

## OPAG Minutes 02/03/2022

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:**

• LCDR Hanna Fylpaa (Chair)	• CDR Gregory Smith
• LCDR Jill Thompson (Chair Elect)	• LCDR Matthew Geiger
• LT Davis Staley (Secretary)	• CDR Christopher Cordes
• LT Khrystopher Gates	• LCDR Emily Mathiak
• LCDR Albert Licup	• CAPT Robert Chelberg
• LT Regina Sullivan	• CDR Sarah Stienbarger
• CDR Erin Giles	• LCDR Laura Alexander

Non-voting members present:

- CDR Paul DeWitt
- CAPT Dawn Clary
- CDR Anthony Stout
- CAPT Shannon Farr
- CAPT Terry Shleisman
- Nancy Nichols

Presentation on Retirement by CAPT Martha Wanca, Western Area Liaison.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion to approve minutes from **12/02/2021**: LCDR Albert Licup
- Second: CDR Christopher Cordes
- No objections. Minutes approved.

### **Subcommittee Chair Reports**

1. **Administrative Management:** LCDR Jill Thompson  
Nothing new to report.

- **Awards:** LT Regina Sullivan  
Updated award request, deadline date March 1, announcement has been distributed via Commissioned Corps channels (HSO News You Can Use and Stand-Alone Announcement). LCDR Jill Thompson to assist in distributing to IHS optometry.

2. **Communications:** LT Davis Staley  
Submitted website update requests for Minutes, Awards Packages, Roster, Bylaw updates.

3. **Data & Evaluations:** LCDR Albert Licup  
Had meeting on January 31, 2022 but nothing relevant to pass on.

**4. Policy:** LT Matthew Geiger

Will discuss bylaw changes for OPAG.

**5. Recruitment:** CDR Sarah Stienbarger, Co-Chair LCDR Emily Mathiak

A few looking at interservice transfer but it depends on promotion results.

A letter was submitted to HSO CPO CAPT Presley regarding recruitment and decrease in numbers.

**6. Stakeholder & Community Engagement:** LT Khrystopher Gates

Nothing to report.

**7. Technical Readiness:** CAPT Robert Chelberg absent, Co-Chair: CDR Erin Giles

Nothing to report. Will attend February HSPAC meeting. More to come on advanced readiness.

**8. Training, Education, and Mentorship:** CDR Christopher Cordes

Nothing to report.

**Stakeholder Engagement Reports**

**Chief Clinical Consultant: CAPT Dawn Clary**

- Recent meeting with Marshall B. Ketchum for IHS Biennial Eye Care Meeting, June 6-9, 2022. Awaiting confirmation for face-to-face meeting, this is not yet confirmed. Virtual will definitely be an option, has been approved by Headquarters.
- A few states are passing laws to eliminate state income tax for military retirement pay, which should include retired USPHS Officer, most recently Utah.

**CDC Liaison: LT Regina Sullivan**

- CDC has a NOFO that will be accepting applications to enhance CDC's vision and health surveillance system using a variety of source to obtain US National, State, and County prevalence for eye diseases, vision impairment, and utilization of eye care. This announcement should be closing March 23, 2022.

**AFOS Liaison: CDR Christopher Cordes**

- Next AFOS conference will be at SECO the first week in March 2022, in New Orleans. CDR Greg Smith will be appointed the next AFOS President.

**Discussion Topics/ Q&A**

- HSPAC encourages officer participation and engagement in official activities that produce visibility and certificates.
- COVID 19 Hazardous Duty Pay should have been paid for May-Sept 2022. Should be \$275 per month. A few officers have seen this come through and should continue over the new few months. Needs to submit every quarter to area liaison, look for an email from Robin Davidson for instructions. Should automatically qualify for Hazardous Duty Award for 180 days of continuous service.
- Excess leave must be used by September 30, 2023 or will expire. Check eCORPs for errors.

- PHS Awards submitted prior to August 31, 2021 should be in PIR. Optometry has done well recently with PHS Awards. Plan awards submission well in advanced. It can take 6-8 months before things show up in PIR.
- Verify promotions folder by February 15, 2022 if you are up for promotion
- COVID vaccine documentation needs to be uploaded into HHS Vax, sent to Medical Affairs Branch, and Service Unit Employee Health. No Commissioned Corps requirement for boosters at this time, check with your service unit if this is a requirement for your location. If you test positive for COVID, report it to medical affairs via Corp Care.
- Complete required trainings on CCLMS, deadline has passed.
- Innovative Readiness Training. They are always looking for Optometrists. Several of us have been on IRT missions and had great experiences. Contact LCDR Matthew Geiger or LT Davis Staley if you want more information from those who have participated recently. It is a 15-17 day deployment. If your supervisor gives permission, it will all be paid for.
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness has been extended. Please email LCDR Hanna Fylpaa if you have applied or had loans forgiven.
- Apply for HSPAC Peer to Peer mentoring.
- OPAG cannot use previously raised funds that we already have. This will affect our award plaque purchasing for awards in the future.
- PTU required by December 31, 2021. ODU update coming in February 1, 2023.
- OPAG Bylaws Update: will revisit again at future meetings, has been requested by HSPAC Leadership.
- COERs are still being posted in eOPF, time for posting is variable, verify you were notified that your COER was completed.
- Update on current status of travel restrictions: November lifted restrictions, December were put back in place, expect at least another month before more information comes out (per CAPT Clary)
- Some states are again restricting virtual CE for licensure, but some states are still allowing it.
- AMSUS meeting will be 100% virtual.

**Meeting Adjourned at 1400 AKST by LCDR Hanna Fylpaa**

**NEXT OPAG MEETINGS: Thursdays at 1300 AKST**

- April 7, 2022
- June 6-9, 2022 - IHS Biennial Eye Care Meeting
- August 4, 2022
- October 6, 2022
- December 1, 2022 (beginning of 2023 operational year)

All meetings are:

1300 Alaska  
1400 Pacific  
1500 Mountain  
1600 Central

1700 Eastern