



Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee



The EHO Assessment

October 2022 News and Updates

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

CPO Updates

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

Disclaimer: This newsletter/article is for informational purposes only and does not reflect official views of U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or USPHS Commissioned Corps leadership.

Be The Hero

With Veteran's Day approaching, I'd like to take a moment in this month's EHO Assessment to thank our officers for the sacrifices you make each day to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the Nation. All too often we do not honor ourselves for the sacrifice, commitment, and hardships we endure in the name of prevention. That's an easy trap to fall into when our work results in 'nothing happened'. Our prize is the injury that was avoided, the outbreak that was prevented, the illness that did not occur.

Being an officer requires sacrifices; it's harder than simply being a federal employee and more than just a job. Those sacrifices would weigh heavily upon us if our duties lacked sufficient meaning to justify them. The key to ensuring your sacrifices aren't in vain is to define your personal vision for yourself and your service and then pour your heart into those areas where your mission and the Corps mission align. You can't do that until you get honest about why you are here, what you want, and what you are willing to give. As we prepare our COERs this is an opportune time to reflect upon our accomplishments, examine our weaknesses, plan where we will grow next year. We also should take this time to recognize the honor and privilege we have to complete our important work as commissioned officers. We wear the cloth of the Nation to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the Nation.

Commissioning of officers has a long history as a lawful extension of sovereign power. Article II, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution requires the President to commission all Officers of the United States: ". . . he shall take care that the Laws be faithfully executed and shall commission all the officers of the United States." Justice John Marshall wrote in the famous

Marbury v. Madison decision of 1803 that “granting a commission is the distinct act, done in the name of the President, which empowers an officer.” Commissioning is done to ensure the President is fully accountable for what the service does in defense of the Nation, and it is the reason we officers serve at the pleasure of the President. Serving as a commissioned officer is fundamentally different from being employed by the federal government. It is an honor and a privilege.

As a boy I always wanted to grow up to be a scientist and a soldier. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” always resonated with me, and I admired those who protected the vulnerable among us. I’ve been living my dream serving as an EHO these last twenty-four years. It’s no secret that I see our uniformed service as patriotic and heroic. If you’re an industrial hygienist protecting workers while they earn the means to provide for their family, you’re a hero. The EHOs working to prevent unintentional falls among our elders are heroes. If you sample drinking water systems, inspect wastewater treatment plants, or remove potentially contaminated food from the market, you are preventing illness and that is heroic. Deploying as a safety officer and protecting the health and safety of those who protect the health and safety of the Nation is a noble and heroic mission.

So, as we draft our COER narratives and reflect on the year’s accomplishments, don’t lose sight of the big picture. Your commission is your sliver of the President’s authority, granted so you may act on his behalf to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the Nation. It’s a responsibility that few bear, but in bearing it you have the opportunity to be a hero.

Bray, W. (October 2017). Know What An Officer Commission Means. *Proceedings*, 143/10),
<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/october/know-what-officer-commission-means>

CAPT Timothy Jiggins, MSPH, REHS/RS, CIH
EHO Chief Professional Officer

Welcome New Voting Members

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC), please welcome our five newest EHOPAC Voting Members CDR Katie Bante, LCDR Laura Annetta, LCDR Sandra Carpio, LCDR Mark Otto, and LCDR Beth Wittry!



Figure 1. CDR Katie Bante



Figure 2. LCDR Laura Annetta

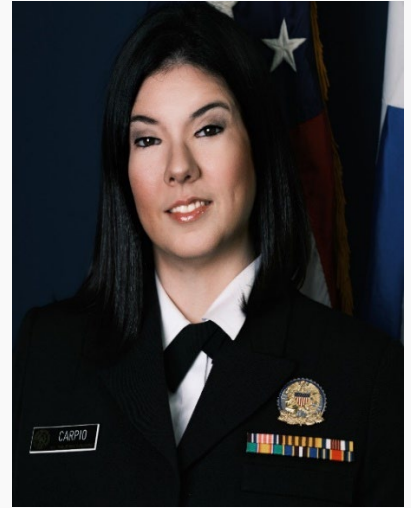


Figure 3. LCDR Sandra Carpio



Figure 4. LCDR Mark Otto



Figure 5. LCDR Beth Wittry

Important EHOPAC Subcommittee Updates

Communications:

The *EHOs in Action* Photobook final day for submissions is **October, 31 2022**. Do not miss your chance to be included and share amazing action shots of your contributions with Public Health Service leadership and fellow officers!

Send photos of distinctive/significant work conducted in 2022. Photos can be from your duty station, deployments (PHS or agency), JrCOSTEP assignments, fitness events, volunteer work, or recruitment events. We also need photos with interesting scenery/events that may not include an officer, but represent work environments, an environmental health issue, or an accomplishment. Be creative, be proud, and have fun!

Submit:

- High resolution photos to CDR Christopher Smith at nxz0@cdc.gov and LT Shelby Haddeland at shelby.foerg@ihs.gov with “2022 EHOs In Action Photobook Submission” in the subject line.
- A succinct description (1-2 sentences) that can be used as a caption and identifies the officer(s) in the photo.
- A complete photo release form for images with non-PHS personnel (email contacts for release form)

Thank you to all those that have submitted photos – we cannot wait to share the 2022 Photobook!

Training and Events:**COF Symposium Call for Abstracts**

We are now soliciting speakers for the 2023 EHO Category Day during the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, which is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2023 (0800-1730) in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Are you stationed at a unique duty station and want to share your experience with other EHOs? Alternatively, do you have an idea for an interactive presentation that will teach your fellow EHOs an important EHO skill? Apply to be a Category Day Speaker! **We are looking for EHOs to provide 1) 30-minute interactive presentations on topics of interest to fellow EHOs and 2) 5 to 10-minute presentations on their interesting duty stations.**

If you are interested in participating as a speaker, check your email for more details or email LCDR Jona Johnson (jjg0@cdc.gov), LT Kelly Genskow (kelly.genskow@hhs.gov), and LCDR Erin Kincaid (erin_kincaid@nps.gov).

New EHOPAC Training Listserv

Looking for amazing training opportunities specific for Environmental Health Officers delivered straight to your inbox? If so - then sign up for the EHOPAC Training Listserv! Public Health Service officers' who sign up for the Listserv will receive emails highlighting current training courses, degree programs, certificate programs, and opportunities to encourage Officers seeking professional development. Email updates on new and exciting opportunities will be sent out on a regular basis.

Signing up for the EHOPAC Training Listserv is easy! To subscribe or unsubscribe, please visit: <https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=ehopac-training&A=1>

After clicking on the link – you will be directed to the following page:

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Ensure your name and your email address are entered accurately. Additionally, please ensure the dropdown box for “EHOPAC-Training EHOPAC Training List” is selected. Once all the information is correctly entered, click on “Subscribe (EHOPAC-TRAINING).” You will receive a confirmation email from “LISTSERV.” Check your email for this confirmation email. You will need to click on the link in the email to confirm your subscription to the Listserv.

For any questions or concerns related to the EHOPAC Training Listserv, please contact the Training Workgroup Lead, LCDR Ronan King at Ronan.King@nps.gov.

Mentoring and Orientation:

The Mentoring and Orientation Subcommittee would like to welcome June 2022 Officer Basic Course (OBC) 137 Graduate LTJG Delia Gilbert. LTJG Gilbert is stationed with the National Park Service in Staten Island, NY. June 2022 marked the first in-person OBC since the pandemic began.



Figure 1. OBC 137 – June 2022 Graduation Photo of CDR James Speckhart with LTJG Delia Gilbert.

Mentoring Moments and Tips

Mentors, Don't Just Answer – Ask!

EHOs – this Mentoring Moment is for the Mentor.

Rather than being a Mentor who only answers questions and echoes back stories of you in situations similar to what your mentee is experiencing, be a Mentor with a more reflective mindset.

When you transition from simply **answering** your mentee's questions to **asking** your mentee productive questions, you are enabling your mentee to reflect on how to best handle their current situation and navigate future challenges.

Mentors, please take 10 minutes to watch this [video](#) and think about how to apply these principles.

Officer Leader Profile

CAPT Luis O. Rodriguez, MS, REHS/RS, CP-FS, CPO, DAAS CDC, National Center for Environmental Health

Leadership Perspective

I am one of the few Hispanics in the EHO category. My EHO career has taken me from LTJG to CAPT with billets O3 to supervisory O6 and varied assignments in 3 states and 1 U.S. territory as well as 40 international TDYs in 22 countries with multiple agencies. I started my career in FDA before transferring to CDC. I feel fortunate to serve in the Water, Food, and Environmental Health Services Branch of CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, the nation's premier government organization of environmental health (EH) subject matter experts (SMEs).

I am currently assigned to the branch's EH Practice Section, where I lead the EH Data Modernization Workgroup and provide expertise in the collection and use of high-quality EH services data. These data are essential for identifying and addressing environmental hazards, driving decision making, and informing evidence-based practices. I am also an SME for teams working on best practices, emergency response, safe food, and safe water. I previously served in the Vessel Sanitation Section of the branch, where I managed the Florida office and supervised a team of talented inspectors to prevent introduction of acute gastroenteritis into the United States from cruise ships sailing from foreign to U.S. ports.

Being a leader has been a learning experience. I learned to know my team members, their personalities, and what is important to them. I learned to be kind and considerate while striving to do great work. I learned to shape my leadership style depending on the situation or task. I learned that many times an employee leaves a manager, not a job. I learned that when you are the leader it is not about you; instead, it is about your direct reports and the team. I learned to be teacher, advocate, cheerleader, mentor, and of course I learned from my mistakes.



Figure 6. CAPT Rodriguez

“Talk the talk, walk the walk. Lead by example.”

Career Highlights/Accomplishments

- Receiving the 2022 National Sanitation Foundation & National Environmental Health Association Walter F. Snyder Environmental Health Award
- Serving as COA Field Representative and COA President of two branches, one winning branch of the year
- Serving as Voting Member in HOAC and EHOPAC
- Mentoring JOs
- Deploying for Hurricanes Katrina, Irma, and Maria
- Deploying for the COVID-19 response

Education/Training

- Walden University, PhD (ABD) Public Health
- University of Puerto Rico, Master of Science Environmental Health

- University of Puerto Rico, Bachelor of Arts Secondary Level Science Education

Professional Associations

- Commissioned Officers Association
- National Environmental Health Association
- American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS)

Awards Corner

CDR William Bird, Deputy Director Program Support Center/Federal Occupational Health Dallas, TX

Dallas-Fort Worth Federal Executive Board's Public Service Award - Outstanding Customer Service

The EHOPAC Executive Committee would like to congratulate EHO CDR William Bird for being awarded the Public Service Award – Outstanding Customer Service by the Dallas-Fort Worth Federal Executive Board. The award honors an employee's outstanding customer service from the 220 Federal Departments and Independent Agencies and Senior agency officials representing the Federal District, Area, and Field Offices throughout North Central Texas. CDR Bird received this distinguished award on July 2, 2022, in recognition of his steadfast and unparalleled dedication to serving his customer agencies to the best of his ability. During his 23-year tenure at Federal Occupational Health (FOH), CDR Bird has proven himself to be an indispensable asset and one of FOH's most respected program managers. CDR Bird has worked tirelessly to improve the health and safety of the federal workforce spanning >40 agencies nationwide. Annually, he manages ~\$4M worth of services for customers and directs and performs complex industrial hygiene assessments, air quality surveys, safety program development, and more. Projects include both short and long-term engagements, ranging from months to years. During his time at FOH, he has developed subject matter expertise, assisting customer agencies with complying with regulations, laws, and industry standards by identifying, analyzing, and mitigating workplace hazards. His exceptional ability to serve and collaborate with both internal and external customers underwrote his 2021 promotion to Environmental Health and Safety Services Deputy Director. CDR Bird has built an excellent reputation for FOH and is committed to providing outstanding customer service.



Figure 7. CDR Bird

Organization of the Month

The Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology



The Certification Board of Infection Control & Epidemiology, Inc. (CBIC®) is a voluntary, autonomous, multidisciplinary board that provides direction for and administers the certification process for professionals in infection control and applied epidemiology. CBIC is independent and separate from any other infection control-related organization or association, but does collaborate with three partner organizations (Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC), and The International Federation of Infection Control (IFIC)) to help promote the importance of being certified in infection prevention and control (CIC®). Visit <https://www.cbic.org/> to learn more about certification opportunities.

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, matthew_kozler@nps.gov, LT Stephanie Bridges, stephanie_bridges@nps.gov, and LT Stephen McLane, stephen.mclane@fda.hhs.gov!

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Thank you for all you do,

EHOPAC Communications Subcommittee – Publications Team

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