

OPAG April 7, 2022 MINUTES

OPAG Voting Members Present:

LCDR Hanna Fylpaa (Chair)	LCDR Jill Thompson (Chair-elect)
LT Davis Staley (Executive Secretary)	LT Regina Sullivan
LCDR Emily Mathiak	LCDR Albert Licup
LT Matthew Geiger	LCDR Laura Alexander

Non-voting members present:

- CDR Anthony Stout
- CAPT Barb Cohn

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from February 2022: LCDR Al Licup
- Second: LT Davis Staley
- No objections. Minutes approved.

Subcommittee Chair Reports:

1. Administrative management: LCDR Jill Thompson
No report.
2. Awards: LT Regina Sullivan
Nominations were received for each award, except the student IHS Award. Student IHS Award deadline is May 1, 2022. Voting members - look out for an email to provide your vote regarding the recipient for each award.
3. Communications: LT Davis Staley
No report.
4. Data and Evaluations: LCDR Albert Licup
Analytics subcommittee had their first meeting. Working on awards normalization, will assist with the de-identification and score normalization process for HSPAC Awards, which may be introduced to the PAGs at future meetings.
5. Policy: LT Matthew Geiger
Working on updating Bylaws and SOPs to align OPAG more closely with HSPAC subcommittees, specifically nomenclature. Keep an eye out for an email with these documents to be approved at a future meeting, suggestions and edits can be sent to LT Geiger or LCDR Fylpaa. Discussed 10-year limit for OPAG voting membership, no longer as applicable as it was several years ago when written. With smaller number of

optometrists, OPAG members will time out and OPAG may run out of optometrists eligible to be a voting member.

6. Recruitment: CDR Sarah Steinbarger
 - a. Co-chair: LCDR Emily MathiakNo new applicants. CDR Steinbarger is training in LCDR Mathiak on recruitment duties and communications
7. Stakeholder and Community Engagement: LT Khrystopher Gates
No report.
8. Technical Readiness: CAPT Robert Chelberg
 - a. Co-chair: CDR Erin GilesAdvanced readiness for Summer 2022 between April 1-30, program begins July 1.
9. Training, Education, and Mentorship: CDR Christopher Cordes
No report.

Stakeholder Engagement Reports:

- **CDC Liaison:** LT Regina Sullivan
CDC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) applications are being reviewed to maintain and enhance the CDC Vision and Health Surveillance system using data from a variety of sources in order to assess US National, State, and County level prevalence of major eye diseases, visual impairments, and utilization of eye care. Short term outcomes are to increase the number of years of vision/eye health surveillance data and to prioritization of vision and health surveillance topics and indicators. Intermediate outcome is to increase the use of the survey and demonstrate through online metrics and various data sources. Long term outcome is to improve the comprehensive timeliness of public health eye health data. Applications are being reviewed and awarded soon.
- **AFOS:** AFOS Member nominated for AOA Trustee position.

Discussion Topics:

From IHS Commissioned Corps All Hands Meeting March 9, 2022

- Importance of maintaining Basic Readiness, check status often, upload documents 14 days prior to the end of the month, Letters of Reprimand will be distributed if you are marked not qualified 3-4 times in a 2 year process, and the separation process will be initiated after 4-5 months of non-qualified status.
- Practice Hours Verification: on RedDog website under “My Forms” If position is designated code 81 in your PIR then you only have to do this online, “Officer’s Practice Supervisor” and “Officer’s OPDIV/STAFFDIV/NON-HHS Organization Supervisor” are

likely the same if you are in a clinical position, If you are in a non-clinical position these supervisors may be different and you have to also complete a paper form PHS-7085.

HSPAC All Hands Meeting March 25, 2022

- Many new policies will be implemented by September 1, 2023.
 - Force distribution management Policy
 - Promotion Policy
 - Retirement Policy
- Encourages HSO's to continue utilizing mentorship programs, continue to engage as officers, continue to grow in your field, expertise, and leadership, as well as maintain qualifications.
- Add a Deployment Role SUBSPECIALTY in RedDog: primary role is determined by CCHG (likely Optometry) but a listed subspecialty is required by **March 21, 2022**.
 - See email dated 3/18/2022
- COVID-19 Hazardous Duty Pay
 - For providing clinical care to infected or possibly infected patients
 - Payments for dates 5/12/2021 - 9/30/2021 are pending with the Financial Service Branch.
 - Recertify now for dates 10/1/2021 - 12/31/2021 (look for an email from Robin Davidson on 1/6/2022)
 - Hazardous Duty Award should be automatically awarded - officers have been seeing this on PIR
- Excess Leave Carryover
 - 2020 and 2021 carryover leave must be used prior to September 30, 2023 or will expire and be forfeited.
 - Confirm that leave credit has been carried over in eCORPS for 2020.
 - 2021 carryover leave is pending CCHQ update.
- COVID Vaccine Documentation must be uploaded into the HHS VAX system, sent to the Medical Affairs Branch and Service Unit Employee Health.
 - Currently there is no Commissioned Corps requirement for boosters
 - Your service unit may have separate requirements
 - Religious waiver requests deadline extended to January 31, 2022.
- Positive COVID test: report to Medical Affairs through Corps Care at PHSCorpsCare@hhs.gov
 - PCR test results or photo of home test with name/SERNO/test date or statement from healthcare provider
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness temporarily expanded
 - USPHS and IHS are eligible utilizing Employee ID Number (found on W2)

- www.studentaid.gov/publicservice
- Please email me if you have recently applied, been accepted, or had your student loans forgiven

- OPAG Funds Update: Fundraising and previously raised funds are not available. It is up to the PAGs to decide how to proceed and how to fund plaques or awards.
 - Motion that certificates will be paper until funds become available: LT Regina Sullivan
 - Second: CDR Anthony Stout
 - No objections, motion approved.

- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) provided through the IRS to USPHS Officers, look for a link in the Officer Secure Area.

- Uniforms
 - PTU Update - required by 12/31/2021
 - ODU phase out, replaced by new Coast Guard Utility Uniform (CGU) by 2/1/2023
 - Unclear if there is a grace period for new uniform purchase or if ODU will just be no longer available for purchase by that date

- IHS Biennial Eye Care Meeting in June, will be all virtual, will replace the June OPAG meeting.

- Good and well-being
 - CAPT Clary will be receiving the Distinguished Service Award at the AOA meeting.
 - CAPT Cohn discussed the Commissioned Corps-wide Surgeon General meeting regarding promotion and force distribution policy changes.

Meeting adjourned