



AWARDS

Tips and Tools for the USPHS PA

PAPAG Awards Subcommittee

Presented by: LCDR Dale Welsh and CDR Katherine Demers

Special thanks to CDR Scott Miller, LCDR Gina Tomkus, and CDR John Hubbard

Commissioned Officer's Awards Program (COAP)

The screenshot displays the official website of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. At the top left is the organization's logo, and to its right is the text "COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE". On the top right, there are links for "OSA Sign In", "FAQs", and "Contact Us". Below this is a search bar with the placeholder text "I'm looking for...". A navigation bar contains several menu items: "Login", "Assignments", "COER", "Financial Services", "Medical Affairs", "Personnel & Career Mgmt", "Policy", "Promotions", "RDB", and "Training". The "Personnel & Career Mgmt" menu is open, showing a list of options. The option "Awards-Officer Awards Program" is highlighted in yellow. Other options in the menu include "About Personnel & Career Management", "Nominations Procedures and Forms", "Eligibility to Receive Awards", "Approval Levels", "Types of Recognition & Awards Criteria", "Non-PHS Awards", "Write-Up (Narrative) Guidance & Tips", "List of OPDIV Awards Coordinators (PDF, 67kb)", "List of Liaisons (PDF, 266kb)", "2021 USPHS Awards Process Flowchart (PDF, 702kb)", "FAQs", "May 2022 Officer Awards", "DEERS Information (PDF, 139kb)", and "Important Information Regarding DEERS and ID Cards During COVID-19 (PDF, 57kb)". To the right of the dropdown menu, a secondary list of links is visible, including "eCORPS Information", "Education Benefits Overview", "FAQs", "Forms", "Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF)", "eOPF FAQs", "eOPF Status", "FAQs Practice Hours and Special Pay Changes", "Licensure", "Transcripts FAQs", "Extramural and Intramural Training FAQs", "Officer Leave and Absence Request FAQ", "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)", "Veteran Health Administration (VHA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Practice Hours", and "Link to list of Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) Chairs (PDF, 19kb)".

COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

OSA Sign In | FAQs | Contact Us

I'm looking for...

Login Assignments COER Financial Services Medical Affairs **Personnel & Career Mgmt** Policy Promotions RDB Training

About CCHQ Corps Connections

Visit CDC.gov

As Public Health Service Officers and America's Health Force, we are prepared to respond to global health emergencies. Our mission is to be out there when the need is greatest, placed on involuntary deploy or "alert" status effective with the implementation of the new Corps Directive 121.02, "Deployment and Readiness," as of 10/1/2020. Commissioned Corps officers assigned to HHS OpDivs/Offices are considered mission critical, for deployments, under the conditions of the request is approved by the CCHQ Director as per the Policy Directive in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding with the organization.

Visit coronavirus.gov

COMMISSIONED CORPS OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

DOCTRINE

United States Public Health Commissioned

HHS CORONAVIRUS

About Personnel & Career Management

Awards-Officer Awards Program

- Nominations Procedures and Forms
- Eligibility to Receive Awards
- Approval Levels
- Types of Recognition & Awards Criteria
- Non-PHS Awards
- Write-Up (Narrative) Guidance & Tips
- List of OPDIV Awards Coordinators (PDF, 67kb)
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eCORPS Information

- Education Benefits Overview
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- Forms
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- Officer Leave and Absence Request FAQ
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Types of Awards

PHS Ribbon Order of Precedence



Individual Honor Awards (6)

Distinguished Service Medal (DSM)

Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)

Outstanding Service Medal (OSM)

Commendation Medal (CM)

Achievement Medal (AM)

PHS Citation (CIT)

Assistant Secretary for Health's Awards (2)

Assistant Secretary for Health's Exceptional Service Medallion (ASHM)

Assistant Secretary for Health's Exceptional Service Medal (ASHEM)

Surgeon General Awards (2)

Surgeon General Medal (SGM)

Surgeon General Exemplary Service Medal (SGESM)

Unit Honor Awards (3)

Presidential Unit Citation (PUC)

Outstanding Unit Citation (OUC)

Unit Commendation (UC)

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_award_criteria_m.aspx#1

CCU CC511.01 outlines the processes for awards

Agency Approved Awards: Those agencies that have their own Awards Board process can approve: **CIT, AM, CM, OSM, and UC**. Once through the agency approval process, awards are forwarded to COAP for final processing.

PHS CCAB Approved (Commissioned Corps Awards Board) – MSM, DSM, OUC or awards from agencies without award boards

Other Uniformed Service Awards (DoD, NOAA, or CG) – processed by Service, but will undergo additional review to ensure it isn't a duplicate award

Service Awards (Hazardous Duty) – Agencies submit

Prior Service Awards – processed during commissioning

This presentation focuses on Agency Approved and PHS CCAB Individual and Unit Honor Awards

For more information regarding the other types of awards see: https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_index_m.aspx

To be Eligible, Nominated Officer MUST:

- 1) Meet Basic Force Readiness requirements
 - From the date of award nomination through the date award is approved
 - Last 5 years of the award period (for career wrap award)
- 2) Compliant Professional Licensure/Certification
- 3) Have satisfactory COER(s) on file
 - Period covered by the recognition
- 4) No pending/ongoing adverse actions

Steps to Success

1. Fill out correct nomination form
 - ▶ https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/forms/FORMS_awards_m.aspx
 - ▶ PHS-6342-1 for Unit Honor Awards
 - ▶ PHS-6342-2 for Individual Honor Awards
2. Draft narrative
3. Send both nomination form and narrative to nominator and supervisor for signature and routing
4. Send both to the Agency Liaison for processing
 - ▶ Must be submitted within 13 months after the performance period

Awards process flowchart:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/PDF_docs/USPHS_Awards_Process_Flowchart.pdf

Narrative- General Guidance

- ▶ Narrative **cannot exceed one single spaced typed page.**
- ▶ “Cited for” - Synopsis of specific achievement for the nomination is limited to 150 characters.
- ▶ Bullets are encouraged when they provide clarity without losing the meaning in any section.
- ▶ Times New Roman 12-point style, 1-inch margins – NO REDUCTIONS.
 - ▶ If the Times New Roman font is unavailable, use a comparable font.
- ▶ Use agency specific guidance for details regarding formatting, structure, etc.

Narrative outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Background
- ▶ Accomplishments
- ▶ Impact
- ▶ Conclusion

[Commissioned Corps Management Information System \(psc.gov\)](http://psc.gov)

Introduction - Opening Sentence/ Statement

Include an introductory sentence or paragraph that describes the general criteria for the award being considered (e.g., continuous leadership, major public health impact, etc.) and the time period covered by the nomination.

- ▶ Ensure it matches the period covered on the nomination form.
- ▶ Depending on agency, the entire sentence may need to exactly match the narrative and dates on nomination, e.g. CMS, or may have a very specific format, e.g. IHS.

INDIVIDUAL HONOR AWARD NOMINATION RECORD PART I	
	ENTRY ON DUTY DATE
PHS PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY	SERNO
ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE OR POSITION	
PERIOD COVERED (mm/dd/yyyy)	
From	To
for which the individual is being nominated must be <u>limited to 150 characters.</u>	

Opening Sentence Example

Lieutenant Commander (*your name here*) is nominated for the USPHS Commendation Medal for his continuous and distinguished service as the Senior Clinical Physician Assistant overseeing the Hepatitis C Treatment program at (*your duty station here*) from 1 January 2017 to 12 March 2021.

Opening Sentence for End of Tour or End of Service

Commander (your name) is nominated for the USPHS Outstanding Service Medal for his continuous outstanding leadership and exemplary service while serving with the (name of agency here) from July 2017 through December 2020

Note: POM 821.14 allows for an End of Tour Award that can cover information previously used to support an award, provided there are additional activities/accomplishments. This must clearly state that it is a “career” or “end of tour” award

Background

- ▶ Provide some pertinent background to give the nomination reviewer perspective on the issue and any prior or mitigating circumstances.
- ▶ State clearly
 - ▶ The aspects of the project or activity.
 - ▶ How and when the project or activity started as well as any potential goals.
- ▶ When relevant, this section should also identify the nominee's regular duties and how the accomplishments are outside the expectations of the position.

Background Example

The IHS Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 describes the five-year goals of the agency. IHS Strategic Plan Goal 1 states: “To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people.” Specifically, Goal and Objective 1.3 aim to provide “Increased access to quality health care services.” By overseeing the (*name of duty station or unit*) Hepatitis C Treatment program, LCDR (*your name here*) was able to provide a major public health impact to American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) by expansion of services and increased access to evidence-based treatment for patients with known Hepatitis C virus, as confirmed by laboratory testing.

Accomplishments and Impacts

▶ Accomplishments

- ▶ Achievement or success
- ▶ If the officer's name is the subject and the action applies to the officer, it is an accomplishment
- ▶ What did you do?

▶ Impacts

- ▶ Results of the work, dedication, perseverance and accomplishments
- ▶ If the sentence is a “as a result of...” then it is an Impact
- ▶ Why was what you did important... the “so what?”

Accomplishments and Impacts

- ▶ If you accomplished something but have no impact to demonstrate, may consider not putting these in your award
 - ▶ Example, you may have been elected President of the World, but if you haven't made an impact (yet) in that role, it is not something worthy of an award, although it is quite an accomplishment.

Note: some prefer these to be separate sections, others will combine these two for each bullet

Accomplishments



Write from an objective and factual perspective. This section should address the following questions:

- ▶ What is "above and beyond" or "exceptional" in relation to the officer's expected scope or responsibility in the position relative to his or her respective rank?
- ▶ Why is it deserving of recognition?
- ▶ Each accomplishment should align with a specific impact
- ▶ How were the potential goals met? **Utilize facts, data, and dates whenever possible.**

Accomplishments Example

1.) (*Your name here*) developed an interdepartmental collaboration that included members of the medical staff, pharmacy department, and business office. He oversaw the diagnoses and treatment of Hepatitis C, as well as the completion of necessary paperwork and laboratory compliance measures to ensure that treatment was not only initiated in a timely manner, but also completed by the patient.

2.) Due to the extremely high cost of antiviral regimens for Hepatitis C treatment, an interdepartmental collaborative initiative led by (*your name here*) took place to assist patients with applications for patient assistance programs, alternate resources, and/or state or federal insurance qualifications. The average monthly cost for Hepatitis C antiviral regimens for a federal IHS facility is as follows: sofosbuvir/velpatasvir > \$6000, ledipasvir/sofosbuvir > \$7000, and glecaprevir/pibrentasvir > \$5,000. With these agents, 8-12 weeks of treatment is required to complete the antiviral course.

Accomplishments Example (Con'd)

3.) Upon acceptance to the respective program, (*your name here*) ensured that the patient obtained the initial supply and all subsequent refill supplies of their antiviral regimen. He also oversaw, ordered, and interpreted all pertinent laboratory testing before, during, and upon completion of the antiviral regimen.

Impact

- ▶ Clearly and concisely state how the outcomes and impact of the specifically attributable accomplishments affected the project, etc.
 - ▶ Utilize facts, data and dates whenever possible to assist in demonstrating the impact of a nomination.
 - ▶ Be sure to use a chronological order to assist in clarity.
 - ▶ Consider putting the scope of the impact (local, regional, national, etc.)
 - ▶ MATCH each accomplishment to each impact
- ▶ What were specific outcomes and impact that were directly attributable to the actions of the officer on the project ?

Impact Example

- 1.) Increased access to care for patients, ensuring that 100% of patients with confirmed Hepatitis C received and completed treatment.
- 2.) By assisting the patient in alternate resource measures, (*your name here*) was able to oversee more than \$131,000 in cost avoidance to the service unit, the agency, and the patient.
- 3.) All patients that completed treatment had undetectable viral levels at treatment completion which will provide lifelong health benefits to the patient.

COMMON MEASURES OF IMPACT

- Increased/improved behavior of target audience
- Increased accessibility to resources
- Increased efficiency of operations, actions, or interventions
- Improved health equity and decreased health disparities
- Financial savings or cost avoidance
- Decreased staff time or energy savings
- Policy implementation
- Increase in knowledge or awareness

From the 2023 Letter from the Promotion Board Chairs

“Develop your impact statements in a SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound). Use hard numbers, percentages, dollar figures wherever you can to amplify your achievements.”

Other examples- linking accomplishments to impacts

▶ **Accomplishment**

- Initiated and directed the deployment of federal medical response teams (National Disaster Medical System and USPHS) in support of state and tribal COVID surge response. Managed the strategic operations of over ##### deployed federal public health and medical responders.

▶ **Impact**

- Identified over ##### patient COVID contacts in Intensive Care Units, Emergency Departments, Urgent Cares and Long-term Care facilities across region. ##### vaccinations and ##### antiviral therapeutics delivered.

Other examples- linking accomplishments to impacts

▶ **Accomplishment**

- LT Awesome leveraged her emergency medicine experience to perform minor surgical procedures onsite, and mentored other APPs on mastering these valuable skills.

▶ **Impact**

- LT Awesome and the medical team performed ## of minor surgical procedures on site in FY19, saving the facility over \$\$___ annually in hospital and security/transportation costs.

EXAMPLE #1 – WITH/WITHOUT IMPACT

Without Impact

Served on training team as a trainer.

WITH Impact

Lead Trainer on Public Health Analyst (PHS) Training Team; provided subject matter expertise for onboarding materials and developed training curriculum that increased knowledge of trainees by 45% in pre- and post- test results; successfully trained over 40 new PHAs.

EXAMPLE #2 – WITH/WITHOUT IMPACT

Without Impact

Deployed in support of
Hurricane Maria

WITH Impact

Deployed with RDF-1 team
to provide support during
Hurricane Maria: provided
administrative and
technical support to 200+
dialysis/special needs
patients at 2 different
shelters on 3 separate
missions.

Closing Sentence/Conclusion

- ▶ Provide a short summary to emphasize the importance of the project, accomplishment, or activity.
 - ▶ Depending on agency, the sentence may need to follow a very specific format, e.g. IHS

Closing Sentence Examples

- ▶ The singularly distinctive accomplishments of LT (*your name here*) reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Public Health Service.
- ▶ CDR (*your name here*) is the epitome of what a US Public Health Officer should represent. Her dedication, expertise and outstanding leadership had been consistently evident throughout her assignment/career. It is without reservation that I recommend, CDR (*Your name here*), to be awarded the (*name of award here*).

Helpful Suggestions

- ▶ Write out all acronyms the first time used
- ▶ Use high impact verbs (e.g. championed, spearheaded, orchestrated, delivered, implemented, etc.)
- ▶ Use objective data to quantify accomplishments/impact (e.g. cost savings per year, percentage increase in clinic meeting quality measure such as colon cancer screening, number of patients treated compared to average medical provider, etc.)
- ▶ Review the award levels and their requirements prior to writing the award narrative. Do not assume that if you write for a higher level award that it will be downgraded.
- ▶ Do NOT use future tense (e.g. “will accomplish”, “may affect”, etc.). If you are unable to adequately measure or document outcomes and impact, it is better to delay nomination until you are ready.

Helpful Suggestions

- ▶ **Always** use agency specific recommendations on layout, style, section headings, standardized opening/closing statements, etc.
- ▶ **Do not chance receiving a lower level award—or no award—due to rushing a nomination for promotion purposes.** Submitting a well-documented nomination helps ensure officers receive appropriate recognition for significant accomplishments.
- ▶ DO have someone NOT connected with the project in question review the award narrative. Any person unfamiliar with project should be able to clearly ascertain what the officer(s) is being submitted for when reading the narrative. Utilize his or her feedback to provide clarity.

High Impact Verbs

Achieved	Accelerated	Administered	Advocated	Amplified
Awarded	Built	Capitalized	Centralized	Chaired
Championed	Coached	Collaborated	Competent	Completed
Composed	Conceived	Conceptualized	Controlled	Counseled
Created	Critiqued	Cultivated	Curated	Delivered]
Demonstrated	Devised	Diagnosed	Directed	Drove
Eliminated	Enabled	Engineered	Enhanced	Exceeded
Expanded	Expedited	Facilitated	Forecasted	Forged
Formalized	Formulated	Fostered	Founded	Gained
Generated	Grew	Guided	Headed	Implemented
Improved	Increased	Influenced	Initiated	Inspired
Instituted	Introduced	Invented	Investigated	Launched
Led	Maintained	Maximized	Mentored	Minimized
Mobilized	Motivated	Negotiated	Networked	Optimized
Orchestrated	Organized	Originated	Outpaced	Outperformed
Overhauled	Oversaw	Partnered	Performed	Pioneered
Planned	Prepared	Produced	Publicized	Recognized
Reduced	Researched	Saved	Simplified	Spearheaded
Steered	Stimulated	Strategized	Streamline	Supervised
Surpassed	Teamed (up)	Transformed	United	Upgraded

Example- Nomination Form

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Public Health Service Commissioned Corps INDIVIDUAL HONOR AWARD NOMINATION RECORD PART I		
OFFICER'S NAME <i>(Last, First, MI)</i>		ENTRY ON DUTY DATE
PHS RANK <i>(O - 1 through O - 10)</i> O-4	PHS PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY Health Services	SERNO
CURRENT ORGANIZATION	FEDERAL/TRIBAL/URBAN FACILITY	ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE OR POSITION Senior Clinical Physician Assistant
PROPOSED AWARD: Commendation Medal	<input type="checkbox"/> With Valor	PERIOD COVERED <i>(mm/dd/yyyy)</i> From 01/01/2017 To 03/12/2021
NOTE: <i>(Synopsis of specific achievement for which the individual is being nominated must be limited to 150 characters.)</i>		
CITED FOR Overseeing the Hepatitis C Treatment program with a 100% patient treatment rate.		

Example- Narrative

COMMENDATION MEDAL LIEUTENANT COMMANDER [REDACTED]

The Commendation Medal is awarded to Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] for continuous exceptional service. Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] distinguished himself as the Senior Clinical Physician Assistant overseeing the Hepatitis C Treatment program assigned to Indian Health [REDACTED] from 1 January 2017 to 12 March 2021.

The IHS Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 describes the five year goals of the agency. IHS Strategic Plan Goal 1 states: "To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people." Specifically, Goal and Objective 1.3 aim to provide "Increased access to quality health care services." By overseeing the [REDACTED] Unit (CSU) Hepatitis C Treatment program, [REDACTED] was able to provide a major public health impact to American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) by expansion of services and increased access to evidence-based treatment for patients with known Hepatitis C virus, as confirmed by laboratory testing.

Accomplishments/Impact:

- [REDACTED] developed an interdepartmental collaboration that included members of the medical staff, pharmacy department, and business office. He oversaw the diagnoses and treatment of Hepatitis C, as well as the completion of necessary paperwork and laboratory compliance measures to ensure that treatment was not only initiated in a timely manner, but also completed by the patient. **IMPACT:** Increased access to care for AI/AN patients, ensuring that 100% of patients with confirmed Hepatitis C received and completed treatment.
- Due to the extremely high cost of antiviral regimens for Hepatitis C treatment, an interdepartmental collaborative initiative led by [REDACTED] took place to assist patients with applications for patient assistance programs, alternate resources, and/or state or federal insurance qualifications. The average monthly cost for Hepatitis C antiviral regimens for a federal IHS facility is as follows: sofosbuvir/velpatasvir > \$6000, ledipasvir/sofosbuvir > \$7000, and glecaprevir/pibrentasvir > \$5,000. With these agents, 8-12 weeks of treatment is required to complete the antiviral course. **IMPACT:** By assisting the patient in alternate resource measures, [REDACTED] was able to oversee more than \$131,000 in cost avoidance to the service unit, the agency, and the patient.
- Upon acceptance to the respective program, [REDACTED] ensured that the patient obtained the initial supply and all subsequent refill supplies of their antiviral regimen. He also oversaw, ordered, and interpreted all pertinent laboratory testing before, during, and upon completion of the antiviral regimen. **IMPACT:** All patients that completed treatment had undetectable viral levels at treatment completion which will provide lifelong health benefits to the patient.

The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Public Health Service.

Administrative Checks

- ▶ Appropriate award level
- ▶ Within 13 months
- ▶ Signatures and titles
- ▶ No Adverse Actions
- ▶ Satisfactory COERS
- ▶ Up to Date License
- ▶ Award History
- ▶ Qualified Basic Readiness

Common Reasons for Rejections

- ▶ Officer's role in project or impact is not clearly explained
- ▶ Proposal or idea is not yet implemented
- ▶ Impact or quantitative information is minimal or not included
- ▶ Accomplishment and activity is not appropriate for level of award
- ▶ Forms or formatting are not correct

2023 Award Comments

	O6 board	O5 board	O4 board
Suggestion: “Progression to meet Awards benchmark”	29%	22.60%	34.30%
Awards as a strength	23.40%	12.50%	15%
Suggestion: “need more recent awards”	14.10%	9.70%	14.60%

Helpful Links

- ▶ [Writing for Impact Guidance Document](#) – HSPAC resource
- ▶ Awards FAQ's
 - ▶ https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx
- ▶ Agency Awards Coordinator list:
 - ▶ https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/PDF_docs/OPDIV%20Coordinators%20List%20-%20landscape.pdf
- ▶ The policy that primarily directs the COAP is CCI CC511.01. Discusses nomination procedures, proper forms, types of awards and their criteria, etc.:
 - ▶ https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CCI_511.01.pdf

PAPAG Awards Subcommittee

AWARD REVIEWS



The PAPAG Awards subcommittee members are ready to help review your award narratives!

How does this work?

- If you are interested in having your award reviewed by our team, please submit your narrative and any relevant documents (specific agency format/templates, etc.) to LCDR Gina Tomkus, PAPAG Awards Subcommittee Chair, at gina.c.tomkus@ice.dhs.gov
- A panel of subcommittee members will be happy to review and provide you valuable and collaborative feedback. Please allow the reviewer(s) 1 to 2 weeks from the time of submission to provide the necessary feedback.
- Further award writing guidance and tips can be found in CCMIS under the Personnel and Career Management section: [Award Write-up Tips](#)

Good luck, and we are here to support you!

The PAPAG
Awards
Subcommittee
is here to help!