

OPAG Minutes 12/04/2019

MISSION: Represent and advocate for the professional discipline of optometry and its Commissioned Officers, civil servants, contract and tribal optometrists serving within the Public Health Service and affiliated services.

OPAG Voting Members

Present:

- CDR Christopher Cordes (Chair)
- LCDR Laura Alexander (Chair-Elect)
- LT Hanna Fylpaa (Executive Secretary)
- LCDR Jill Thompson
- LT Albert Licup
- LT Matthew Geiger
- CDR Patrick Britton

Absent/Excused:

- CDR Sarah Stienbarger
- CDR Gregory Smith

Liasons and Non-Voting Members

- LCDR Emily Mathiak
- LT Regina Sullivan
- CAPT Robert Chelberg
- CAPT Dawn Clary

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from 10/02/2019: LCDR Albert Licup

Second: LCDR Laura Alexander

No objections. Minutes approved by unanimous consent.

Subcommittee Chair Reports

1. **Administrative Management:** LCDR Laura Alexander
OPAG elections will occur at today's meeting.
2. **Awards:** LCDR Laura Alexander
OPAG follows HSPAC guidelines for awards nominations. HSPAC emails should be coming out soon and will be forwarded on by LCDR Alexander.
3. **Communications:** LCDR Jill Thompson
 - **Communications Co-Chair:** LCDR Emily Mathiak
Nothing to report.
4. **Data & Evaluations:** LT Albert Licup
Nothing to report from HSPAC Data and Analytics. Most recent meeting was cancelled.

5. Policy: LT Matthew Geiger

Minor changes made to policy revamp and it has been posted on HSPAC to be moved to max.gov. Yearly reviews will take place.

6. Recruitment (Ad Hoc): CDR Christopher Cordes for CDR Sarah Stienbarger

IB, previous Corps officer, repealed application due to lengthy processing time.

Speaking with 2 Navy optometrists that may be interested in transferring to Commissioned Corps of the USPHS in the future.

Application process moved online but this has not improved speed of processing.

7. Stakeholder & Community Engagement: CDR Patrick Britton

Nothing to report.

8. Technical Readiness: CAPT Robert Chelberg

Advanced Readiness Program is up and going. How will this affect optometry? This can help set you apart from other officers in promotion but will also be applicable if interested in deployment. The program will be administered through the PAG. The person in CAPT Chelberg's current role as chair of Technical Readiness for OPAG will take applications and monitor/track training and communicate to HSPAC when requirements are met. CAPT Chelberg has a spreadsheet that monitors and tracks an officer's progression through the program. There will be a specific area online that will allow access to the education. One of the main requirements for this is having the FMRB. This is a brand new program and is HSPAC-specific. This will aid in better preparing officers for deployment, although as a clinical optometrist is prepared to deploy with active licensure.

9. Training, Education, and Mentorship: (Ad Hoc): CDR Christopher Cordes for CDR Gregory Smith

HSPAC Mentorship has been attempting to meet for 4-5 months but meetings keep getting cancelled. If you did apply to be a mentor or mentee, the program is stalled at this time with hopes to move forward in the new year.

Stakeholder Engagement Reports

• **Chief Clinical Consultant:** CAPT Dawn Clary

IHS Biennial Eye Care Meeting is scheduled June 1-4, 2020. The Agenda is nearly complete and will be sent out soon along with travel and accommodation information. Sunday will include a welcome BBQ before the meeting begins.

CAPT Clary was contacted by HSO CPO CAPT Willis Marsh regarding the number of optometrists in the Corps and how long the junior officer numbers are. They have elevated the issue of low junior officer numbers and are requesting information, such a vacancy rates, the number of optometrists and their rankings, pay for VA/civil service/private sector and how low it is coming in as an O-3, and the lengthy application process. The Commissioned Corps see optometry's numbers and how difficult it is to get optometrists in. The freeze for active duty optometrists in the Commissioned Corps for a few years was acknowledged and the effects will linger for quite some time.

The Medical Affairs Branch will be one of the first steps in the new online application, as it is not uncommon for people to move most of the way through the application process but then get disqualified by medical affairs late in the process.

- **CDC Liaison:** LT Regina Sullivan

Vision Health Initiative has created a 1-page document that shows the cost of vision problems. The cost is expected to increase 157% to \$373 billion in the next few years due to the aging population. Hopefully this will increase conversations at the CDC regarding the importance of addressing vision problems in the aging population. This is a great resource to increase awareness of vision problems affecting our population.

Discussion Topics/ Q&A

- IP/BP/BCIP

- CDR Cordes has been receiving appropriate pay for the past 3 months.
- LT Fylpaa sat for fellowship exam this year and submitted BCIP paperwork, but it has not been reflected on her paycheck yet. BCIP will be retroactive and back paid to the date it was received.

- Elections:

- 4 open spots: slated
 - LCDR Alexander (Chair)
 - LT Fylpaa (Executive Secretary)
 - LCDR Thompson
 - LT Davis Staley – graduated from ICO in 2014; prior Air Force; stationed in Wasilla, Alaska; has been in Anchorage area for 5 years. Participated in Baltimore RAM and is currently participating in DC RAM.
- Chair – LCDR Alexander will assume this position after completing her term as chair elect.
 - LCDR Alexander graduated from Pennsylvania College of Optometry and worked in Lawton, OK as civil service. She transitioned to Commissioned Corps Officer after 1.5 years. She is now the Oklahoma Area consultant.
- Chair Elect
 - Volunteer to assume the position: CDR Britton graduated from PCO and has been in Rapid City, SD for about 14 years. He has spent most of his career at different IHS clinics in the Great Plains Area.
- LT Geiger makes a motion to approve this slate as stated above, LT Fylpaa seconds this motion, with no dissent the motion passes by unanimous consent. Congratulations LCDR Alexander as new Chair and CDR Britton as Chair Elect.

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- OPAG Chair Elect and Members for 2020

- Terms expiring
 - CDR Cordes – retiring from OPAG
 - LT Fylpaa – willing to stay on
 - LCDR Alexander – willing to stay on and will be Chair for 2020
 - LT Thompson – willing to stay on
 - LT Sullivan is encouraged to transition to voting member to fill vacancy

- IP/BP/BCIP

Good/Welfare

CDR Cordes thanks LCDR Alexander for her service over the past year as Chair Elect. She assumed additional responsibilities in communicating with HSPAC while CDR Cordes was deployed. CDR Cordes also thanks everyone else involved in OPAG during his past year as chair.

LCDR Alexandar is going to DC RAM mission. LT Sullivan is also participating in this RAM as well.
LT Licup has sent out February meeting's call-in information.
LT Fylpaa is expecting Baby Fylpaa's arrival in April 2020.
LCDR Thompson reports baby is doing well and set to arrive in the new year.
Thank you CDR Cordes for your fantastic leadership throughout this past year.

Meeting Adjourned at 0834 AKST by CDR Cordes.

Upcoming OPAG meetings:
05-February-2020

All meetings are:
08:00 Alaska
09:00 Pacific
10:00 Mountain
11:00 Central
12:00 Eastern