

## **The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Charter**

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### **I. MISSION**

The Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), chartered under the Office of the United States Surgeon General (OSG), employs the voluntary service of United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps Officers to advise OSG, and their associated Chief Professional Officer (CPO) as an OSG representative appointed by the Surgeon General (SG), on issues relating to the professional practice and the personnel activities of the Category, and to support initiatives and program activities under the direction of OSG and guidance of their CPO.

### **II. RELATIONSHIP OF THE PAC TO THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

The PAC represents the SG and USPHS Commissioned Corps (PHS). In carrying out its responsibilities, the PAC operates as a resource in an advisory capacity and provides subject matter expertise to the OSG (SG and Deputy Surgeon General (DSG)). It does not substitute for line management or in any way exercise the prerogatives of the respective operating programs. While PAC Voting Members are chosen from the respective HHS Operating Divisions (OPDIVs), Staff Divisions (StaffDIVs), and Non-HHS organizations, they neither represent their organization's management, nor speak for the organization. They are knowledgeable professionals who represent a cross section of the interests, concerns, and responsibilities of the professionals in the Category and organizations staffed by PHS Officers.

### **III. OBJECTIVES**

The PAC serves as a resource in an advisory capacity and provides subject matter expertise, in conjunction with and in support of the CPO, to OSG with the specific objectives of:

1. Identifying and facilitating resolution of issues of concern as they relate to the PHS, the Category, and professional disciplines.
2. Assessing PHS officer needs and assisting in meeting these needs through recruitment, training, utilization, and recognition of officers in the Category, based on directions from OSG.
3. Promoting cooperation and communication, advancing science and technical knowledge, and improving professional practice across the discipline(s) and other health professions, including the dissemination of OSG approved best practices and guidance.
4. Serving as force multipliers to promote SG priorities as directed by OSG.

## The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Charter

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### IV. FUNCTIONS

In carrying out its broad mission and objectives, the functions of the PAC shall include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Provide general professional advice and recommendations to OSG and their CPO:
  - a. Develop position papers, statistical reports, and/or guidelines to advise on matters relating to personnel issues and professional practice of the PAC.
  - b. Deliberate issues, develop findings, and present recommendations on the professional aspects of the category, (e.g., new technologies, regulations, curricula, roles, ethical and professional standards).
2. Provide category career development and readiness advice to OSG:
  - a. Provide advice on PHS practices concerning career development to OSG.
  - b. Provide advice on issues related to PHS officer promotion practices for the category.
  - c. Identify both continuing and long-term intramural/extramural education needs of the category, and identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs.
3. Provide staffing/recruitment and retention advice to OSG:
  - a. Assess and project needs for the category staffing levels throughout the PHS, under the direction of OSG.
  - b. Provide guidance for recruitment to the short-term student affiliation programs (COSTEP, summer students, etc.).
  - c. Collaborate with OSG to develop, and/or review category-specific PHS officer recruitment materials, procedures, and programs.
  - d. Help identify PHS officers and establish networks to assist and facilitate recruitment activities as directed by OSG.
  - e. Provide guidance to OSG concerning the recruitment of qualified candidates.
  - f. Assist in the development of orientation materials for newly-hired category professionals and provide advice/recommendation concerning orientation programs as directed by OSG.
4. Provide PHS and category event, award, and recognition support to OSG:
  - a. Maintain awareness of award programs, events, and opportunities.
  - b. Advise OSG and CPOs as requested based on this awareness.
  - c. Encourage the nomination and recognition of qualified individuals for PHS, professional organization, and category specific awards.
  - d. Serve as an awards coordinator for the category under the direction of OSG.
5. Serve as a communication link and information resource for the category under the direction of OSG:
  - a. Communicate to the category important information concerning professional, ethical, and technical issues.
  - b. Maintain awareness of professional organizations, societies, and academic

## **The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Charter**

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- institutions that will help raise the visibility of the PHS. These may include discipline-specific national organizations, professional schools pertaining to the category, and organizations that promote the PHS or the other Uniformed Services.
- c. Distribute PAC developed materials to professional staff and officers, as appropriate, under the direction of OSG.
  - d. Ensure the availability of PAC notes and materials to OSG.
6. Support to the CPO shall include, but are not limited to the following:
- a. Provide advice on the professional aspects of the category, i.e., new technologies, regulations, curricula, roles, etc.
  - b. Provide advice on ethical and professional standards related to the Category.
  - c. Provide advice on PHS and category practices concerning career development.
  - d. Provide advice on issues related to PHS officer promotion practices for the category such as revision of promotion benchmarks.
  - e. Provide advice on projected needs for category staffing levels in the PHS.
  - f. Review proposed and recommend needed changes to appointment standards and professional requirements, e.g., licensure required to maintain high quality staff.
  - g. Review and provide recommendations on operating practices concerning the optimum use of personnel to meet PHS and individual officer needs.
  - h. Provide advice on the selection of candidates for training as communicated by OSG and/or other career development options.
  - i. Identify and recommend continuing and long-term intramural/extramural education needs of the category.
  - j. Identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs to senior leadership.
  - k. Provide advice on the goals, objectives, and procedures designed to meet PHS and category recruitment and retention initiatives.
  - l. Facilitate relationships with professional organizations and academia to promote public health and PHS professions and disciplines in accordance with guidance from OSG.

### **V. VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

1. Basic Eligibility Requirements: Voting Members must be full time Active Duty PHS officers at the time they are nominated and appointed to the PAC. In addition, officers must maintain basic readiness standards.
2. Size of the PAC Voting Membership: The size of the PAC Voting Membership shall be a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 30 members of the category.
3. Organizational Representation: In order to provide the range of experiences and perspectives necessary for addressing issues before the PAC, all efforts will be made to ensure the broadest representation possible among all agencies that are routinely staffed by PHS officers of the category.

## **The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Charter**

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4. Geographic Considerations: All efforts will be made to ensure the PAC has at least two Voting Members whose regular duty station is geographically 75 miles outside of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area.
5. Gender and Minority Representation: All efforts will be made to ensure the PAC includes gender, racial, and ethnic minorities in the composition of its Voting Membership.
6. Professional Seniority: All efforts will be made to ensure the PAC has at least one junior officer who at the time of appointment as a Voting Member has less than 5 years of service as a PHS officer.
7. Professional Discipline Composition: Cognizant of the fact that the PAC is structured around the PHS defined professional categories which encompass more than one major professional discipline, to the extent possible the PAC should attempt to be as inclusive as practical in selecting Voting Members who possesses the requisite credentials for each of the respective sub-disciplines that make up the category.
8. Ex-Officio Members (non-voting): The CPO is a non-voting ex-officio member of the PAC. The Immediate Past Chair is a non-voting ex-officio member of the PAC if their Voting Member term would have otherwise expired and if they are not appointed to another term. The Immediate Past Chair serves to help ensure continuity of PAC operations. The PAC may identify other individuals to serve as ex-officio members to provide substantive coordination with relevant professional and academic organizations.
9. Liaison Members (non-voting): The PAC may identify individuals to serve in a liaison capacity to provide information or assist with activities, e.g., staff from the Office of the Secretary or the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health.
10. Advisory Members (non-voting): The PAC may identify Civil Service, former USPHS officers, and students to serve in advisory roles to the PAC.

### **VI. VOTING MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION PROCESS**

1. Annually, the PAC will solicit nominations (self-nominations are accepted) for vacancies on the PAC from all individuals in the category. The nominations will be reviewed by the PAC to identify highly qualified candidates to fill the anticipated vacancies. Names of officers selected to fill these vacancies will be transmitted by the PAC to the nominee's respective Agency PHS liaison and CPO for endorsement. A final list of nominees will be sent by the PAC to OSG for selection and approval.
2. This nomination process shall be conducted so that the final nomination package is available for the OSG's consideration no less than 60 calendar days prior to the expiration of the regular term of the Voting Member.
3. Should the need arise to fill the remainder of the unexpired term of a Voting Member, the vacancy shall be filled by an officer selected from the currently serving alternates through a process that is consistent with the rigor followed in the annual Voting Member selection process.

**The Health Services  
Professional Advisory Committee Charter**

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**VII. TERM OF APPOINTMENT**

1. PAC Voting Members will serve in either 2-year, 3-year, or 4-year terms as designated by each PAC in their Bylaws. Terms will be staggered to ensure rotational balance.
2. PAC Voting Membership is limited to a total of 9 years and a maximum of 8 years in any 10-year period. Each PAC may designate their Voting Membership limits between 6 and 9 years in their Bylaws.
3. Alternates: Cognizant of the demands of the members' primary work responsibilities and the PAC's need to conduct business, the PAC has the option of establishing procedures to identify officers who can serve as alternate Voting Members. Such alternates shall have voting privileges when serving in the place of the primary Voting Member. It is the responsibility of the primary Voting Member to keep the alternate fully informed and knowledgeable of the PAC's activities. Any OPDIV clearance or approval requirements for travel/per diem must be handled within the OPDIV by the primary Voting Member. All alternates must meet and maintain basic readiness.
4. Attendance: Any Voting Member of the PAC who frequently misses meetings without just cause, does not vote on PAC business items, does not participate in required activities, or does not complete assigned tasks in accordance with the PAC Bylaws, can, at the discretion of the PAC Chair in consultation with the CPO, be asked to voluntarily resign from the PAC, or the PAC Chair, in consultation with the CPO, can initiate a request to OSG to terminate the officer's Voting Membership and so inform the OPDIV Agency Liaison.
5. Removal: A Voting Member may be removed from the PAC at the request of the Chair for just cause (non-attendance, disciplinary action, etc.). In such case, the Chair will make a recommendation to the CPO, who, if concurred, will make a recommendation to the SG for removal of the Voting Member. The SG will make the final determination of removal of the Voting Member.

**VIII. CHAIRPERSON**

1. Selection: The Chairperson will be elected by the Voting Membership of the PAC.
2. Term: The Chairperson will serve a 1-year term. If a Chair-Elect is not identified by the end of the current Chair's term, the Chair may serve an additional 1-year term at the discretion of the CPO.
3. Term of the Chair-Elect: The Chairperson will serve as the Chair-Elect the year prior to serving as the Chairperson.
4. Immediate Past Chair: Immediately following the Chairperson's term, the former Chairperson may serve an additional year in the role of Immediate Past Chair. If their Voting Member term would have otherwise expired and if they are not appointed to another term, they may serve as Immediate Past Chair in a non-voting, ex-officio capacity. The role of the Immediate Past Chair will be to provide advice and

## The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Charter

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consultation to the current Chairperson as needed.

### **IX. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

1. The PAC shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (e.g., Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures). These shall include, at the minimum provisions covering the following:
  - a. Operational year: Determine and report to OSG on a quarterly basis.
  - b. Frequency of meeting: Meetings will be held once per quarter at a minimum.
  - c. Agenda: A meeting agenda and appropriate background material is to be made available to the members.
2. Records and Reporting:
  - a. Minutes of each PAC meeting will be developed and approved by a majority of the PAC Voting Members and/or by the PAC Chair.
  - b. Minutes and reports of the PAC will be distributed in accord with Item IV (5) (C) FUNCTIONS.
  - c. The PAC must establish a system to maintain a permanent file of the official minutes and reports of the PAC.
  - d. PAC Chair will be prepared and available to brief the SG and DSG, or their representative, and their CPO quarterly as scheduled by OSG.
3. Executive Secretary: The Executive Secretary must be a member of the category.
4. Quorum: A Quorum consists of at least 50 percent of the PAC Voting Membership. An alternate attending in lieu of the member shall be counted in determining the quorum requirement.
5. Voting: Where voting is required or appropriate, e.g., election of the Chair, action will be determined by the simple majority of those Voting Members present.
6. Subcommittees: Where the PAC elects to establish standing or ad hoc subcommittees said membership may include non-PAC members provided that the Chair of the subcommittee is, when practical, a Voting Member of the PAC.