



A Year in Review

A Message from the HS PAC Chair

CDR Ali Danner, MPH



Dear HSO Family (CC Officers and Listserv Members),

Greetings! How does one close out a year of serving and leading the most diverse and dynamic of the Corps' eleven Categories? I feel honored to have served as your 2013 Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC) Chair! So, I would like to leave you with a few final pearls:

To our Junior HSOs, I encourage you to approach your PHS careers very intentionally. Leadership experts say that people who write down their goals are about 80% more likely to accomplish them. Therefore, I encourage you to write 1-Year, 5-Year, and 10-Year S.M.A.R.T. Goals [<http://topachievement.com/smart.html>]. Goal-setting will maximize your career potential, especially when combined with the Career Enhancement Binder, mentoring and IDPs. Hopefully, most of you have heard about the binder through the HSO Listserv and my presentations over the past several years.

To our Senior HSOs, I ask that you remain Officers of Excellence – balancing intentional career building and personal achievement with ongoing support for Junior Officers and the Corps. How? One of the best ways is to Mentor, but you can also volunteer to serve on one of our PAGs [<http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pags>] or on a HS PAC Subcommittee [<http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pac/sub>]. We need your wisdom, experience, and energy throughout our PAC and PAGs. We need more of you to participate at these two organizational levels.

In closing, I hope that you have been personally impacted by high quality HS PAC support this year – whether through career counseling, mentoring resources, webinars, or consultations by me directly or with other HS PAC leaders, members, and HSO volunteers. Again, it has been a great honor to both *serve and lead* you during 2013! I leave you in the very capable hands of our incoming 2014 HS PAC Chair, CDR Todd Alspach. He will have strong support, beginning with our 2014 HS PAC Chair-Elect, CDR Stacey Evans. Please encourage and work with them over the next year as they reach out to you for input on various action items and continue to provide the HSO community with career and promotion resources.

I wish you all continued success! May God continue to bless the Health Services Category, the Corps, and our great nation!

Sincerely,

Ali

CDR Ali B. Danner, MPH

2013 Chair, Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC)

United States Public Health Service (USPHS)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

[HS PAC Subcommittee Accomplishments \[2-3\]](#) • [HS PAG Accomplishments \[4-5\]](#) • [HS PAC Awards Luncheon \[6\]](#)
[HS PAC Mentorship \[7\]](#) • [HS PAG Articles \[8-10\]](#) • [HS PAG Leadership & Committee Members \[11\]](#)

HS PAC Chair's Recommended Reading List

CDR Ali Danner

Reading high-quality books is one of the least expensive ways to enhance your career and life. I have been passionate about reading since I was very young! In recent years, I have moved from reading mainly technical and public health topics to additionally reading books on leadership, and on organizational and personal development.

MY PERSONAL BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS & TIPS	
Facing career challenges and motivation issues?	Read the Start (Jon Acuff) book; get help (mentoring, etc.)
Want to strengthen your "networking" skills?	The Power of Who (Bob Beaudine); practice what you read and you will be glad that you did
Want to build your leadership skills and your organization—building a team, empowering other leaders and team members, organizational development?	EntreLeadership (Dave Ramsey); Good to Great (Jim Collins) — two of the best resources
Want to get more motivated and be inspired to be a more creative thinker?	The Go-Getter (Peter Kyne) — this book tells you how to become one (a Go-Getter)
Struggling with getting motivated or taking personal responsibility for your success and contributions?	QBQ - The Question Behind the Question (John Miller), an excellent book on personal accountability
Want to join the ranks of stronger financial planning and debt freedom?	The Total Money Makeover (Dave Ramsey) — life changing, comprehensive financial planning
Just want a fun read?	Happy, Happy, Happy (Phil Robertson) and Si-cology (Silas Robertson) — just plain fun, wholesome, and funny. I am reading these books to my wife and our two youngest sons! You should see our sons' enthusiasm as they ask many nights if I will be reading more of the "Happy" book to them!

"If you want to succeed, you've got to stay focused and move slow and steady." — Unknown

CDR Ali B. Danner, MPH

2013 Chair, Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC)

United States Public Health Service (USPHS)

The HS PAC Leadership—The Gavel Has Been Passed!

HS PAC 2013 Chair - CDR Ali Danner

HS PAC 2014 Chair - CDR Todd Alspach

Thank you for your leadership!



Health Services Professional Advisory Committee 2013 Subcommittee Accomplishments

Awards Subcommittee

- * The Awards Subcommittee worked to review 10 nominations for the 2013 Joint Services: Health Services Junior Officer of Excellence Award and make notification to the 3 awardees.
- * Reviewed 11 nomination packages for the 2012-2013 Kissel/Garcia/Responder of the Year Awards, prepared and forwarded awardee citation of the selected individuals to HS PAC Chair.
- * Submitted awardee write-ups to COA Frontline and to the Category Day Planning Committee for use during the HSO Category Day Awards Ceremony.
- * Developed a HS PAC Awards Subcommittee guidance document that assists in establishing and following consistent awards review, processing, and communication.



- * Restructured the HS PAC Awards Subcommittee to allow for more officers to volunteer. Additionally, 3 new leadership positions were created within the subcommittee (Resources Team Lead, Officer Support Team Lead, and Awards Process Improvement Team Lead) in order to improve operational quality of the Subcommittee and to allow for more officers to have elevated responsibilities.
- * Created and piloted a new awards review process which includes the addition of a de-identification team and an awards specific review team for each award which will allow for better review continuity.
- * Regularly updated HS PAC website with awards information.
- * Accepted new subcommittee members – Awards Subcommittee is currently at 34 total members, including 4 HS PAC Voting Members.

Career Development Subcommittee

- * **Developed Career Strategies Institute** which included 5 webinars on: 1) Promotion, 2) Developing Documents with Impact, 3) Writing Awards, 4) Workplace Bullying, and 5) Leadership, approximately 350 Officers attended the Career Strategies Institute Webinars
- * Conducted webinar in August 2013 with the Office of Minority Health on Ending Health Disparities and Promoting Health Equity: Resources and Training Opportunities (approximately 41 Officers attended)
- * Implemented CV Reviews Project (approximately 45 officers had their CVs reviewed)
- * Coordinated HSO Booth for 2013 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium
- * Coordinated with Mentoring Subcommittee to provide career counseling sessions at 2013 PHS Symposium (approximately 30 officers received counseling)
- * Collaborated with the Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) to implement 30 minute "Coaching on Demand" Sessions for 25 junior officers
- * Conducted HSO Benchmarks Feedback Survey
- * Conducted CV Summary Length Survey (only with HSO Leadership)

Communications Subcommittee

Featured 7 **National Prevention Strategy spotlights**, worked collaboratively and assisted 11 PAGs, developed Communications Standard Operating Procedures, disseminated 45 HSO Weekly and 23 Special Announcements to over 2,640 listserv subscribers, completed over 150 website updates, responded to website inquiries from officers and the general public, and developed two Communications Checklists for the PAGs/PAC Subcommittees that outlines key communications tasks and processes.

Health Services Professional Advisory Committee 2013 Subcommittee Accomplishments

Mentoring Subcommittee

73 total matches from Jan-Sept 2013

463 total matches over the life of the program beginning in May 2010

New database features implemented :

- * Request Mentor/Mentee field has been added. Officers can now specify a specific mentor
- * Layout for the database has changed on main screens resulting in a wider screen
- * Our committee members can now update an officer's information in their application using the "Update this Profiles" button
- * In the "Find Match" feature, it will show 2 tables of potential mentors. The first table consists of mentors never before matched with this officer. The 2nd table, below the 1st, will show prior mentors matched with this officer.

The 2013 HSO Mentoring Brochure has been updated, posted on our mentoring webpage, and was distributed at the COF conference HSO Career Counseling Session, COF Mentoring and Career Progression Roundtable, and at the HSO Booth.

COF Mentoring and Career Progression Roundtable lead by CDRs Valentin-Bon and Alspach.

Career Counseling for NON-promotes, continued development of the Mentoring Newsletter, co-hosted the 5th annual COF HSO Career Counseling Session. For this session, there was a total of 14 counselors and 30 mentees.



Membership Subcommittee

Reviewed 22 HSO membership nominations and conducted a membership subcommittee vote on Tuesday, July 23rd. Five officers were selected and their names were forwarded to the voting membership for concurrence. The HS PAC would like to welcome the following officers to the 2014 voting membership: CDR Travis Fisher, CDR William Waldron, LCDR Francis Bertulfo, LCDR Jemekia Thornton, and LCDR Bobby Rasulnia.

Policy Subcommittee

Completion of the 9th edition of our **Health Service Officer Resource Directory**. It is a valuable resource that will guide PHS officers in managing their career. Its imbedded hyperlink website makes it easy to locate important information regarding personnel, training, military benefits, and readiness. In addition, the policy group completed a comprehensive review of the Health Service By-Laws. The policy subcommittee group is planning to submit this document for approval in the first general body meeting HS PAC meeting in February 2014.

Readiness Subcommittee

- * Disseminated updated information on issues of readiness to all HS officers through the use of **Weekly Announcements of the HS PAC**
- * Reached out to other PAGS to assist with readiness criteria and advise on best approaches to partner with OFRD for updated information
- * Revisited the readiness checklist and Subcommittee will make recommendations for year 2014
- * Assisted HS officers with addressing concerns they had regarding status on their deployment teams
- * Advocated with all Readiness Subcommittee chairs to obtain a readiness status from OFRD for all HS officers

Health Services Professional Advisory Committee

2013 Professional Advisory Group Accomplishments

Basic Applied Science Professional Advisory Group (BASPAG)

This year, BASPAG focused on providing general professional development information by regularly disseminating continuing education and professional development conferences through our listerv. BASPAG also provided PHS-specific information to assist our members in their careers. Listed below are the 2013 BASPAG presentations:

- * Developing a Curriculum Vitae (CV) with Impact - CAPT Susan Bonfiglio
- * Putting Pen to Paper: Writing Commissioned Corps Awards - LCDR David Hunter
- * Networking - CDR Candace Hander
- * Your Career in the USPHS - CDR David Lau
- * Promotion Readiness - CDR Mary McCormick
- * Details and Looking Ahead - CDR Felicia Binion-Williams

Medical Laboratory Science Professional Advisory Group (MLSPAG)

- * The MLSPAG successfully developed the criteria for a Senior Advisory Council, which will work with the leadership of the MLSPAG
- * Submitted HSO weekly tips and meeting announcements
- * Reviewed and submitted comments on the Surgeon General's Walking Initiative
- * Successfully developed a questionnaire for the Call to Active Duty process
- * Distributed three newsletters
- * Developed an informational BOP Senior Co-step email and distributed it to Clinical Laboratory Science programs across the country
- * Developed, distributed and analyzed a MLSPAG recruitment and retention survey

Optometry Professional Advisory Group (OPAG)

- * OPAG designed a challenge coin and it will be in production very soon. The funds are organized through our COA COF account. We will use our profits to fund future awards
- * OPAG developed a student award to recognize an extern student that made significant contributions during Optometry Student status within the professional realm of Optometry and the Indian Health Service. This award will be presented annually by OPAG. The awardee will be presented with a plaque at their individual school graduation and the awards will also be announced at the IHS bi-annual meeting
- * Improved communication and work within the larger group of HS PAC

Physician Assistant Professional Advisory Group (PAPAG)

- * The readiness subcommittee provided PAPAG with updates each month about the quarterly status of readiness for PAs in the USPHS. The PAs who were listed as "Not Qualified" were contacted by phone or email. Individual assistance and guidance was provided to officers who needed help in becoming "Basic Ready"
- * At the COF conference in May 2013, CDR Hunter-Buskey gave a presentation at a break-out session on HSO Category Day related to advice on publishing and authoring articles
- * The Welcoming Subcommittee wrote a draft document called "Physician Assistant Career Jump-Start Guide" intended for newly commissioned PA officers in the USPHS. This packet could be given to PAs when they enter Officer Basic Course (OBC) training in conjunction with the HS PAC and JOAG materials
- * During the October PAPAG meeting, the Awards Subcommittee gave a comprehensive presentation about different USPHS awards. Specifically, the presentation included award details related to the following: JOAG, the HSO category, AMSUS, PAPAG, and PHS Honor Awards. Tips for writing effective awards were highlighted
- * October 4, 2013: HSO Weekly Announcements: Issue 39: LCDR Reid wrote an article, as part of promotion of the National Prevention Strategy (NPS), titled "PAPAG Highlights Prevention and Screening." The article included preventive health tips and screening tests specifically for men, women, and both
- * During PA week, October 6-12, 2013, a Health Fair was organized by CDR Goldstein at his duty station, FMC Devens, in recognition of National PA Week. A brief article about the Health Fair and a picture of the participating PAs was posted on the AAPA Facebook page
- * Coordinated a letter of recognition to all Commissioned Corps PAs from the ASG in support of National Physician Assistant Day

Social Worker Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG)

- * Awarded Senior Social Worker of the Year to CDR Stacy Evans for helping to establish critical National level programs, addressing needs of disaster victims and serving in leadership positions in both the DHHS and DoD
- * Awarded Junior Social Worker of the Year to LCDR (now CDR) Tarsha Cavanaugh for her exemplary leadership on violence prevention initiatives and health promotion activities for underserved populations
- * Completed a revision of the SWPAG bylaws that will be sent to HS PAC for approval
- * Developed guidelines to implement a SWPAG Voting Membership in 2014
- * Modified SWPAG Welcome packet
- * Collaborated with HS PAC Health Services Application Placement Program (HSAPP) Lead to obtain names for new SW CADs as they receive CAD orders

Health Services Professional Advisory Committee 2013 Professional Advisory Group Accomplishments

Dental Hygiene Professional Advisory Group (DHPAG)

Established SOPs for all committees. Developed and produced Communication SOP for PAC approval. Maintained level of professionalism and recruited interim Executive Committee Members when members were unable to fulfill this year's obligation. Proposed change of committee structure/outcomes to better align with PAC goals.

Healthcare Administration Professional Advisory Group (HAPAG)

Implemented the first ever 5-year Health Administration Professional Advisory Group (HAPAG) Strategic Plan, focusing on specific objectives to enhance the utility of the PAG for healthcare administrators. Selected two officers for the HAPAG Senior Excellence in Leadership Award (CDR Robert Windom) and Junior Excellence in Leadership Award (LT Garmin Williams). Conducted six healthcare administration focused presentations that included an HHS Regional Administrator and the promotion coordinator from DCCPR. Published the bi-annual HAPAG newsletter, highlighting outstanding accomplishments achieved by healthcare administrators throughout the Corps. Developed a networking roster listing healthcare administrators' contact information and current positions to enhance networking opportunities. Selected five new voting members for the CY 2014 - 2016 term (CDR David Dietz, CDR Monica Jessup, CDR Christa Hrynshen-Trimmer, CDR Tobey Manns-Royal, LCDR Bryna Forson). Finally, developed a "needs assessment" survey that focused on the current needs of healthcare administrators and provided strategic direction on what the HAPAG should focus on in the future.

Information Technology Professional Advisory Group (ITPAG)

The ITPAG conducted outreach presentations to various categories, offering IT subject matter expertise to support category activities. The ITPAG is simultaneously supporting two website efforts: revamp of the Scientist category website and activities related to the potential migration of PAC websites to usphs.gov. The ITPAG developed their first coin to symbolize pride and identity for the group. The ITPAG developed draft standard operating procedures for subcommittee chairs to guide roles and responsibilities during the calendar year. ITPAG members fill all empty slots within an IT and Communications training course provided to RDF in Frederick, MD. The ITPAG provided presenters as part of a separate breakout session at the COA Symposium.

Psychology Professional Advisory Group (PsyPAG)

It has been a productive and exciting year for PsyPAG. Under the leadership of the Chair: CDR Dobbmeyer, Chair-elect: CDR Satterfield and Secretary: CDR Corso, along with numerous committee chairs, PsyPAG has become a primary connection for support, advocacy, and information for PHS psychologists. Over the year, the number of PsyPAG members has grown through an intentional effort of identification and making contact with prospective members, identifying psychologists as they enter into OBC to offer immediate support and community. Numerous professional growth opportunities are available within the PsyPAG community. From an ongoing mentoring program to new ABPP (Board Certification) Support Group and Prescribing Psychologist Special Interest Group, there are ample opportunities for psychologists to gain support and spur growth on an individual and small group level. Over the past year, the Research and Conference Committee, along with the Professional Development Committee, provided timely notification of available conferences, worked to promote career development through benchmark activities and ran two successful speaker series that focused on skill-based topics for psychologists, as well as career opportunities in various agencies and introducing officers from those agencies to fellow PHS psychologists. Additionally, PsyPAG implemented an expanded psychologist annual awards program in 2013, recognizing excellence in senior career and junior career psychologists.

Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG)

The PHPAG was established in 2010 and serves in a resource and advisory role in the coordination, development, training, and evaluation of activities related to the public health professional disciplines among Health Services Officers in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). Highlights of the PHPAG 2013 accomplishments include: implementing approximately 9 brown bag educational calls/webinars in 2013, reaching approximately 680 officers; partnering with HS PAC to offer 30 minute "Coaching on Demand" sessions to 25 junior officers; creating and distributing 2 resource documents on Policy Careers and Work-Life Balance; developing standard operating procedure (SOPs) for both the epidemiology track and communication committees; adding global health as one of the public health track focus areas; attending Officer Basic Courses (OBCs) and representing the PHPAG; conducting a 2013 PHPAG Membership Survey; designing and ordering the 1st PHPAG Coin; updating the PHPAG bylaws and marketing materials; hosting 2 discussion roundtables and a PHPAG meet and greet session at the 2013 COF Symposium; awarding the 2013 PHPAG leadership award; development of a resource document for certified health education specialist (CHES); and continuing to implement the PHPAG Peer to Peer Mentoring Program. In its third year of existence, the PHPAG is constantly evolving to better serve HSO Officers. Look for more innovative and exciting career enhancing programming from the PHPAG in 2014!

Health Services Category Awards Luncheon

December 6, 2013

Consistent with tradition, after the last Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Meeting on December 6, 2013, HSOs in the both the DC Metro (Dec. 6th) and Atlanta Metro (Dec. 11th) areas reconvened at local restaurants to commune, laugh, eat, drink and hand out awards for all the hard work over the past year. HSOs in the DC Metro area met at Timpano Italian Chophouse in Rockville, MD. CDR Ali Danner presented officers in attendance with certificates from RADM Epi Elizondo, the Chief Professional Officer, the HS PAC Chair, and the Subcommittee Chairs. In addition, HSOs in Atlanta, GA held their holiday luncheon at Mykonos Tavernas. A great time was had by all and we look forward to the next Holiday Luncheon in 2014!



CDR Danner (HS PAC Chair) presents RADM Lushniak , Acting Surgeon General ,with the the HS PAC coin at the DC Area 2013 HSO Luncheon

HSO Luncheon
Attendees
Atlanta, GA



Take Time out for Mentorship

Mentoring is one of the foundational aspects of leadership and career development, yet many officers do not have an officially designated mentor.

The Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) Mentoring Subcommittee complements and supports the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC) Mentoring Program. To that end, the SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee, chaired by CDR Malaysia Gresham, created a SWPAG Mentoring Meet and Greet Subcommittee chaired by LT Israel Garcia and co-chaired by LCDR Kendall Bolton. The Mentorship Meet and Greet Subcommittee's vision is to promote mentorship among social work officers by sponsoring meet and greet opportunities that foster mentorship, fellowship, and networking opportunities among junior and senior officers across the nation.



To date, the committee credits several USPHS officers with hosting SWPAG Mentoring Meet and Greets nationwide.

On September 26, 2013, with the support of CDR Malaysia Gresham, CAPT Edwin Vazquez, and CDR Todd Lennon, the SWPAG Mentoring Meet and Greet Subcommittee coordinated a successful Meet and Greet event for social work officers in the DC metro area. The event took place at La Tasca Restaurant in downtown Rockville, MD and was attended by ten officers. While the camaraderie and the delicious "tapas" were enjoyed, the group was honored by the presence of Rear Admiral Sarah R. Linde, Chief Public Health Officer for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). She exuded enthusiasm about HRSA and PHS and spoke to what she believes to be key regarding mentoring and career success. RADM Linde's speech included the following:

"Thank you for your kind invitation for me to join you for this event. Mentoring is one of the most important experiences in our professional careers, so being with you is a terrific opportunity for me to "pay it forward" as I have benefited from many mentors throughout my career. Here are a couple of pearls of wisdom that I have learned along the way. Be broad in your thinking about who can serve as a mentor for you. There are things to learn from superiors, peers, and subordinates and also from officers in other professional categories. While it is great to have a general plan about your career path and trajectory, be open to opportunities that arise that challenge your original thinking and may cause you to stray a bit from your plan. Those are often the most tremendous growth and development opportunities. Finally, be confident and courageous enough to ask for, and receptive to hearing and acting on, feedback about your areas for improvement. The ability to recognize your deficits can be one of your greatest strengths."

The SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee agrees with RADM Linde that we can all learn from one another and mentoring is critical to the enhancement of leadership and professional development. You may even be wondering why Mentoring Meet and Greets don't occur more frequently - and we cannot agree more. Mentoring Meet and Greets provide opportunities that can be a springboard to foster networking and mentoring opportunities that cannot be found in the typical digital world we work in.

To that end, we invite you to coordinate or host a Mentoring Meet and Greet opportunity in your agency or region. Regardless of where you are assigned, making time to attend or host a Mentoring Meet and Greet will require some determination. For our fellow officers stationed in remote areas, it will also require more creativity. It can be as simple as hosting a webinar or conference call. It is possible all of these can have a tremendous impact in career development, especially for our junior officers.

For more guidance and/or support to host a Mentoring Meet and Greet for Social Workers, contact LT Israel Garcia at igarcia@hrsa.gov or LCDR Kendall Bolton at kendall.bolton@dha.mil.

Stay tuned for our next DC Metro Mentoring Meet and Greet event.

Article contributed by LT Israel Garcia, LCDR Bolton Kendall and CDR Malaysia Gresham

OFRD's Mental Health Teams Detached From the Federal Medical Center Model

On Monday 15 April 2013, two explosive devices were detonated at the Boston Marathon finish line, resulting in shrapnel injuries and death to bystanders, marathon participants, volunteers, and race officials. The impact of this event reverberated throughout the community and resulted in a need to support and protect the mental health of those affected in the Boston metropolitan area. The State of Massachusetts requested federal assistance for disaster response to include the deployment of PHS Officers under the Department of Health and Human Services. Mental Health Team (MHT) 3 was on call for the month of April and received the call out from the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment to get "boots-on-the-ground".

DCCPR recently made adjustments to deployment teams' structures such that MHTs were identified as "stand alone" teams, giving DCCPR the capability to deploy the MHTs outside of Federal Medical Stations (FMS). As such, the MHTs work directly with the Incident Response Command Team (IRCT). This has resulted in two deployments, Sandy Hook and Boston Marathon explosions, where the need for mental health services were identified and a quick response was coordinated with a more nimble MHT. As a direct result, nineteen Tier 2 Officers and one RIST Officer received phone calls to deploy within less than 24 hours of the explosions and some team members were arriving on site in Boston within 24 hours of the event. This was an unprecedented deployment response time, and the example of such beckons Officers to remain prepared, particularly those in their "on-call" month.

The behavioral health picture of this particular event was complicated and compounded by multiple factors in the hours/days after the IED blasts at the world class sporting event, to include the following, sustained injuries (i.e., upwards of 260 individuals), loss of life (i.e., 3 persons), the search for and identification of suspect (i.e., manhunt), an unprecedented metropolitan-wide shelter-in-place and lock-down, car-jacking, multiple incidents of reported "shots fired", dispatch of grenades from a moving vehicle, SWAT teams entering hospitals with weapons drawn searching emergency rooms, ambush and death of an MIT Officer, holdup of suspects in a residential area, death of a suspect in residential area, and holdup and capture of second suspect in residential neighborhood. The location of the suspect's capture was within one mile of PHS billeting. Many deployments involve risk the astute Officers considers during deployments. Incorporation concept of active shooter, sheltering-in-place, and other safety measures are a consideration as Officers may be called on to deploy into harm's way. Security measures were taken for this deployment to include an on-site HHS Officer during "lockdown", safety briefings, shelter-in-place communications, and missions were vetted for Officers' safety.

The primary mission of mental health disaster response is to mitigate the adverse effects of trauma by promoting and protecting psychological well-being. For the Boston mission, this was addressed in outreach efforts to provide Psychological First Aid (PFA), psycho-education, referrals, and assisting in developing long-term psychological support plans to the Boston Athletic Association, first responder groups, universities/colleges, and other interest groups or city officials.



USPHS Officers Deploying during the Boston Marathon Explosion

This deployment began with a working All-Hazards Preparedness Plan in which PHS could integrate and operate within their footprint. The command center was located in downtown Boston near the blast sites. From the moment of the explosions, the Massachusetts Incident Command (MIC) was a counter response in support of the victims, family members, organizers, volunteers, businesses, education centers, and the community at large. Requests for services and support came in daily to the MIC for vetting and resource management (e.g., police, FBI, EMS, hospitals, universities, etc.). The MHT worked collaboratively in establishing a match for services and coordinating resources towards mitigation of psychological trauma. The primary missions were providing mental health services to the Boston Athletic Association (i.e., host of the world renowned Boston Marathon) and first responder groups in emergency management services. Additional support was provided to three area hospitals where victims were treated for blast and/or gunshot injuries (e.g., Boston Children's, Beth Israel Deaconess, and Mt. Auburn Hospital). Officers were also present at two universities/colleges (e.g., Suffolk and Wheelock) in providing PFA and psycho-education. Team members participated in a collaborative effort lead by the Red Cross in staffing a Family Assistance Center for victims of the explosions and their family members. The Boston Last Mile Run and Candlelight Vigil was staffed with PHS Officers on the MHT with medical professional backgrounds with disaster mental health training (e.g., PAs and nurses) along with other mental health specialist. PFA was also provided for employees of a company who were exposed to trauma being located at the finish line.

A statement made by a staff member of Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital had a particular power and resonance for a uniformed service wielding mental health providers at the ready. Through tears she spoke, "...when I saw you Officers walk in together through our hospital halls, I said to myself 'here comes the Calvary of Mental Health'".

My Dad's Four Day System to Quitting Tobacco Use

By CAPT Janet Hawkins



When I described the organization's new smoking (or non-smoking) policy which states, "Effective 6 months from the date of this Instruction (June 21, 2013), all active duty Corps officers, while in uniform, shall not use tobacco or tobacco products" to my Dad, a former two pack a day man for 35 years, he related the following for me to pass along as I saw fit. It's surely worth pursuing, I thought, if it's useful to even one person attempting one of the most difficult habits to break.

Nicotine stacks up with the other hard drugs in difficulty of breaking free. This, despite all the gimmicks, plastics, pills, patches and other paraphernalia on the market. Dad insists ultimately that the wisest decision is to go "cold turkey"! It's always a bit more difficult, he says, with a smoking couple due to differences in will power. Dad calls it the "Four Day" system because he claims it takes four days to physically rid the body of the nicotine before the psychological challenge sets in. During those four days of physiological craving, your body screams for that missing ingredient! For this reason, it's very helpful to retreat on leave or a long weekend to one's very favorite places, be it beach, mountains, or wherever many of life's daily stressors will be muted or missing.

Prior to beginning, set a date that will be memorable; for example Independence Day, a birthday or some other event and don't forget to spread the word beforehand among family and friends - so you will seem really, really awkward or unworthy, at best, if you don't follow through. Perhaps the most important factor of all is the need to stop thinking of chemicals entering your body as a treat. Thinking like a smoker. If one craves a piece of chocolate cake, one will surely manage to find one. "Dying" for a smoke, will certainly help you find one as well. Much like any addict hungering for a fix, good self-talk is essential. "I don't have to smoke today. Maybe tomorrow." In my Dad's case, those Four Days are 30 years past now, but you may still find a toothpick or a couple of Tic Tacs in his mouth.

2013 Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Members

Chief Professional Officer
Chair
Chair-Elect
Exec Secretary

RADM Epifanio Elizondo
CDR Ali Danner
CDR Todd Alspach
LCDR Jamar Barnes

Subcommittee Chairs

Awards	LCDR Sheila Weagle
Career Development	CDR Dan Hesselgesser
Communications	CDR Deidre Washington-Jones
Membership	CDR Tarsha Cavanaugh
Mentoring	LCDR Makeva Rhoden
Policy	CDR Brett Maycock
Readiness	CDR Todd Alspach
Recruitment & Retention	CAPT John Jaworski
	CDR Josef Rivero
	CDR Carlos Castillo
	CDR Stacey Evans

2013 Voting Members

CAPT John Jaworski	CDR Stacey Evans
CDR Todd Alspach	CDR Dan Hesselgesser
CDR Tracy Branch	CDR Todd Lennon
CDR Carlos Castillo	CDR Brett Maycock
CDR Tarsha Cavanaugh	CDR Kimberly McIntosh-Little
CDR Barbara Cohn	CDR Ieshia Jones
CDR Rhondalyn Cox	CDR Josef Rivero
CDR Ali Danner	CDR Karen Sicard
CDR Jean-Pierre DeBarros	CDR Deidre Washington-Jones
CDR Amanda Dunnick	LCDR Sheila Weagle

2014 Voting Members (New)

CDR Travis Fisher
 CDR William Waldron
 LCDR Francis Bertulfo
 LCDR Bobby Rasulnia
 LCDR Jemekia Thornton

Special Thanks to the 2013 HS PAC End-Of-Year Newsletter Committee

CDR Malaysia Gresham, LCDR Amy Constantine, LCDR Carla Burch, LCDR David Wright, LCDR Keisha Johnson, LCDR Monique Salter, LT Stephanie Felder, LT Liza Soza