAC Mentoring Session held during the Symposium. We also had 25 EHOs attend the EHO Social, I hope that you will be able to travel to Minnesota next year to attend the Symposium!

Thank you to CDR Eva McLanahan and CDR Elizabeth Valenti who oversaw the planning of this year's EHO Category Day with Category Day planners LCDR Beth Wittry, LT Sam Frank, and LCDR James Gooch.

Lastly, congratulations to this year's EHOPAC Award Winners! Please refer to the Awards section of the Newsletter for details regarding this year's award recipients.

EHO Category Coin is back in stock!

The EHOPAC is selling the category coins for \$10. There will be an additional \$4 shipping cost if needed.

The coin features the EHO logo (as shown on the right) on one side and the Seal of the U.S. Commissioned Corps on the other. Anyone interested in purchasing coins should use the fillable PDF form available via the link below:

https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/documents/EHOPAC_Coin_Order_Form_2017.pdf

If you have questions you can contact CDR Jessica Otto at usphsehovac@gmail.com or 240-402-1876.



Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee

2018 EHOPAC Members



**RADM Kelly Taylor, IHS
Chief Professional Officer**



**CDR Chris Van Twuyver, FDA
EHOPAC Chair**



**CDR Michael Quinn, DOI
EHOPAC, Chair Elect**



**CDR Jessica Otto, FDA
EHOPAC Secretary/Treasurer**



**LT Daniel Malashock, EPA
Executive Committee Liaison**



**CDR Jill Shugart, CDC
EHOPAC Ex-Officio**



**CDR Monica Leonard,
CDC, Mentoring &
Orientation**



**CDR Carrie Oyster, USCG
Mentoring & Orientation**



**CDR Jessica Hensley, FDA
Information Technology**



**CAPT Stephen
Piontkowski, IHS
Career Development**



**CDR Luis Rodriguez, CDC
Communications**



**CDR Jamie Mutter, CDC
Awards**



**CDR Elena Vaouli, ATSDR
Marketing & Recruitment**



**LCDR David Bales, IHS
Marketing & Recruitment**



**LT Steven Merritt, EPA
Readiness**



**LT Erin Kincaid, CDC
Communications**



**LCDR Matthew Deptola,
NIH, History**



**CDR Katie Hubbard, IHS
Policy & Standards**



**LCDR Andrew Kupper,
FDA, Policy & Standards**



**LCDR Travis Bowser, IHS
Training & Events**



**CDR Elizabeth Valenti,
FDA, Training & Events**

EHOPAC Subcommittee Highlights

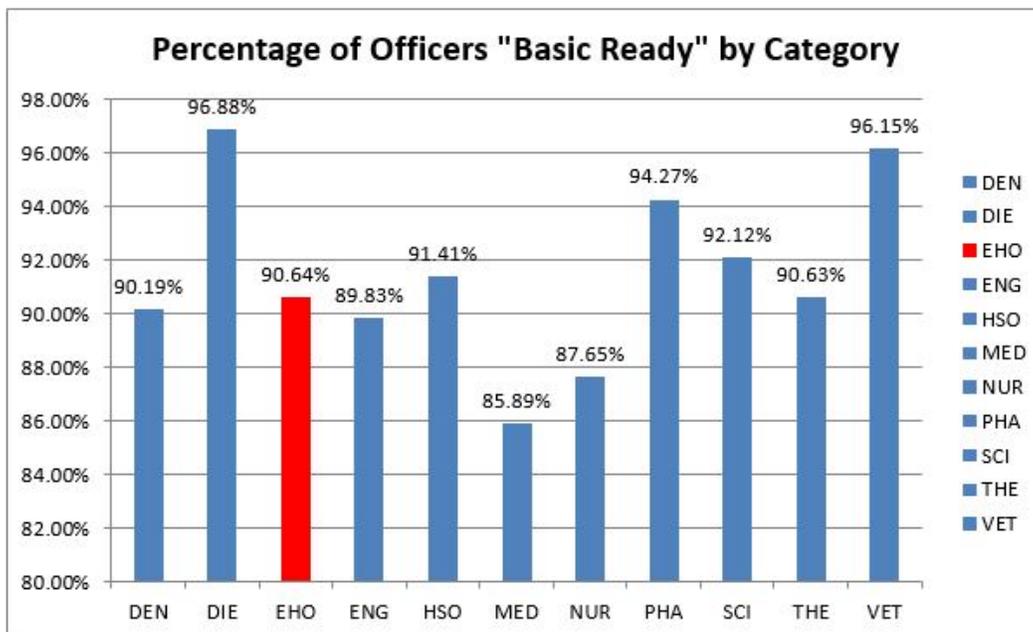
Readiness

Leadership Change

Thanks to LCDR Daniel Adams for his leadership of the Readiness SC over the past year. LCDR Adams has handed the baton off to LT Krista Ferry and LT Steven Merritt, who are co-chairing the Readiness Subcommittee going forward. LTs Ferry and Merritt are excited to continue the work of the subcommittee and help EHOs to be prepared for deployments and maintain eligibility for promotions as increased weight is placed on consistent readiness history.

Readiness Status

After the recent transition from Direct Access to the Officer Secure Area on CCMIS, the readiness numbers for the EHO Category and the entire PHS Commissioned Corps have improved markedly over the last quarter. As of April 30, 2018, the Environmental Health category has 32 officers that aren't basic ready, with 7 of those being exempt. EHOs are sixth overall, but our readiness percentage has come up above 90%. Keep an eye on the RedDOG Self-Service functionality within the Officer Secure Area to check your status and remember that readiness checks are now monthly.



Conditions of Service Policy

Over the last 7 months there have been a flurry of readiness-related policies and directives coming out of DCCPR. In addition to limiting promotion potential and making you ineligible to deploy, maintaining individual readiness also has a bearing on our eligibility to continue serving in uniform. CCD 111.03, issued at the end of March, requires all officers to:

- CONTINUALLY meet Corps' basic force readiness standards and be deployable
- Meet Corps medical retention standards and notify Medical Affairs of any status changes
- Maintain Corps' weight standards established by ASH, with an effective date of October 2018

Failure to meet these conditions of service could result in administrative action or involuntary separation. If you're concerned about meeting the weight standards and are on Facebook, consider joining "Ground Pounders," to help you shed the pounds with other PHS officers encouraging you and offering accountability along the way. There have been lots of success stories from other officers committed to getting fit and being ready for this readiness requirement.

EHOPAC Subcommittee Highlights (continued)

Marketing & Recruitment

Recruit and Environmental Health Officer (RAE) update

The Marketing and Recruitment (M&R) Subcommittee is looking for a new Officer, or an Officer who is already part of the Adopt-a-School workgroup, to become a representative for Fort Valley State University in Fort Valley, GA; Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA; and Mississippi Valley State in Itta Bena, MS.

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.

Applicant Assistance and Placement (AAP) update

Are you interested in being the first to know when newly boarded EHOs are available for hire?

The Applicant Assistance and Placement (AAP) workgroup is here to help. Our goal is to assist you in searching for a qualified candidate by placing newly boarded EHOs in their first position. You'll receive monthly updates on newly boarded EHOs available for hire along with information on their specific qualifications and experience. If you are interested in receiving these updates or know a hiring official in your Agency who would could benefit from this information, please contact AAP's Co-Lead LCDR Sarah Meehan (sarah.meehan@fda.hhs.gov).

General Duty Updates – AAP is currently tracking and assisting 31 EHO boarded applicants, 24 of whom were boarded in January, February and March 2018. 26 of these boarded applicants are currently seeking their first assignment. If you are a hiring official and would like more information about these newly boarded applicants, please contact AAP's Co-Lead LT Bradley Benasutti at Bradley.benasutti@fda.hhs.gov.

APPLICANT UPDATES AS OF APRIL 2018	31 EHO Applicants Successfully Boarded	5 Have Secured Federal Positions	26 Are in Need of Securing a Billet
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Special thanks to LCDR Aaron Niman for representing the EHOPAC at the 10th Annual USPHS Commissioned Corps Awareness Day on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at the FDA White Oak Campus in Silver Spring, MD.

Communications

Social Media Team- Our Social Media team is working hard to increase our presence on both our open and closed Facebook pages. Be sure to check out both pages for EHO-related news!

Publications Team- Once again, our Publications team has worked extremely hard on this edition of the Newsletter. Thank you to them for their dedication!

EHOPAC Subcommittee Highlights (continued)

Mentoring & Orientation

The M&O Subcommittee worked diligently this past quarter. We created a novel Officer Basic Course (OBC) Graduation Working Group, led by LCDR Monique Lester and LTJG Rachel Forche. They oversee eight EHO junior officer volunteers who have stepped up and agreed to welcome brand new EHOs who graduate from OBC each month. These officers share with graduates a personalized welcome letter from our Chief Professional Officer RADM Taylor. They also receive an EHO challenge coin and short document on the history of the Challenge Coin and our category. In addition, we are standing up an OBC Open House Working Group, led by CAPT Timothy Jiggins.

This group of senior officer volunteers will staff a booth during an “Open House” event at OBC to answer questions new officers from other categories may have regarding the EHO category, as well as pass out mentoring information to new EHOs. As you can see, we continue to improve and lead the way regarding the welcoming and greeting of officer graduates.

Pictured right, a photo from OBC #101 graduation, taken on 28 FEB2018 with RADM Palmer A. Orlandi, Jr (the presiding flag officer during graduation) with EHOs CDR Mike Reed, LCDR Monique Lester (OBC Graduation Working Group leader) and EHO graduates LT Patricia Wrona and LT Russ Cameron.



Besides the OBC Working Groups, the M&O Subcommittee continues to match interested EHOs in the mentoring program. Currently, since overhauling the mentoring program in 2017 we have close to 60 EHO pairings thanks to LT Kerton Victory’s assistance with our Mentoring database. Please e-mail LT Victory, ybk7@cdc.gov if you are interested in being a Mentor or Mentee.

In April, M&O provided an evaluation survey to mentoring pairs participating in our Mentoring Program. We are hoping to receive feedback from the survey to help improve our program and to provide better services to EHOs. Survey responses are due by 15 May. Many thanks to CDR Emily Lee and LCDR Candis Hunter for their development of this survey.

Finally, the M&O Subcommittee participated with DCCPR on a joint-category project to create a combined-category Welcome Packet. We are finalizing the project and hope you will approve of the completed project.

Policies & Standards

During the EHO open application window during the month of February, DCCPR forwarded Policies and Standards subcommittee 61 potential applicant files for review. After two rounds of review by EHO officers, 41 applicants were found to meet our application criteria. The majority of the candidates not making the cut was due to the lack of possessing a qualified degree by the end of the open application window. Those candidates meeting the application criteria have been forwarded further application materials by DCCPR to continue with the application process.

American Academy of Sanitarians

Again this year the American Academy of Sanitarians will host a reception at the NEHA Annual Education Conference for the AAS/USPHS (EHOPAC) Awards Reception at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel (Platinum 7 Room), on Monday, June 25th 7:30-8:30 PM.

There will be “very light” refreshments available. Following the “Exhibit Hall Grand Opening Event” there will be quite a bit of food available!

2018 EHOPAC Award Winners

Congratulations Award Winners!

On behalf of the EHOPAC Awards and Recognition Subcommittee, please join us in congratulating our 2018 EHOPAC Award winners! As usual, there were many deserving nominations which made it quite difficult for the EHOPAC to choose just one winner for each of these prestigious awards. Congratulations to everyone nominated! A big thank you goes to all the nominators that took the time to write thoughtful narratives showing the great work that EHOs are doing.

EHO Responder of the Year, LCDR Brian Czarnecki

The EHO Responder of the Year Award recognizes excellence by individuals in achieving the USPHS mission of improving the Nation's health through the practice of environmental health during emergency preparedness, disaster response, and contributions to national or international public health threats.

In September 2017, LCDR Czarnecki served as the Chief Safety Officer on the Incident Response Coordination Team (IRCT3) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This deployment was in response to Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria in the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands territories in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He contributed to the HHS Emergency Support Function #8 mission accomplishments of ensuring safety, welfare, and accountability of assigned personnel; executing missions identified by the Federal Health Coordinating Official, and maintaining positive control of teams/equipment assigned to the Incident Response Coordination Team. For example, he managed risk and controlled plausible threats by conducting safety orientations to greater than 600 first responders upon arrival to Puerto Rico. LCDR Czarnecki's work exemplifies the highest traditions of the Environmental Health category and demonstrates the PHS mission to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our Nation.



LCDR Brian Czarnecki (Photographed above)

(Continues on next page)

2018 EHOPAC Award Winners! (Continued)

Edward (Ted) Moran Award, CDR Bryan Christensen

The Edward (Ted) Moran Award recognizes an outstanding mid-level environmental health professional who consistently achieves high standards in the practice of environmental health, occupational health and safety, industrial hygiene, or radiological health.

CDR Christensen's nomination detailed his leadership in several CDC programs. CDR Christensen was specifically selected by CDC's Emergency Operations Center for the CDC 2014 Ebola Response because of his pertinent education and expertise in occupational health and personal protective equipment (PPE). CDR Christensen provided PPE training to the Nigerian Army Medical Corps and approximately 200 Nigerian health care workers. In addition, he was asked to join the CDC Ebola Response's Domestic Healthcare Infection Control team and provide subject matter expertise on PPE for domestic infection control issues. He also served as lead for CDC's Zika Healthcare Infection Control team for the Zika Response June to August 2016. In his current position, CDR Christensen provides technical assistance for healthcare worker safety and environmental infection control, as well as subject matter expertise on personal protective equipment (PPE) for domestic and international infection control issues.



CDR Bryan Christensen (Pictured above)

John C. Eason Award, LT Steven Merritt

The John C. Eason Award was established to recognize the accomplishments of talented newcomers to the field of environmental health and moreover, to recognize the promise these individuals hold for the future of the Public Health Service.

LT Merritt's nomination detailed the initiation of a request to allocate competitive funding toward testing the efficacy of household water treatment systems for the removal of per- and poly- fluoro alkyl substances (PFASs). The research provided residents with information on the level of effort and costs to install, operate, and maintain these point of entry systems, as well as the expenses of periodically disposing of spent granulated active carbon media and reverse osmosis membranes. Beyond initiating PFASs water treatment research, LT Merritt has also used his subject-matter expertise in radiation safety and industrial hygiene to provide leadership in EPA Region 8 with the decommissioning of the Regional Laboratory. In addition, he also voluntarily deployed twice for EPA as a Safety Officer in support of recovery operations for Hurricane Harvey in Houston, TX and Hurricanes Maria/Irma in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



LT Steven Merritt (Pictured above)

2018 EHOPAC Award Winners! (Continued)

Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award, CAPT Kenny Hicks

The Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award recognizes significant contributions by an individual who has enhanced professional growth and career development of environmental health professionals working in the U.S. Public Health Service by serving in a mentoring capacity.

CAPT Hicks has profoundly impacted the recruitment and retention of environmental health professionals into the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). His reach spans the entire spectrum of our work force including the Commissioned Officer Student Extern Program (COSTEP), entry level field staff, mid-level managers and executive level professionals. Through the years of working with the COSTEP program, CAPT Hicks served as the senior officer advising these students and guiding them through the multitude of challenges of the COSTEP process. His dedication and commitment to strengthening and expanding the Environmental Health Officer category as well as other public health disciplines is truly exceptional.



CAPT Kenny Hicks (Pictured above)

John G. Todd Award, CAPT David Cramer

The John G. Todd Award is the highest honor given by the EHOPAC. The award recognizes an exemplary senior-level environmental health professional for significant career contributions in achieving the PHS mission of improving the Nation's health through the practice of environmental health. CAPT Cramer's first decade of service began in three consecutive IHS ISOHAR assignments of Bethel, AK, Pine Ridge, ND, and Ft. Duchesne, UT. These assignments influenced CAPT Cramer to dedicate his career to improving the public health status for the nation's underserved American Indian and Alaska Native population. In his current position as the Phoenix Area IHS Institutional Environmental Health Program Manager, he is responsible for serving as the occupational health and industrial hygiene subject matter expert for a 4-state region (AZ, NV, UT, CA) serving 46 tribes, 27 healthcare facilities, and 2,500 federal employees. He is also the principle subject matter expert to the region's team of 25+ EHOs assessing complex tribal community-based institutions such as industrial sites, correctional facilities, assisted living centers, dialysis centers, and large-scale casino resorts. He has been recognized for his exemplary 25-year USPHS Commissioned Corps career of program management, achievement, and significant contributions to the environmental health profession.



CAPT David Cramer (Pictured above)

2018 NEHA AEC EHO Meet and Greet



The Environmental Health Professionals of
the U.S. Public Health Service



**26 JUNE 2018
NEHA AEC
EHO MEET & GREET**

Come join us!

Please join us for a meet & greet on June 26th, 6:30 PM at JT Schmid's Restaurant & Brewery. This informal event will be open to all PHS officers, as well as friends and family attending the conference.

Local area EHOs are encouraged to attend!

This is a great opportunity to network and socialize with other EHOs and PHS officers from around the country.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Please keep an eye on the EHOPAC listserv for additional information and to RSVP!

**2018 NEHA Annual
Education Conference**

Meet & Greet

June 26, 2018

6:30 PM

**JT Schmid's Restaurant &
Brewery**

**2610 E Katella Ave
Anaheim, CA**

**Open to all PHS officers
and their friends & family**

Event POCs:

LT Kate Pink

Kathryn.Pink@ihs.gov

&

LTJG Joshua Greenberg

Joshua.t.greenberg@uscg.mil

Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee

“Share Your Story” on Facebook

Submitted by: LT Tyler White

The Social Media Team is looking to “Share Your Story” on Facebook! This effort is to showcase the diversity of EHO careers and the exciting and important work we do. The goals are to increase recognition of EHO career paths, promote collaboration/connection among current EHOs and our stakeholders, and increase EHO recruitment efforts. We want to hear from you!

A template is provided below. You can join and post directly to the “USPHS Environmental Health Officers” Closed Facebook Group – the post will be reviewed and approved by our Team. You can also share your story to external audiences on the Open Facebook Page “U.S. Public Health Service – Environmental Health Officers,” following guidance in the checklist below. All submissions are subject to personally identifiable information requirements.

We are happy to work with you on the formatting and content if you have any questions or concerns. The “Share Your Story” effort will take place from May through October 2018.

Post Template

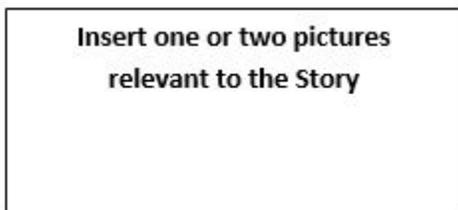
“Share My Story” by LCDR Jane Doe

Agency: Indian Health Service

Duty Station: Phoenix, AZ

Position: Institutional Environmental Health Officer

Insert text of your story. The text should be limited to 1-2 paragraphs or 8 lines. The story must discuss some aspect of your career as an EHO. It can be a summary of a duty station, career, program, response effort or specific work experience. This is your chance to share a great experience, lesson learned or opportunity you have gained from your career as an EHO.



Self-check before posting submission:

- ✓ *I am aware that submission of the story implies consent for posting, solely for the purpose of publishing via the specific Facebook platform.*
- ✓ *Any agency vetting/approval processes, if required, have already been completed.*
- ✓ *I have included a caption for the photo(s).*
- ✓ *All officers in photos are wearing uniforms correctly, if applicable.*
- ✓ *If my story is relevant for an external audience, I have submitted it via email (using this template) to LT Tyler White, Social Media Team Lead, tyler.j.white@uscg.mil*

Awards Corner

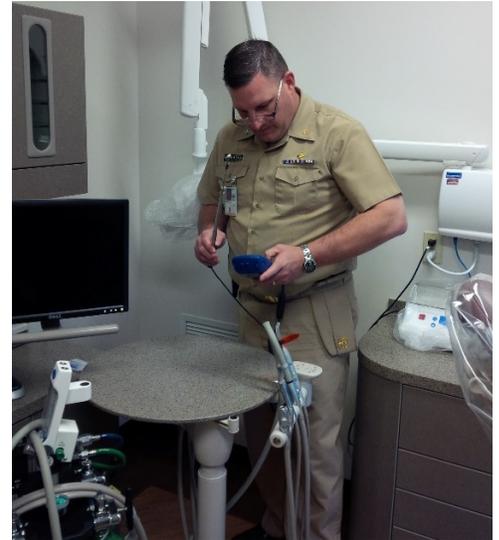
Many of our Environmental Health Officers receive recognition from professional organizations, agencies, and other entities for their outstanding work in the field of environmental health. The following officers received awards in the previous year and represented our category with pride and distinction.

CAPT Chris Kates

**IHS, Institutional Environmental Health Officer,
Oklahoma City Area Office**

The IHS Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award recognizes significant contributions by an individual or group resulting in improved healthcare safety and/or infection control conditions at an IHS or tribal healthcare program. CAPT Kates provides safety, industrial hygiene, infection control, and emergency management services to 8 federal service units and 39 tribes in 3 states. CAPT Kates received the 2017 Gefroh Award for his leadership in improving the safety and efficiency of healthcare facility operations, as well as in fostering collaboration between federal, state, and tribal agencies.

CAPT Chris Kates, pictured right.



Group Award - Vessel Sanitation Program

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Environmental Health

The CDC Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP) was recently awarded the Excellence in Partnering (International) Award during the 2017 NCEH/ATSDR Honor Awards — for excellence in international partnering with Public Health Agency of Canada's Travelling Public Program (TPP). VSP's partnership with TPP enhances both public health programs and contributes to global public health on cruise ships. EHOs involved in this award: CAPT (ret.) Jaret Ames, CAPT (ret.) Charles Otto, CDR Aimee Treffiletti, CDR Luis Rodriguez, CDR Jay Wamsley, CDR Jessica Pharo, LCDR Beth Wittry, LCDR Scott Daly, LCDR James Miller, LT Laura Annetta, LT Mistin Ray, and LT Erin Kincaid.

CDR Bryan Christensen

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic
Infectious Diseases**

2017 Alumnus of Distinction Award from Saint Vincent College (Latrobe, PA). The Award is made by the Saint Vincent Alumni Association in recognition of meritorious service and commitment to Saint Vincent.

CDR Bryan Christensen, pictured right, receiving his award.



Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee

LT Steven Merritt

EPA Region 8, Industrial Hygienist/Radiation Coordinator, Denver, CO

EPA Gold Medal for Exceptional Service (EPA's highest award)

Between October 2015 and June 2017, LT Steven Merritt led sample collection teams and helped generate data needed to analyze the long-term impacts of the Gold King Mine release on the Animas and San Juan Rivers in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. On March 13, 2018, he was awarded the EPA Gold Medal for Exceptional Service for his participation in the team that provided interdisciplinary analysis of the fate and transport of acid mine drainage following the 2015 release from the Gold King Mine in Colorado.



Pictured above with LT Merritt are Doug Benevento (L), the EPA Region 8 Regional Administrator, and Deb Thomas (R), the EPA Region 8 Deputy Regional Administrator.

LT Adrienne Eastlake

National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health, Industrial Hygienist, Cincinnati, Ohio

2017 NCEH/ATSDR Honor Award for Excellence in Emergency Response – Domestic. This is a group award that recognizes the individuals that showed incredible resilience and endurance during emergency response efforts before, during, and after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in 2017.

LT Kate Pink

Indian Health Service, Environmental Health Officer, Ft. Yuma (Phoenix Area)

2017 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year award for the Phoenix Area of IHS

The Environmental Health Specialist of the Year award is given out to nominees from each area of the Indian Health Service. From these nominees, one is chosen to represent the nation. This award is given to those who show innovation and excellence in promoting the health and well-being of the American Indian and Alaskan Native community. LT Pink received the award due to accomplishments in recreational water safety, prevention and control of vector-borne and zoonotic disease, and food safety training.



Pictured above, LT Pink receiving her award.

Frequently Asked Questions

Periodically, EHOs will submit questions or feedback to the EHOPAC Executive Committee leadership via the EHOPAC Anonymous Feedback System (<https://goo.gl/lgy9TD>). Questions are addressed during quarterly EHOPAC meetings by EHOPAC leadership. In addition to sharing responses to questions via teleconference, they are shared in quarterly meeting minutes and the Newsletter.

Question 1: Physical Standards

QUESTION: During the SG's All Hands I heard a lot about physical standards, but nothing about Program Support in terms of at least time for Physical Training. Prior service officers know that the military typically provides 2 hours per day during duty hours for PT. Since weight standards are now so important, when will Commissioned Corps officers be provided time for PT?

ANSWER: Meeting height and weight standards are a condition of service and are the responsibility of the Officer. Officers have the option of discussing any needs with their supervisor as necessary, but are ultimately responsible for meeting height and weight standards.

Question 2: EHO Category Officer Numbers

QUESTION: What are the EHO call to duty and retirement numbers over the last 24 months and how are we trending? Are we keeping up our numbers or are we shrinking to the point where we will no longer be a category or worse – rolled into the HSO category.

ANSWER: We are not aware of any discussions regarding merging or removing categories. We have maintained an average strength of 350-360 EHOs since the 1990s. Some of the variances in EHO numbers can be attributed to agency budgetary increases and decreases over time. We continue to receive more applicants than we can find positions. In 2016 and 2017 we were able to board 50 applicants of which 18 were commissioned after locating jobs. We believe that more officers could have been commissioned during this time frame if the agencies had elected to hire additional officers. In short we are not aware of any discussions regarding eliminating the EHO category or merging the EHO category with Health Services. We continue to receive and board more applicants than can be hired by the agencies. We are planning to post the current EHO numbers in the “Hail and Farewell” section of our newsletter for awareness.

Question 3: Retirements due to height/weight standards

QUESTION: Has anyone looked at the projected retirement numbers due to the enforcement of the height/weight standards? We had a pile retire when we ‘up armored’ the PHS CC in 2000 so it stands to reason that some will choose to retire vs. doing the weight loss and PT.

ANSWER: We are unaware of anyone researching this topic. It would be impossible for us to research this at the PAC level due to the limited information available.

Question 4: Corps Strength & the Future of the Commissioned Corps

QUESTION: The lack of new Officers over the past 3 years and the calls to get rid of or phase out the CC seems to be a recurring trend that cuts across Administrations. What or better yet who drives this issue?

ANSWER: The SG has been a strong advocate of the Corps, marketing our utility to the public. Current and past leadership has also marketed the utility and accomplishments of the Corps, most notably the Ebola and hurricane responses. As a Corps we should take every opportunity to market our capabilities and service to the public to increase awareness.

Administrative Announcements

EHOPAC QUARTERLY MEETINGS!

Join our Quarterly Meetings! Listen for EHOPAC and Commissioned Corps updates. Hear leadership discuss pertinent EHOPAC issues. All are encouraged to submit questions to be addressed by EHOPAC leadership as well as any other information they wish to share with fellow EHOs. Have a question for EHOPAC Leadership? Submit it anonymously by using this link: <https://goo.gl/Igy9TD>

Upcoming 2018 EHOPAC Meetings:

September 11th, December 11th

Webinar: <https://ihs.adobeconnect.com/ehopac/>

Conference Line: 1-800-832-0736; Conference Room #: 6084616

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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DISCLAIMER

Any opinions or thoughts presented in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not represent the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or any other government agency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the EHOs who contributed articles to this Newsletter!

Have an idea for our next EHO Newsletter?

Want to be a featured “EHO in Action” in the next Newsletter?

Submit your ideas to LCDR Jonathan Blonk at jonathan_blonk@nps.gov