



PHPAG NEWSLETTER



December 2013

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE USPHS

Volume I, Issue 2

Reflections From The 2013 PHPAG Chair



**CDR Deidre Washington-Jones
PHPAG Chair (2013)**

It has been a pleasure serving as the 2013 Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) Chair. As a charter member of the first PHPAG voting membership group, I served in various leadership roles such as Chair of the PHPAG Career Development Committee, Chair-Elect, and most recently as PHPAG Chair during its first three years of existence. However, at the start of my tenure as the PHPAG Chair, I encouraged voting members and non-voting members to think “outside the box” and expand on what they thought was possible for our activities in 2013. The PHPAG 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). Although we have only been in existence for a short period of time, the breath of PHPAG 2013 activities is characteristic of a mature professional advisory group (PAG) and is the result of our voting members’ and non-voting members’ hard work. We have grown as a PAG and our structure and activity portfolio denotes many accomplishments.

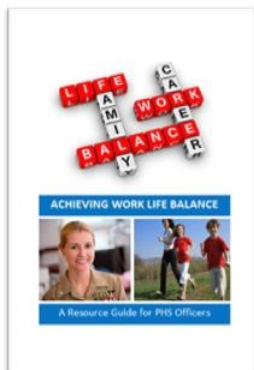
Highlights of the PHPAG accomplishments in 2013 include: 1) implementing approximately 9 brown bag educational calls/webinars, reaching approximately 680 officers; 2) developing the PHPAG Coin; 3) updating the PHPAG bylaws; 4) partnering with HS PAC to offer “Coaching on Demand” sessions; 5) creating a resource booklet to help improve officer’s work-life balance and a checklist to obtain Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES) certification; 6) adding global health as one of the public health tracks; 7) representing the PHPAG at the PHS Officer Basic Course (OBCs) Open House; 8) conducting a 2013 PHPAG Membership Survey; 9) hosting Category Day discussion roundtables and a PHPAG Meet and Greet at the 2013 COF Symposium; 10) awarding the 2013 PHPAG leadership award; and 11) continuous implementation of the PHPAG Peer to Peer Mentoring Program. Details about these accomplishments are addressed throughout this newsletter.

(Chair’s article continued on next page)

In this issue:

Reflections from the 2013 PHPAG Chair, Cont.	2
Message from the 2014 PHPAG Chair	3
New Executive Committee and Voting Members	4
PHPAG Articles	5-6
Subcommittee Updates	7-10
Public Health Track updates	11-14
Announcements	14

Helpful Tips: Work/Life Balance



How do you balance your responsibilities as a PHS Officer?

Prioritize and Identify Time Wasters - Use your Outlook calendar to compartmentalize your day. Each morning, decide what you want to accomplish that day. Avoid activities that do not enhance your career or personal life.

For a copy of the PHPAG work-life balance brochure, contact LCDR Donna Phillips at dnp7@cdc.gov

Reflections from the 2013 Chair (Continued)

“...The completion of the third year also marks a major milestone for the PHPAG because for the first time, half of our voting members were not the charter members. So our leadership building with volunteers was put to the test and was successful! Often PAGs struggle with recruiting officers to apply to be voting members. Additionally, new voting members and non-voting members struggle to understand their commitment. However, in 2013 all of our volunteers rose to the challenge. A PAG amounts to little without the support of all the key players. The initiative and work ethic of our members has been amazing and is the backbone for the PHPAG’s current success. Also, because we provided opportunities for officers to take on leadership roles, our non-voting members became vested in the mission and growth of the PHPAG. As a result, we were able bring in nine additional voting members to the PHPAG in 2013.

In 2013, the PHPAG continued to strengthen its role by providing guidance to officers related to promotion preparation. Approximately 130 officers attended our webinar on promotion for non-clinical officers. As officers continue to face new challenges such as lower promotion rates, mobility challenges due to limited career opportunities, and changes in HSO precepts, the PHPAG must continue to evolve to innovatively meet the needs of officers. Developing a long term career plan and consistently working on your career is more important now than ever before for all officers.

During my tenure as PHPAG Chair, I have learned many lessons about leadership including leading to achieve substantial results and building future leaders. Below is a list of 10 leadership lessons that I believe contributed to the success of the PHPAG in 2013.

10 Leadership Lessons that Support Success

1. Have a vision and communicate the vision.
2. Invest in volunteers and give them the opportunity and creative space to lead.
3. Be charismatic and build relationships.
4. Focus on the successes and analyze those successes for what made them work.
5. Continually monitor and revise your goals and objectives.
6. Establish action plans.
7. Gain buy-in and ownership for what needs to be done, but be able to provide ideas and guidance as needed on specific activities. Volunteers often depend on leadership for creative input.
8. Consciously build a supportive and inclusive culture (“**this is our PAG**”) and always gather feedback from voting members and non-voting members to make improvements.
9. Make it fun, but treat it like a business (accountability and moving the PAG towards solutions and final decisions is important).
10. Remember that both voting members and non-voting members are still **volunteers**. Be more complimentary than critical and offer constructive feedback versus criticism.

Future of the PHPAG

Our volunteers are the energy that keeps the PHPAG moving. Thus, it is important that we continue to intentionally cultivate the relationship between officers and the PHPAG by providing opportunities for leadership and growth while showing the added value of participation in PHPAG activities. The PHPAG has a very bright future and under the leadership of CDR Christye Brown as the 2014 Chair and the 2014 PHPAG voting membership, I am confident that the PHPAG will continue to flourish and grow. “ ~CDR Deidre Washington Jones

Message From Our 2014 PHPAG Chair



**CDR Christye Brown
PHPAG Chair (2014)**

“Following in the footsteps of CDR Washington-Jones will be no small feat - her tenure as Chair resulted in the heightened visibility of our PAG’s prodigious work!”

My vision for the PHPAG is to become the premiere resource for officers to fulfill their niche in public health.

In 2014, the PHPAG will further develop our platforms in continuing education and career development and also ensure that we maximize opportunities to provide continuing education credits when possible. As we welcome the new Global Health Track to our cadre of Public Health Tracks, I look forward to specialized work products from each specialty that will bring professional value to fellow officers in the PHPAG and throughout the HSO community.

While these initiatives may serve as an introduction to the PHPAG for some, it is my vision to also expand recruitment efforts through various Commissioned Corps channels such as the Officer Basic Course and Commissioned Officers Foundation Symposium. The PHPAG’s continued growth and professional development, coupled with our expanding work in mentorship, will ensure the continuity of our leadership and productivity for years to come!”

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW PHPAG
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & VOTING MEMBERS**

EFFECTIVE JAN 2014

2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**CDR CHRISTYE BROWN, CHAIR
CDR MELANIE ROSS, CHAIR-ELECT
CDR LESLIE HAUSMAN, SECRETARY**

2014 EX- OFFICIOS

CDR DEIDRE WASHINGTON-JONES

2014 EXISTING VOTING MEMBERS

**CDR IDONGESIT ESSIET-GIBSON
CDR MELANIE ROSS
LCDR NISHA OATMAN ANTOINE
LCDR LAJEANA HOWIE
LCDR ANDREA PEAY
LCDR PAULA WASHINGTON
LCDR MARGARET WHITTAKER**

2014 NEW VOTING MEMBERS. TERM ENDING 2015

**CDR LETIA BOSEMAN
CDR MATTHEW WEINBURKE
LCDR ELIZABETH GARZA
LCDR KEISHA JOHNSON
LCDR DINA PASSMAN
LCDR DONNA PHILLIPS
LCDR MONIQUE SALTER
LT SARA AZIMI-BOLOURIAN
LT CHRISTIAN BULLOCK**



WE ARE LEADERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

By: CDR Maria Benke

Public health (PH) is an ever-evolving and complex field. PH leaders must navigate shifting political priorities, manage limited resources, and respond to emerging threats and health emergencies. Inherently, leadership is about creating change - within our respective organizations and among the populations we serve. PH officers are on the forefront of influencing these changes to promote, protect, and advance health. Regardless of specialty, our competence in transformational, political, trans-organizational, team-building, and crisis leadership enable us to be effective in improving health systems and health outcomes domestically and abroad.

Fundamentally, effective leadership is rooted in the values we espouse, decisions we make, and actions we take. Upholding professional excellence, personal integrity, and a deep commitment to service is the key to our success as PH leaders and as a Corps. It is about mission above self; having the courage to advance PH science and practice, even if it goes against the grain of popular culture. Leadership involves humility - empowering others so the changes we influence are sustainable, and growing our next generation of leaders to ensure the future of public health.

THE 2013 USPHS SCIENTIFIC AND TRAINING SYMPOSIUM



The PHPAG played a prominent role by hosting a series of roundtable sessions during HSO Category Day highlighting the work and diversity of its officers. The three-part approach included presentations and discussions covering: 1) The Role of Professional Advisory Groups (PAGs) in the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC); 2) How to Achieve Work-Life Balance: A Facilitated Discussion for PHS Officers; and 3) Opportunities in Policies. The breadth of these topics and the interest among participants once again demonstrated the value and far-reaching contributions the PHPAG continues to make to the Corps. The PAG discussion, led by CAPT George Durgin, CAPT Craig Wilkins, CDR Joseph Roth, and LCDR Dawn Arlotta, focused on the role of PAGs among HSOs and the multitude of professional benefits of participation. The forum provided an opportunity for junior officers to learn about how the PAGs represent disciplines within the category and how they allow officers to grow professionally while assuming greater responsibilities as HSOs. Moreover, participants learned about the PAG development process, particularly for the PHPAG and BASPAGs, and how PAGs operate within the PAC structure. At the Policy Careers roundtable, CDRs Idong Essiet-Gibson and Letia Boseman, co-chairs of the PHPAG Policy Track highlighted HHS initiatives that aim to eliminate health disparities and improve health equity. Also, during this lighthearted discussion, officers learned about policy-related skills and competencies needed to develop and implement these high-profile initiatives. The work-life balance roundtable presented by LCDR Donna Phillips was a continuation of a series of activities led by the PHPAG's Career Development Subcommittee on this topic. During this lively and interactive discussion, participants received helpful tips and strategies on how to balance responsibilities as a PHS Officer with their work and family lives. The PHPAG also hosted a "Meet and Greet" Session during the 2013 USPHS Scientific Symposium to introduce officers to the PHPAG and promote camaraderie among members.

Article submitted by LT Dawn Arlotta, CDR Joseph Roth, LCDR Donna Phillips, CDR Letia Boseman and CDR Idong Essiet-Gibson

Subcommittee Updates



Mentoring Subcommittee

MISSION

To assist officers in successfully navigating their PHS career by facilitating peer-to-peer networking.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS OPERATIONAL YEAR

Within the Commissioned Corps, responsibility for career development and promotion lies with the commissioned officer, so it is helpful to have a network of peers. Additionally, an officer must juggle other responsibilities such as deployment and physical readiness. The mission of the Peer-to-Peer Networking Program is to connect officers of the same rank to assist each other in navigating the multiple facets of officership. This year, we matched 30 officers based on their backgrounds in clinical care, epidemiology, food safety, health education, and social work. In addition, we recruited officers for the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee Mentoring program.



CDR Joy Ann Matthias
Subcommittee Chair

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

We will implement appropriate recommendations from the 2013 evaluation survey to improve the matching process and program effectiveness.

Awards Subcommittee

MISSION

To recognize officers for their accomplishments with Public Health Service and Category Awards in their respective public health disciplines.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS OPERATIONAL YEAR

Commanders Teresa Baptise, Traci Mullins, Jeff Tarrant, Van Tran, and Matthew Weinburke, Lieutenant Commanders Katrina Mosley, Antoine Smith, and Paula Washington, and Lieutenants Sara Azimi-Bolourian, Annette Bush and Elizabeth Russell all played a vital role in the PHPAG Awards Subcommittee. By continuing the nomination and selection of the PHPAG Excellence in Leadership Award and streamlining of the subcommittee Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), these officers have provided outstanding guidance to the subcommittee. The Excellence in Leadership Award was created to recognize a Health Services Officer who has demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in the field of public health and for exceptional work toward the mission of the PHPAG, and this year the awardee was LCDR Sherene Cora. Following the delivery of the 2013 Excellence in Leadership Award at the COF Symposium, the subcommittee revised the SOP to ensure a seamless transition to the 2014 Excellence in Leadership Award process, which will be used for future Excellence in Leadership Awards and other PHPAG award activities. Additionally, the Awards Subcommittee is involved in the research and assessment of a second PHPAG award. This process will be continued in 2014 in the hopes that two awards will be issued at the COF Symposium.



CDR Matthew Weinburke
Subcommittee Chair

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

The PHPAG Awards subcommittee goals for 2014 are to: a) nominate, select and recognize the recipient of the 2014 PHPAG Excellence in Leadership Award at the COF Symposium in Raleigh, NC; b) complete the process of creating and implementing a 2nd PHPAG award; and c) continuing the process of streamlining and revising the PHPAG Awards Subcommittee SOP.

Communications Subcommittee

MISSION

The PHPAG Communications Subcommittee mission is to provide effective, accurate, and up-to-date communications to the PAG.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS OPERATIONAL YEAR

Our biggest accomplishment and the one we are most proud of is the development of the first PHPAG coin which we will be available for purchase January 2014. During this operational year, the Communications Subcommittee also reformatted and revised the PHPAG brochure for a more up-to-date and appealing look; worked with HSPAC Communications Subcommittee to develop our first communications Standard Operating Procedures; provided Weekly Listserv Announcements in a timely and consistent manner; fulfilled 31 website update requests and 15 HSO Weekly Announcement requests; and we acquired 4 new members in 2013.



LCDR Nisha Antoine
Subcommittee Chair

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

In 2014, the Communications Subcommittee plans to work on the following activities: continue to reformat the PHPAG Weekly Listserv Announcements; finish developing a PHPAG flyer; work collaboratively with HP/HE Track to develop talking points and informational sheets about the PHPAG for OBC to recruit new officers; assist in increasing membership and marketing the PAG through selling of the new PHPAG coin; and develop a “Learn more about the PHPAG” presentation.

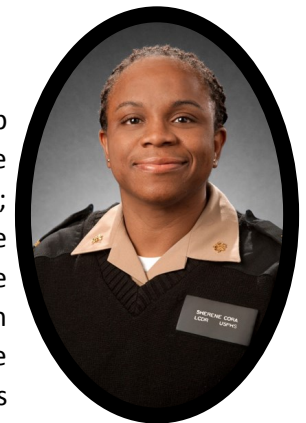
Membership Subcommittee

MISSION

The mission of the Membership Subcommittee is to recruit, involve and retain PHPAG members.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS OPERATIONAL YEAR

In 2013, we had various accomplishments including the following: updated the membership spreadsheet containing demographics, degrees, certifications and other information needed for the PHPAG; revised the goals and mission statement to better reflect the Membership Subcommittee; disseminated the annual PHPAG membership retention survey, and prepared a summary of the results. Results were available for use by the PHPAG leadership to help understand the impact of the PHPAG for future planning; revised and distributed an additional membership retention survey which will again be used to better understand the PHPAG members and meet their needs; completed the 2013 voting membership process, installing nine new members; completed the chair-elect process resulting in a new 2014 chair-elect—volunteers included: Ex- Officio LT Dawn Arlotta, LCDR Nisha Oatman Antoine, CDR Idongesit Essiet-Gibson, and LCDR Margaret Whittaker; and continuing to revise the membership’s Standard Operating Procedures. Additionally, the subcommittee would like to recognize LCDR Andrea Peay for her outstanding service and leadership for chairing the subcommittee with LCDR Cora.



LCDR Sherene Cora
Subcommittee Chair

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

The 2014 goals of the Membership Subcommittee are to increase membership by soliciting volunteers and implementing the membership survey .

Career Development Subcommittee

MISSION

The Career Development Subcommittee mission is to serve as a resource for officers in enhancing their career potential and job satisfaction.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS OPERATIONAL YEAR

We had three major accomplishments this year.

1) A “Coaching on Demand” activity in collaboration with the HS PAC Career Development Subcommittee where junior officers were provided with 30 minutes of coaching from senior officers. The activity included 25 senior and 25 junior officers.

2) We developed a Work Life Balance Resource Guide (June 2013). Approximately, 30 copies of the Work Life Balance guide were disseminated at the COF Symposium and a roundtable discussion was presented at the symposium.

3) We hosted a webinar on “Preparing for Promotion: How Officers in General Public Health Disciplines (non-clinical) can be Competitive in the Process” which reached over 130 officers.

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

For the new operational year we are working on a resource guide on “How Public Health Officers can obtain CEU’s.” We are also working on hosting a brown bag on “Details” in collaboration with the Policy Track. In addition, we would like to write the SOPs for the subcommittee.



LCDR LaJeana Howie
Subcommittee Chair



Public Health Track

Updates



PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKS

Epidemiology Collaboration (EpiC) Track

MISSION

The mission of the Epidemiology Coordination (EpiC) Track is to provide resources and guidance to support Health Services Officers, who either work as an epidemiologist or are interested in epidemiology, develop and enhance their career within the Commissioned Corps.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EpiC held three brown bag sessions on diverse epidemiology topics of interest to PHS officers. We also developed and shared a robust SOP for planning and running brown bags, including templates for call scripts and promotional messages. EpiC collaborated closely with the Epidemiology Interest Group to plan and execute the epidemiology sessions at the 2013 COF Symposium. EpiC increased not only the number of Track members but also the agencies and disciplines that they represented. Finally, the group continued to fulfill its objective to identify epidemiology resources and activities across disciplines through its liaison program.



LCDR Dina Passman
Track Lead

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

The key priority for EpiC is to continue to support epidemiologists within the Corps and promote interconnectivity between members. As leadership changes for 2014, other priorities may be set as new leadership sees fit.

Generalist Track

MISSION

The mission of the Generalist Track is to foster and promote career development through the planning of educational/training opportunities for a multi-disciplinary audience. Recently, we surveyed members within the generalist track and concluded that officers identify themselves as generalist by professional designation or their current assignment.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year, we hosted a brown bag discussion entitled *Deployment Opportunities for Public Health Generalist* and increased our membership. In November, we had over 170 officers participate in the brown bag discussion from various Professional Advisory Committees. The brown bag discussion included a panel of 5 officers that expounded on their experience during an international or national deployment. Each panelist provided their perspective on training that they perceived were essential and prepared them for their deployment roles. The discussion concluded with an interactive question and answer session with both the participants and panelists.

LCDR Lorraine Williams
Track Lead

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

The Generalist Track will continue to develop educational/training events for 2014 that are beneficial to a multi-disciplinary audience and we are exploring opportunities to collaborate with other groups on various topics.

PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKS

Policy Track

MISSION

The mission of the PHPAG Policy Track is to provide guidance, resources and a forum to help cultivate the professional growth of Commissioned Corps Officers who serve, or have interest in serving, in a public health policy role.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 2013 year, the Policy Track had the following accomplishments: Conducted a roundtable seminar on “Sciences and policy careers: Contributing to ending health disparities and improving health equity” that reached over 20 officers on HSO Category day at the 2013 COF Symposium in Glendale, AZ in May 2013; hosted two successful Health Policy 101 webinars reaching over 150 officers in September 2013; participated in the PHPAG’s social event at the COF Symposium and provided a policy track update. Our outreach efforts to grow the Policy Track resulted in an increase of members from 5 in 2012 to 9 members at the end of 2013.

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

To host a roundtable at the HSO Category Day at the COF Symposium in Raleigh, NC in June 2014.



CDR Idongesit Essiet-Gibson
Track Lead

Health Promotion/Health Education (HPHE) Track

MISSION

The Health Promotion/Health Education (HPHE) Track’s mission is to provide guidance, identify challenges, and propose solutions to cultivate the professional growth of Commissioned Corps Officers and civilians who serve, or have interest in serving in a health promotion or health educator role.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2013, the HPHE Track assessed the needs of officers and completed ground work laid in 2012. Noteworthy activities include the “CHES 101” webinar highlighting the benefits of the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) designation and the certification process; CDR Maria Benke’s highly informative presentation “Career Progression in the U.S. Public Health Service: A Health Educator’s Perspective”; the launch of the monthly Officer Basic Course (OBC) Open House; and dramatically increasing interest in the PHPAG.

GOALS FOR NEW OPERATIONAL YEAR

In 2014, the HPHE Track should continue to identify needs of officers with interest in CHES, implement the “Officers on the Move” initiative to improve and extend the USPHS mission through community service, and provide a more formalized resource for continuing education resources for officers. Lots to come in 2014!



CDR Melanie Ross
Track Lead

PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKS

Introducing the NEW Global Health Track

The new Global Health Track of the PHPAG aims to provide officers interested in global health with a forum to discuss international health issues. The infrastructure is still being established but ideas for Global Health Track goals include brown bag sessions, informing officers of opportunities for international deployments and TDYs abroad, and bringing to light the types of global health issues USPHS officers face in their day-to-day jobs.



LT Stephanie Briguglio
Track Co-lead

LT Stephanie Briguglio, co-lead of the Global Health Track, was commissioned to the USPHS in January, 2013, and is a data manager at the FDA in College Park, Maryland. Prior to joining the Corps, she earned an MPH in epidemiology and global health practice, and spent a semester in India studying health issues plaguing rural and urban Indian populations of all ages. She is excit-

Co-lead LT Tara Dondzila, currently works with the National Park Service in San Francisco as their Public Health Specialist. Prior to commissioning, LT Dondzila earned a Masters of Public Health focusing on Global Health at the University of Wisconsin. She has worked with the World Health Organization on food security and safety efforts in Eastern Europe and has nonprofit work experience improving health outcomes in West Africa. She is looking forward to forming a Global Health Track that benefits officers with similar public health interests.



LT Tara Dondzila
Track Co-lead





Announcements

Introducing the NEW Public Health Professional Advisory Group Coin

The PHPAG coins are made of solid brass and 1.75" in diameter. This newly designed coin features the USPHS seal on the front and our PHPAG symbol which displays various public health disciplines and concentrations representing the skill sets of our diverse cadre of Health Services Officers. We are pleased to announce that our coin will be available for purchase in January 2014! Thank you for your support.

front



back



Note: Staff on front of coin will be gold in color, not red.

Ordering Instructions: Contact LCDR Nisha Antoine for an online form.

Email: nisha.antoine@fsis.usda.gov, Phone: 202-690-6485

Payment: Make checks or money orders payable to "USPHS Commissioned Officers Foundation." Write PHPAG Coin on the memo line.

Special thanks to the **PHPAG Communications Subcommittee** for their efforts in creating this **2nd Annual PHPAG newsletter**

Meet Your Editors



LCDR Nisha Antoine, MPH
Biologist
US Department of
Agriculture



LCDR Johnni Daniel, MPH
Epidemiologist
US Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention



LCDR Monique Salter, MPH
Epidemiologist
US Food and Drug
Administration