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**Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC)**

***EPAC General Meeting Minutes***

*April 9th, 2020*

1. **Welcome/Call to Order (EPAC Chair, CDR Samantha Spindel)**

* Meeting called to order at 1500 EST

1. **Roll Call (Executive Secretary, LCDR Michael Simpson)**

* Officers or Alternate emailed LCDR Simpson to confirm attendance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subcommittee** | **Name** | **Alternate** | **Attendance**  **(Yes, No, Excused, Alternate)** |
| **EPAC Chair** | CDR Samantha Spindel | LCDR Michael Simpson | Yes |
| **Executive Secretary** | LCDR Michael Simpson | LT Timothy Martin | Yes |
| **Chief Engineer** | RADM Edward Dieser | N/A | Excused |
|  | | | |
| Awards | CDR John Kathol | CDR Michael Termont | Yes |
| CDR Matthew Mergenthaler | LCDR Travis Sorum | Yes |
| Career Development | LCDR Omobogie Amadasu | LCDR Joshua Sims | Yes |
| CDR Eric Hanssen | CDR Leo Gumapas | Yes |
| Events | LCDR Derrick Buck | LT Timothy Martin | Yes |
| LCDR Michael Gifford | CDR Jeremy "Bret" Nickels | Excused |
| Information | CAPT Josh Simms | LT Drew Katherine | Yes |
| LCDR Garrett Chun | LT Adam Ramos | Yes |
| Public Health Engineering Practice | CDR Leo Gumapas | CDR Andrew Yang | Yes |
| CDR James Coburn | LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor | Alternate |
| Readiness | CDR Frank Chua | CDR Shane Deckert | Yes |
| CDR Sean Bush | CDR Mark Hench | Yes |
| Recruitment and Retention | LCDR Praveen KC | CDR William Fraser | Yes |
| LCDR Fred Kelly | LCDR Kenneth Chen | Yes |
| Rules | CDR Deb Cox | CDR Stacey Yonce | Yes |
| LCDR Matt Palo | LT Christian Parra | Yes |
| Strategic Planning for Engineering | CAPT David Harvey | LT Melissa De Vera | Yes |
| CDR Sam Russell | CDR David Gwisdalla | Yes |
| ***\* When a member is not available, the Alternate can serve as the voting proxy.***  ***\*\*See Appendix A for more information about each member, including hyperlinks to email addresses*** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **EPAC Liaisons** | | | |
| **CCWIAB** | CAPT Varsha Savalia | CDR Theresa Grant | Yes |
| **COA** | CDR Nikhil Thakur | LCDR Michael Simpson | Alternate |
| **JOAG** | LT Colin Tack | LT Jaison Eapen | Yes |
| **SAME** | CDR Steve Sauer |  | No |

1. **Chief Professional Officer (CPO) Remarks/Update** **(RADM Edward Dieser)**

* My “A, B, C” of Leadership
* Frustration vs. Relief
* Response Engagement
* Readiness: Personal & Professional

1. **EPAC Chair Remarks (EPAC Chair, CDR Samantha Spindel)**

* It’s been three weeks since our last EPAC meeting and Town Hall Meeting
* Please provide any feedback to me about the Town Hall Meeting
  + We want to be sure we are meeting your needs for future Town Hall Meetings
* EPAC Objectives
  + Engage Officers
    - All engineers in the USPHS understand the latest information pertaining to our category and have awareness about EPAC projects and initiatives
  + Develop Leaders
    - Utilize EPAC as a training ground to develop leadership skills
  + Partner with OSG-chartered groups
    - EPAC works with other groups (e.g., PAC Chairs Group, JOAG) to achieve common aims
* Meet biweekly with RADM Dieser, meet quarterly with the Deputy Surgeon General (next meeting on 13 Apr 2020)
  + Please continue to share concerns and comments and know your voice is being heard
  + RADM Dieser continues discussions onward with the CPO Board (examples include PHU, leave, etc.)
  + RADM Schwartz is a champion of our category and listens intently and acts accordingly

1. **Awards Subcommittee Discussion (CDR John Kathol, Chair)**
2. **Awards Review Board (February Cycle-Villforth, Lynch, Burgess, ELIT, SAME Awards)**

* SAME Awards – RADM Dieser made the selections and notified SAME.
* SAME JETC Event cancelled – Need to determine if and how SAME plans to recognize the Awardees.
* Chief Engineer Awards – Subcommittee has reviewed the nominations and the final scores are being summarized and reviewed. Plan to provide recommendation to EPAC Chair by 4/10.
* USPHS Symposium cancelled – Need to determine how this year’s awards will be presented to honor and recognize awardees

1. **Strategic Initiatives Team (Lead: LCDR Travis Sorum –** [**travis.sorum@ihs.gov**](mailto:travis.sorum@ihs.gov)**)**

* Update Award Nomination Packets, Examine EOY/NSPE Award Nomination Process, Update Rubrics as needed, Create Review Team Criteria. Work strategy under development.
* Kickoff meeting scheduled for 4/10

1. **Project/Initiative SOP Initiative (Lead: LCDR Abbas Bandukwala –** [**Abbas.Bandukwala@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Abbas.Bandukwala@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* 50% draft SOP complete, work ongoing.

1. **Career Development Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Omobogie Amadasu, Chair)**

* April meeting cancelled to focus on COVID19 issues, all Leads will email LCDR Amadasu updates by end of April to report out for next month

1. **PE Licensure Fact Sheet (Lead: CDR Eric Hanssen –** [**eric.hanssen@nih.gov**](mailto:eric.hanssen@nih.gov)**)**

* Will be distributed to Category in April “Engineer Announcements” and posted on webpage

1. **USPHS Symposium Speed Mentoring (Lead: CDR Kurt Kesteloot –** [**kurt\_kesteloot@nps.gov**](mailto:kurt_kesteloot@nps.gov)**)**

* Event cancelled, CDS considering developing an alternative virtual route

1. **EPAC Promotion Q&A (Lead: LCDR David Dar –** [**David.Dar@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:David.Dar@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Proposal is under consideration by CPO and EPAC Chair to solicit questions from the Category and have them answered by O-6’s in the August All-Hands call

1. **CDS Webpage (Lead: LT Adam Cooke –** [**Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* New layout is live. Still a work in progress but “back” button fixed!
* Potentially add a new link called CPO Corner to have all CPO Career related items in one location

1. **Online Engineering Masters Programs Survey (Lead: LCDR Tyrrell Lang –** [**Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov**](mailto:Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov)**)**

* Feedback period over. Goal to have survey roll out in May

1. **Events Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Derrick Buck, Chair)**
2. **SAME – JETC (Lead: LCDR Jessica Sharpe –** [**jessica\_sharpe@nps.gov**](mailto:jessica_sharpe@nps.gov) **and CDR Steven Sauer -** [**Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov**](mailto:Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov)**)**

* Awards were approved and sent to SAME.
* Event has been postponed, date TBD

1. **COF Symposium “Category Day” (Lead: LCDR Fred Kelly –** [**fred.kelly@nih.gov**](mailto:fred.kelly@nih.gov)**)**

* Event postponed a year with the same location - Renaissance Hotel Glendale, AZ, June 21-24, 2021
* Co-Lead: LCDR Matthew Palo, Chair-on-Deck: LCDR Michael Gifford.

1. **AMSUS Annual Meeting (Lead: LCDR Michael Simpson –** [**michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Gaylord Nation Resort and Convention Center, MD, Dec. 6-10, 2020
* Lecture abstracts extended and now due July 17th and Poster abstracts due August 3rd.
* Six topics can be found at <https://www.amsus.org/events/call-for-abstracts-2/> with Public Health being the most relatable for Engineers
  + **Public Health–**These presentations should be focused on collaborative, population-based, trans-national health promotion. These presentations may discuss health concerns that cross country borders and may include coordination of care, prevention of illnesses, and treatment to sustain health as well as training of medical forces or leading during a changing healthcare landscape.
* Co-Leads: LCDR Michael Tollon, LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor

1. **E-Week (Lead: TBD)**

* Rotation schedule/process will be implemented in SOP upon LCDR Gifford’s return from deployment

1. **Information Subcommittee Discussion (CAPT Joshua Simms, Chair)**
2. **Content Management (Lead: CDR Jim Kohler –** [**Kohler.James@epa.gov**](mailto:Kohler.James@epa.gov)**)**

* Have recently updated CDS webpage <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/career_development.aspx>
* Will be updating R&R webpage shortly
* Have also added other various documents such as Meeting Minutes, Member Directory, Organizational Structure, Subcommittee Vacancies, and EPAC Voting Member Application
* Submit update requests to [EPAC-POSTINGS@LIST.NIH.GOV](mailto:EPAC-POSTINGS@LIST.NIH.GOV)
* Anonymous Feedback section on main page website is being checked, have received some recently and forwarded information onto EPAC Chair to review and discuss with CPO

1. **Newsletter (Lead: CDR Jason Peterson –** [**Jason.Peterson@cms.hhs.gov**](mailto:Jason.Peterson@cms.hhs.gov)**)**

* Completing draft Spring 2020 EPAC Newsletter.  Hope to have it out for review within the next week or so and have finalized by end of April.

1. **Public Health Engineering Practice Subcommittee Discussion (CDR Leo Gumapas, Chair)**
2. **Overall Administration**

* Completed initial draft of SOPs and plan to relay to Rules Subcommittee by April 30, 2020
* Completed preliminary redesigning of PHEP website using graphics and symbols similar to how Career Development has developed – will send over to the Information Subcommittee shortly

1. **Lead and Drinking Water (Lead: CAPT Alexander Dailey -** [**Alexander.Dailey@ihs.gov**](mailto:Alexander.Dailey@ihs.gov)**)**

* One of the Surgeon General’s Initiatives
* Initial draft report expected by April 30, 2020

1. **Publication Review (Lead: Chair and Vice Chair)** 
   * If you need assistance with peer reviewed or non-peer reviewed article, then PHEP/Publication Review Work Group is happy to help
   * Email CDR Leo Gumapas – [leoangelo.Gumapas@nih.gov](mailto:leoangelo.Gumapas@nih.gov) and CDR James Coburn - [james.coburn@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:james.coburn@fda.hhs.gov) for article to be reviewed
   * Reviews are to be completed within 14 calendar days
2. **Readiness Subcommittee Discussion (CDR Frank Chua, Chair)**
3. **Deployment Readiness Support (Lead: CDR Quynh Nguyen –** [**QuynhT.Nguyen@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:QuynhT.Nguyen@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Working on survey questions for Readiness Survey
* Developing solutions to have engineering officers maintain basic readiness
* Sent to EPAC Leadership for review and will send out to EPAC voting members for additional feedback soon

1. **Readiness Training and Education (Lead: CDR Shane Deckert –** [**shane.deckert@ihs.gov**](mailto:shane.deckert@ihs.gov)**)**

* Met March 13th to discuss Health Facility Assessment trainings with a partial list started
* Working with Events Subcommittee to facilitate a pre-conference training at 2021 COF Symposium
* Developing initiative – Leadership Training for Deployments

1. **Information Management (Lead: CDR Tara Bizjak -** [**Tara.Gooen@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Tara.Gooen@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Working on protocol from OSG for clearance on public webpage to post history of engineers deployed to national disasters (was mentioned after discussion by CDR Russell during Strategic Planning Update)

1. **Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Praveen KC, Chair)**

* Meetings once every two months – last occurred on March 26th

1. **Updating SOP (Lead: CDR Chris Fehrman –** [**Christopher.Fehrman@ihs.gov**](mailto:Christopher.Fehrman@ihs.gov)**)**

* Target date for draft SOP end of April 2020, final inputs from team will be this week

1. **Updated R&R Workplan for 2020 (Lead: LT Melissa DeVera –** [**Melissa.DeVera@ihs.gov**](mailto:Melissa.DeVera@ihs.gov)**)**

* Will also be updating webpage to be simpler and more accessible to all items within 1-2 clicks

1. **Connectors Program (Lead: LCDR Praveen KC -** [**kc.praveen@epa.gov**](mailto:kc.praveen@epa.gov)**)**

* Currently in a standby mode with new applicants provided by CCHQ

1. **COSTEPs (Lead: LCDR Praveen KC -** [**kc.praveen@epa.gov**](mailto:kc.praveen@epa.gov)**)**
   * eCMCS message went out on 04/07/2020 in regard to COSTEP window opening from June 1 – September 30, 2020
2. **Rules Subcommittee Discussion (CDR Deb Cox, Chair)**
3. **Subcommittee SOPs (Lead: LCDR Matt Palo –** [**cle4@cdc.gov**](mailto:cle4@cdc.gov)**)**

* CDRs Griff Miller ([Miller.Griff@epa.gov](mailto:Miller.Griff@epa.gov)) and Stacey Yonce ([yonce.stacey@epa.gov](mailto:yonce.stacey@epa.gov)) are the co-leads
  + **Please submit your SOP schedule timeline to CDR Griff Miller by 04/17** with the target date you plan to submit your Subcommittee SOP for a formatting review by the Rules Subcommittee.
  + The purpose of this review step is to ensure SOPs are aligned with the EPAC template prior to moving forward and requesting a vote by the EPAC.
  + It is not to edit content.
  + This step is required prior to submitting SOPs for EPAC vote.
* LT Melissa DeVera will also be assisting with edits.

1. **Voting Member Selection (Lead: CDR Deb Cox –** [**Cox.Deborah@epa.gov**](mailto:Cox.Deborah@epa.gov)**)**

* 2020 EPAC Application to serve as a Voting Member January 2021 – December 2023 is available NOW!
* **Applications due 06/30/2020.**
* Seeking 7-9 Motivated Applicants.
* Great leadership and networking opportunity!
* Need CV Cover Page, Supervisor’s signature and answers to two questions, see document below for more info (also located on EPAC main page and Rules Subcommittee page)



1. **Strategic Planning for Engineering Subcommittee Discussion (CAPT David Harvey, Chair)**

* Will be discussing with RADM Dieser how to update Engineer Category Strategic Plan last revised July 2005
* New Initiative being led by CDR Sam Russell:
  + Well aware that these are challenging times for officers and suggest officers journal and document their work and accomplishments during this outbreak
  + A lot of the attention will go to the medical achievements; however, it would be a great if EPAC documented engineer contributions during this period of time for historical purposes for future engineers to look back on
    1. For example, what did engineers do in response for the 1918 Spanish Flu?

1. **General Discussion/Questions**

* No further questions discussed

1. **Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board Update (CAPT Varsha Savalia)**

* CCWIAB’s last meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 – nothing substantive to report this month

1. **Commissioned Officer’s Association Update (CDR Nikhil Thakur)**

* 55th USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Update
  + Postponed to 2021
  + Arrangements have been made to hold the 2021 Symposium at the same location, Renaissance Glendale/Phoenix, on June 21-24, 2021
  + COF’s goal is to issue all refunds by April 17.
* Update on search for new Executive Director of COA to replace Col (Ret) Jim Currie
  + Final interviews for the candidates are still in progress
  + A replacement hopefully in place by the end of April

1. **Junior Officers Advisory Group Update (LT Colin Tack)**

* Call for Nominations for JOAG Voting Members – Due April 23, 2020
  + Includes one engineer requested for OY20-21 beginning 10/1/2020, position currently held by LT Tack
  + Responsibilities for the engineer Voting Member (VM) include serving as JOAG VM, serving as co-chair for one of JOAG’s 9 committees, and serving as JOAG-EPAC liaison
  + There is also potential for Engineers to fill four At Large Voting Member openings
  + For more information, see documents linked below or reach out to LT Tack ([Colin.Tack@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Colin.Tack@fda.hhs.gov))



* JOAG has suspended all in-person events (e.g. Meet and Greets)
* The next JOAG General Meeting will be held on Friday, April 10th from 1300-1400 EDT

1. **Society of American Military Engineers Update (CDR Steve Sauer)**

* JETC has been postponed
  + Some JETC events will be held via alternate virtual means/ events
  + Board of Directors is exploring still holding the following virtually:
    - Table top exercise
    - Awards
    - Training session
* More to follow as it develops

1. **Closing Remarks and Adjourn (CDR Samantha Spindel)**

* Thank you to all the engineers that have, are, and will be deployed
* If you haven’t deployed yet, be ready! Stay safe and be well!
* “I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do.” – Leonardo da Vinci
* To help personalize the meeting and to aid in accountability regarding who is speaking at a given time, please link your phone to your name when calling in. Also, please consider uploading a picture to your WebEx profile (see document attached for instructions).



The below information was provided by RADM Dieser but not discussed during the meeting:

* “A, B, C” of Crisis Leadership
  + Attitude – stay positive and steadfast in your actions (social distancing, hand washing, masks); your attitude will lead and sustain all those around you
  + Ballast – I am alarmed by the opinions represented as fact by all media; GO TO reliable sources (CDC, ASPR, FEMA). As one example, comments by the Surgeon General during a White House briefing were selectively taken out of context by the media to seem offensive. The SG’s comments were reflecting on his personal experience with the sincere intention of reaching more Americans, and were not at all offensive in nature
  + Courage – maintain your focus on health – community, family, and self; continue to provide great service in your daily duties whether deployed, working remote, covering for others, or sustaining you normal mission
* Frustration vs. Relief. – a few thoughts
  + I appreciate the frustration some of you may be feeling grounded in a desire to support the ongoing response. I can report that we are nearing 100 engineer deployments in support of the response. We must also recognize the critical work of our IHS engineers that make deployments difficult to impossible for their local communities to sustain when they are responding as well. We also have engineers performing critical work at FDA, NPS, and EPA; and elsewhere. Based on this, I find we are well engaged. Note as well, this response is a marathon – and we are already fast at the start. I continue to support coordination between ASPR and USACE, and sustainment of clinical site operations – this may become a sustained area of need.
  + If you have periods of feeling relieved you are home with family and friends – those feelings are only natural. Caring for loved ones is a primal instinct; with its own challenges (I am home with teenagers 😊). Be your best for them. As I noted above, this is a marathon. Bottom line, do not feel guilty about such feelings, it is instinct. And remember, we must all remain ready to deploy and support the response.
* To assist with remaining ready to deploy, please review the attached CoVID19 Deployment Preparation developed by the Pharm PAC. It is well done (thank a pharmacist).



* Continue to remain positive, stay informed, and maintain your focus: Engineering for Life: Ready Willing Able!
* Share the attached cartoon with friends and family – I know they are proud and thankful for your service.

**Next EPAC Meeting**

**2nd Thursday of the Month**

May 7th, 2019

1500 – 1600 EST

**Webex**: [**Start the meeting**\*](https://fda1.webex.com/fda1/j.php?MTID=m1ce91e7c5ae9bedeb962c2fb23d8ecf0)

*\*Click on URL and have system call you.*

***OR Call In***

**Call-In Number**: 210-795-0506

**Meeting Access Code:** 904 995 269

**APPENDIX A**

**2020 EPAC VOTING MEMBER FULL ROSTER**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chief Engineer** | | | | | |
| **Term** | **Name** | **Rank** | **Agency** | **EPAC Role** | **Location** |
| 2018-2021 | [Dieser, Edward](mailto:eyn3@cdc.gov) | RADM | CDC | Ex-Officio | Atlanta, GA |
| **EPAC Voting Members** | | | | | |
| **Term** | **Name** | **Rank** | **Agency** | **EPAC Role** | **Location** |
| 2018-2020 | [Spindel, Samantha](mailto:Samantha.Spindel@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | EPAC Chair | Beltsville, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Buck, Derrick](mailto:derrick.buck@ihs.gov) | LCDR | IHS | Events, Chair | Tempe, AZ |
| 2018-2020 | [Simms, Joshua](mailto:joshua.simms@fda.hhs.gov) | CAPT | FDA | Information, Chair | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Harvey, David](mailto:david.harvey@ihs.gov) | CAPT | IHS | Strategic Planning for Engineering, Chair | Rockville, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Gumapas, Leo](mailto:leoangelo.gumapas@nih.gov) | CDR | NIH | Public Health Engineering Practice, Chair | Bethesda, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Palo, Matthew](mailto:matthew.palo@fda.hhs.gov) | LCDR | CDC | Rules, Vice Chair | Jamaica, NY |
| 2019-2021 | [Hanssen, Eric](mailto:eric.hanssen@nih.gov) | CDR | NIH | Career Development, Vice Chair | Hamilton, MT |
| 2019-2021 | [Amadasu, Omobogie](mailto:omobogie.amadasu@ihs.gov) | LCDR | IHS | Career Development, Chair | Rockville, MD |
| 2019-2021 | [Bush, Sean](mailto:sean.bush@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Readiness, Vice Chair | Escondido, CA |
| 2019-2021 | [Praveen, KC](mailto:kc.praveen@epa.gov) | LCDR | EPA | Recruitment and Retention, Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2019-2021 | [Cox, Deborah](mailto:cox.deborah@epa.gov) | CDR | EPA | Rules, Chair | Atlanta, GA |
| 2019-2021 | [Russell, Sam](mailto:russell.sam@epa.gov) | CDR | EPA | Strategic Planning for Engineering, Vice Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2020-2022 | [Kathol, John](mailto:John.Kathol@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Awards, Chair | Tempe, AZ |
| 2020-2022 | [Mergenthaler, Matthew](mailto:matthew.mergenthaler@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Awards, Vice Chair | Sacramento, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Gifford, Michael](mailto:michael_gifford@nps.gov) | LCDR | NPS | Events, Vice Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2020-2022 | [Chun, Garrett](mailto:garrett_chun@nps.gov) | LCDR | NPS | Information, Vice Chair | Portal, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Coburn, James](mailto:James.Coburn@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | Public Health Engineering Practice, Vice Chair | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2020-2022 | [Chua, Frank](mailto:Francis.Chua@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Readiness, Chair | Sacramento, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Kelly, Fred](mailto:fred.kelly@nih.gov) | LCDR | NIH | Recruitment and Retention, Vice Chair | Bethesda, MD |
| **Ex-Officio Volunteers** | | | | | |
| 2020 | [Simpson, Michael](mailto:michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov) | LCDR | FDA | Executive Secretary | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2019-2020 | [Thakur, Nikhil](mailto:nikhil.thakur@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | COA Liaison | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2019-2020 | [Savalia, Varsha](mailto:varsha.savalia@fda.hhs.gov) | CAPT | FDA | CCWIAB Liaison | San Antonio, TX |
| 2019-2020 | [Tack, Colin](mailto:colin.tack@fda.hhs.gov) | LT | FDA | JOAG Liaison | Jamaica, NY |
| 2019-2020 | [Sauer, Steve](mailto:Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | SAME Liaison | Spokane, WA |

\*Clicking on the Voting Member name will open their email address