



Sponsored by the  
Chief Engineer,  
Council of Captains, and  
EPAC Career Development

June 16, 2022

3PM ET

# Balancing a PHS Career

**EPAC Senior Officer Panel**

Moderator: LCDR Will Chang

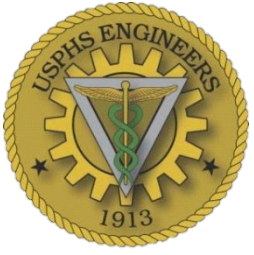
Panelists: CAPT Joshua Simms  
CAPT Tracy Gilchrist  
CAPT Gretchen Cowman  
CAPT Steven Scherling



# CPO Remarks

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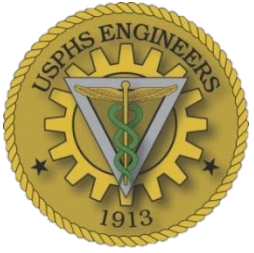
- ▶ Priorities include:
  - Career Development: Balancing a PHS Career
  - Deployment: Maximizing the Deployment Experience
- ▶ CPO Town Hall to be held to discuss the promotion results and feedback
- ▶ CCHQ Connect sessions remain available in Secure Area
- ▶ These sessions discuss many of the changes being considered across a variety of areas (i.e., force distribution, retirement, deployment, etc.)



# Agenda

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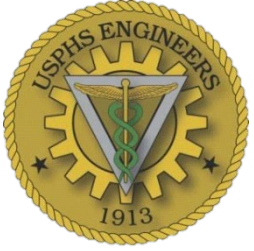
- ▶ Housekeeping and disclaimers
- ▶ Purpose of panel
- ▶ Panelist introduction
- ▶ Fireside chat
- ▶ Q&A
- ▶ Key take-aways
- ▶ Resources



# Housekeeping

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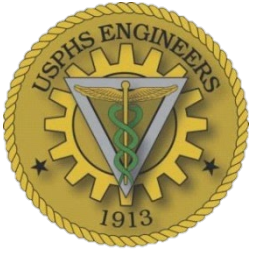
- ▶ Session is recorded for posting on the EPAC website
- ▶ Attendees are muted by default
- ▶ Questions may be taken at the end of the overall session, as time permits
  - ▶ Questions to be generally applicable to the category or officers across a particular agency
  - ▶ Can follow up with officers who had questions that we were not able to get to in this session
- ▶ For questions, please unmute or utilize the chat window
- ▶ PDH credit will be awarded for this session. Please email [William.chang1@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:William.chang1@fda.hhs.gov)



# Disclaimers

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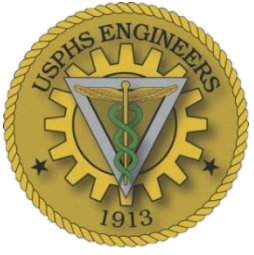
- ▶ The views expressed in this session are based on the panelists' experiences and may not be representative of official policies of the Category or the Corps at large.
- ▶ Officers should utilize official resources on the EPAC and CCMIS websites.
- ▶ Officers are encouraged to seek guidance on career planning and promotion preparation from mentors and/or other senior officers, as case-by-case input may be advised.



# Purpose of Today's Session

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- ▶ Hear from senior engineers representing various engineering disciplines, backgrounds and agencies.
- ▶ Today's panelists will provide unique insights and information on the topic of maintaining balance.
- ▶ The session will provide *considerations* for you to contemplate, not *hard answers* on what's right for you and your specific situation
- ▶ *You are responsible for your career* and must tailor your plan and decisions to meet your personal and professional goals
- ▶ Discussing your situation with peers, your supervisor, or a mentor is a great way to learn from others' experience and gain valuable guidance
- ▶ Today's panelists, other members of the Council of Captains, and other senior engineers are great potential resources for support with maintaining balance.

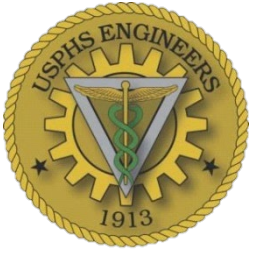


# CAPT Josh Simms

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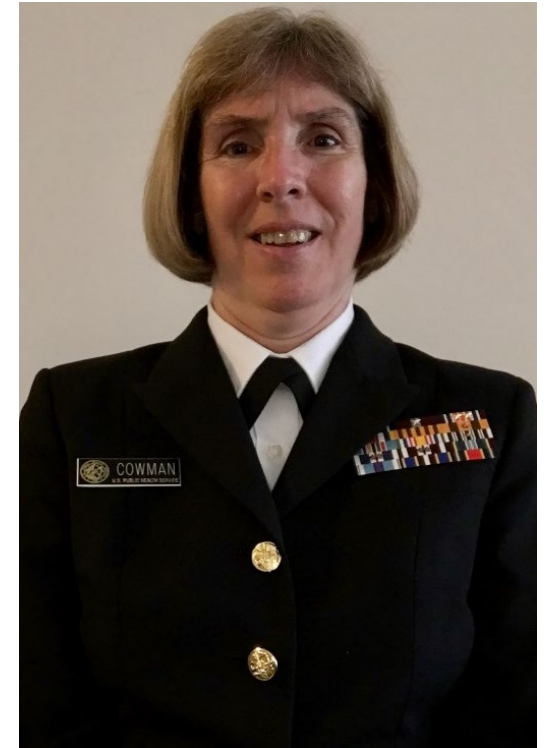
- ▶ 20 Years in the Commissioned Corps
- ▶ Worked in IHS (Window Rock, Fort Defiance, Fort Yuma) and FDA (CDRH and OEO)
- ▶ Currently the Director for the FDA's Office of Emergency Operations
- ▶ Served with EPAC Information Subcommittee (volunteer, vice chair, and chair)
- ▶ B.S in Chemical Engineering, M.S. in Engineering



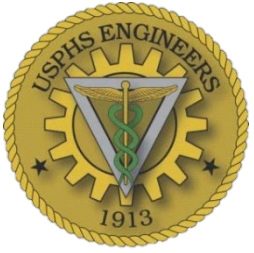


# CAPT Gretchen Cowman

- ▶ 20 years in the Commissioned Corps
- ▶ Branch Chief for Laboratory Design & Construction at the NIH
- ▶ Began PHS career as an environmental engineer with the Navajo Area Indian Health Service in Shiprock, NM
- ▶ Spent 9 years overseas with the CDC in Africa supporting HIV & TB programs and the Global Health Security Agenda
- ▶ Deployed to Ebola responses in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ▶ B.S. in Chemical Engineering, Masters and Doctorate in Public Health, Professional Engineer



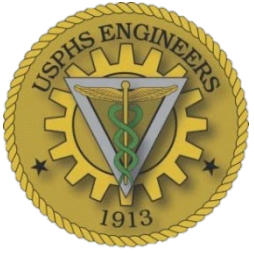




# CAPT Tracy Gilchrist

- ▶ 29 Years in the Commissioned Corps - 9 Years with the Indian Health Service, 1 Year with the Department of State, and 19 Years with the DOI/National Park Service
- ▶ Served on the Tohono O'odham and Navajo Reservations; at Point Reyes National Seashore; in the US Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, and at the Denver Service Center with the National Park Service
- ▶ Currently managing the design and construction of over \$90M in primarily water and wastewater Capital Improvement Projects in National Park units around the U.S.
- ▶ B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering
- ▶ A Professional Engineer (PE), and a Project Management Professional (PMP)

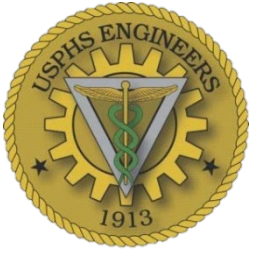




# CAPT Steven Scherling

- ▶ 22 years of committed active service over various locations
- ▶ 16 Years in IHS as environmental engineer, project and program management
- ▶ 6 years in US Navy as submarine officer
- ▶ Bachelors in Civil Engineering (University of Florida) and Masters in Engineering Management (Old Dominion University)





# Poll Questions #1-#3

What is your rank?

- A. ENS/LTJG
- B. LT
- C. LCDR
- D. CDR
- E. CAPT
- F. RDML/RADM

How long have you been in the PHS?

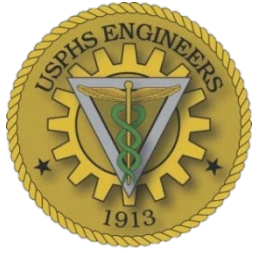
- A. 0-5 years
- B. 6-10 years
- C. 11-15 years
- D. 16-20 years
- E. 21+ years

How long of a career are you planning?

- A. 0-14 years
- B. 15-19 years
- C. 20 years
- D. 21-26 years
- E. 27-30 years



Fireside chat with CAPTs Cowman, Gilchrist, Scherling, Simms



## Poll Question #4

How would you rate your work-life balance?

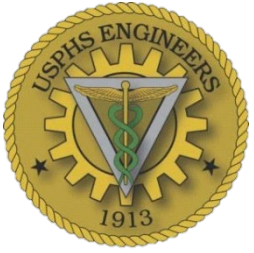
A. Good

B. Fair

C. Poor



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## Poll Question #5

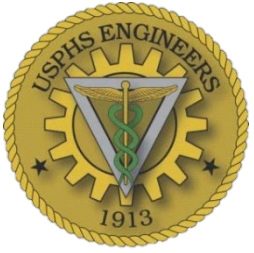
Do you think your peers and colleagues have a good balance in their career?

- A. YES – their balance is good, which is better than mine
- B. YES – their balance is good, which is similar to mine
- C. NO – their balance is not good, which is similar to mine
- D. NO – their balance is not good, which is worse than mine



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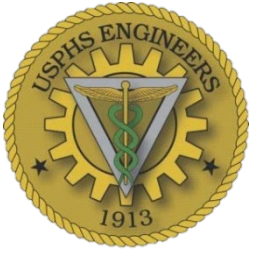
## Poll Question #6

What do you find meaningful in your work? (select up to two)

- A. Contributing to the agency mission
- B. Investing for my personal financial future
- C. Developing professionally
- D. Increasing efficiency in operations
- E. Finding innovative solutions to complex problems
- F. Being a part of the uniformed services
- G. Focusing professionally on public health
- H. Other



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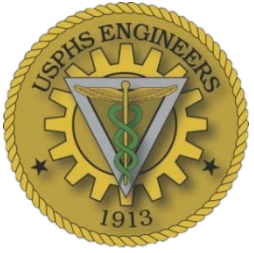
## Poll Question #7

What is the biggest competing priority in your life besides agency work?

- A. PHS activities (e.g., EPAC, deployment)
- B. Professional development
- C. Family
- D. Hobbies
- E. Travel
- F. Other



Fireside chat with CAPTs Cowman, Gilchrist, Scherling, Simms



## Poll Question #8

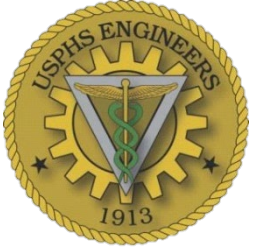
Have deployments affected your life beyond work (e.g., canceled leave)?

A. YES

B. NO



Fireside chat with CAPTs Cowman, Gilchrist, Scherling, Simms



## Poll Question #9

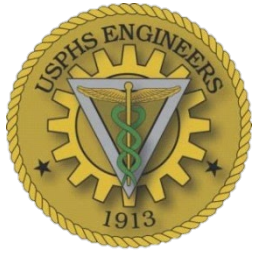
Have you ever had such a bad day in terms of work-life balance that it made you wonder about your long-term future in PHS?

- YES
- NO



Fireside chat with CAPTs Cowman, Gilchrist, Scherling, Simms





# Balancing a PHS Career

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QUESTIONS?



# Key Take-aways

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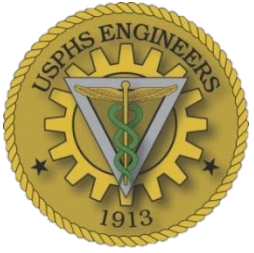
- Know Thy Self!
- Finding balance is challenging but worth the effort
- This too shall pass!
- Use your resources and what is available to you



# Upcoming EPAC Events

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- ▶ July 14: EPAC General Meeting (1500-1630 ET)
- ▶ August 11: CPO Town Hall (1500-1630 ET)
- ▶ September 8: EPAC General + Voting Member Meeting (1500-1700 ET)
- ▶ October 13: EPAC General Meeting (1500-1630 ET)
- ▶ November 17: Senior Officer Panel #6, Maximizing the Deployment Experience (1500-1630 ET)
- ▶ December 8: EPAC General Meeting (1500-1700 ET)



# Acknowledgments

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- ▶ CPO: RDML Emil Wang
- ▶ Council of Captains panelists:
  - ▶ CAPT Josh Simms
  - ▶ CAPT Gretchen Cowman
  - ▶ CAPT Tracy Gilchrist
  - ▶ CAPT Steven Scherling
- ▶ Moderator: LCDR Will Chang
- ▶ Presentation Support: LT Adam Cooke
- ▶ Lead: LCDR David Dar
- ▶ CDS Chair: LCDR Michael Simpson
- ▶ CDS Vice Chair: CDR Chris Fehrman
- ▶ EPAC Chair: LCDR Praveen KC