



# PHPAG NEWSLETTER



December 2015

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUP (PHPAG)

Issue 4

## Reflections from the 2015 PHPAG Chair



**CDR Melanie Ross**  
2015 PHPAG Chair

Greetings PHPAG,

It has been an honor and all my pleasure to work on behalf of the PHPAG this past year. The advancement of the PHPAG could not happen without the collective work of each one of you. 2015 has proven to be an exciting year filled with opportunities, setbacks, and accomplishments. At the start of 2015, we had key areas to focus our work to include, succession planning; an assessment of the PHPAG membership profile; identification of gaps in our professional development needs as officers; and increasing promotional efforts for our brown bags, panels, and other events. While we didn't hit our mark in all areas, we have many shared successes including, the development of resources to assist officers with their continuing education interests, the launch of the inaugural PHPAG Junior Officer of the Year Award, the inaugural social events in the Atlanta and DC areas, and the selection of the 2016 PHPAG new voting members and the executive committee. We have shared in the continued excellence of our PHPAG representation at the Symposium Category Day roundtables, the successful matching of 54 officers for the Peer-to-Peer

Networking Program, many webinars and panels that addressed not only professional and career development topics but also workplace wellness topics, such as workplace bullying, numerous PHS Athletics events, and many other activities featured in this publication. Thank you for being on this journey and your commitment to the PHPAG. I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of the PHPAG under the leadership of the 2016 PHPAG Chair LCDR Lajeana Hawkins. A special thank you to the Communications Subcommittee Newsletter Editors that compiled, reviewed and edited an outstanding newsletter this year!

As we approach 2016 and the tasks that lie ahead for PHPAG, keep our Commissioned Corps values in mind.

### Leadership

Provide vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty.

### Service

Demonstrate a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents.

### Integrity

Exemplify uncompromising ethical conduct and maintain the highest standards of responsibility and accountability.

### Excellence

Exhibit superior performance and continue improvement in knowledge and expertise.

### Helpful Tip: You Can Benefit from the SCRA

(submitted by LCDR Cindy Eugene)

#### SCRA: Service Members Civil Relief Act Overview

The Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is a program that provides certain protections from civil actions against service members who are called to active duty. One of the benefits under these protections is an interest rate reduction on some of your loans. The law limits to 6% interest on credit obligations incurred prior to military service or activation. If you have high interest loans, take some time and review this benefit offered to you as a service member. For more information, see links below.

<http://www.military.com/benefits/military-legal-matters/scra/servicemembers-civil-relief-act-overview.html>

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/scraHome.do>

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# PHPAG Celebrates a



# Year Anniversary



## PHPAG over the Years 2010-2015



Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) represents the diversity of public health disciplines. We provide a networking and support platform for those working in public health positions, with an emphasis in professional advancement. **The PHPAG was founded by a group of motivated PHS officers and became an official PAG on 10CT10**



# ***Ebola Response: PHPAG Officers Responded to largest Ebola Epidemic in history***



LT Felicia Warren deployed to Bomi County, Liberia for 45 days where she provided technical assistance in epidemiology, health promotion, and communications.



LCDR Lorraine Williams deployed as part of the Reintegration Team for MMU4. From L to R: LT Tyson Baize, LCDR Lorraine Williams, LT Tigisty Zerislassie, CAPT Tina Lankford, CAPT Diedre Presley, LCDR Karina Aguilar, LCDR David Good, CDR Monique Frazier.



LCDR Elizabeth Garza pauses for photo while in her personal protective equipment (PPE). She was deployed to the Washington Dulles Quarantine Station as a Public Health Advisor from October 2014 until January 2015.



LCDR Kimberly Nguyen deployed to CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) where she coordinated deployments for CDC USPHS officers across the U.S. and around the world to Ebola-affected countries in West Africa.

# A New Tradition: PHPAG Socials

## Washington, D.C.



Washington, D.C. area PHPAG members gathered at Brio Tuscan Grille during the joint PHPAG and Health Promotion/Health Education (HPHE) end of year social organized by LCDR Jennifer Clements.

From L to R: LT Alex Freiman, LT Jennifer Freiman, LCDR Jonathan Kwan, LCDR Monique Salter, LT Janesia Simmons, LCDR Jennifer Clements, LCDR Lynn Seel, and CDR Karen Beckham

## Atlanta, GA



Atlanta area PHPAG members enjoyed a festive end of year social at Tin Lizzy's. The gathering was organized by LT Desiree Brown and LCDR Katrina Sloan.

From L to R: LCDR Katrina Sloan, LCDR Terrance Jones, CDR Melanie Ross, LT Desiree Brown, and LCDR Jamar Barnes. Not Pictured: CDR Christye Brown.



# Subcommittee Updates

## Awards Subcommittee

### *Mission*

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

### *Accomplishments*

The following officers played a vital role in the Awards Subcommittee's mission, goals, and objectives and were instrumental in this year's accomplishments: LCDR Sara Azimi-Bolourian, CDR Matthew Weinburke, CDR Adam Tahiru, CDR Van Tran, LCDR Katrina Sloan, CDR Jeff Tarrant, LCDR Elizabeth Russell, LCDR Annette Bush, CDR Teresa Baptise, CDR Brett Maycock, and LCDR Antoine Smith.

- Streamlined and revised the PHPAG Awards Subcommittee's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guide the subcommittee in its operations.
- Nominated, selected, and recognized the recipients of the PHPAG Excellence in Leadership Award and the first ever Junior Officer of the Year Award. This year's award recipients were:
  - **CDR Adeoye John Oguntomilade** - *PHPAG Excellence in Leadership Award* for outstanding accomplishments in the field of public health and for exceptional work toward the mission of the PHPAG.
  - **LCDR Elizabeth Garza** - *PHPAG Junior Officer of the Year Award* (rank O-4 and below) for exemplary commitment to the mission of the USPHS and is recognized by her peers for exceptional work toward the mission of the PHPAG.



LCDR Sara Azimi-Bolourian  
Subcommittee Chair



CDR Matthew Weinburke  
Subcommittee Co-Chair



CDR Adeoye John Oguntomilade



LCDR Elizabeth Garza

# Career Development Subcommittee

## *Mission*

To serve as a resource for officers in enhancing their career potential and job satisfaction by planning, coordinating, and organizing events and activities related to career development for officers of the PHPAG.

## *Accomplishments*

2015 proved to be another successful year for the Career Development Subcommittee. The Subcommittee initiated new projects, improved existing activities, and institutionalized protocols for future career development members.

- Hosted webinars that reached more than 125 officers:
  - “Workplace Bullying”: CDR Charlene Majersky, PhD and Gordon Hughes, PhD discussed what we can do as officers to address and prevent bullying from occurring in the workplace.
  - “Promotions: Important Tools for a Successful Promotion Process”: CAPT Mary McCormick and CAPT Daisy Mitchell discussed the importance of highlighting impacts in the COER, ROS, and OS and valuable tips to increase chances for promotion.
- Updated and revisited dissemination of the PHPAG CEU Resource Guide. Distributed via the USPHS Continuing Education listserv, which reached more than 75 officers.
- Developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to future committee members.
- Developed a standard evaluation tool to track webinar participation, assess if webinars met its stated objectives, and facilitated planning for future webinars.



**CDR Donna Addison**  
Subcommittee Chair

# Mentoring Subcommittee

## *Mission*

To groom officers for professional success through peer-to-peer networking. Peer-to-peer networking is a unique type of mentoring where officers of the same rank can share and exchange information. The intention of the relationship is to mutually benefit both participants, unlike traditional coaching or mentoring, where the primary benefit is intended for the less experienced person. The ultimate goal is to help officers perform their PHS mission successfully!

## *Accomplishments*

This year, the Mentoring Subcommittee received approximately 80 volunteers to participate in the Peer-to-Peer Networking Program. The Subcommittee successfully matched 54 officers! This includes 8 Commanders, 24 Lieutenant Commanders, and 22 Lieutenants.



**LCDR Frankeena Wright**  
Subcommittee Chair

# Membership Subcommittee

## *Mission*

To recruit, involve, and retain PHPAG members and to annually solicit, screen, nominate, and process applicants for the PHPAG voting membership slots.

## *Accomplishments*

- Organized and planned the PHPAG social during the 2015 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Atlanta, GA.
- Solicited and reviewed application packets for PHPAG Voting Membership, Chair-Elect, and Secretary nominations.
- Developed the PHPAG membership survey.



LCDR Christian Bullock  
Subcommittee Chair

# Communications Subcommittee

## *Mission*

To coordinate timely and relevant dissemination of information for officers within the PHPAG. The subcommittee is responsible for developing and disseminating the weekly PHPAG announcements, the PHPAG brochure, and the annual PHPAG newsletter. In addition to developing written materials, the subcommittee updates PHPAG information on the HS PAC website and markets the PHPAG coin.

## *Accomplishments*

- Completed HS PAC/PHPAG website updates.
  - Fulfilled 10 website update requests.
  - Added a Resources section and PHPAG Newsletters section to the website.
  - Uploaded monthly continuing education resource documents.
- Completed and disseminated PHPAG Weekly Announcements to the listserv.
- Completed HSO Weekly Announcements requests.
- Updated the PHPAG brochure.
- Developed materials to commemorate the PHPAG 5-year anniversary.
- Promoted sales of the PHPAG coin.
- Developed the 2015 End-of-Year Newsletter.



LCDR Monique Salter  
Subcommittee Chair



LCDR Johnni Daniel  
Subcommittee Co-Chair

# Public Health Track Updates

## Epidemiology Collaboration (EpiC) Track

### *Mission*

To provide resources and guidance to support Health Service Officers who either work as an epidemiologist or are interested in epidemiology to develop and enhance their career within the Commissioned Corps.

### *Accomplishments*

EpiC looks forward to continued growth, collaboration, and representation within the PHPAG.

- Hosted a roundtable discussion at the 2015 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium Category Day. The Subcommittee provided officers and attendees information on the roles and responsibilities of HSO epidemiologists during deployments and other emergency response activities. LCDRs Richard Dunville, Michelle Sandoval, and Niketta Womack presented information on epidemiological perspectives of emergency response from state and local levels, CDC and FDA emergency operations, and USPHS deployments. The roundtable was well attended and attracted an array of individuals, including officers interested in learning more about epidemiology and becoming involved in EpiC's activities.
- Developed a roster that highlighted the background, experiences, hobbies/interests, and a photo of its members. This project was led by LCDR Julie Erb-Alvarez. It put a visual profile to members to further promote interactions and exchange of ideas. It also served as a resource to identify skill sets that would assist the PHPAG and PAC with specific projects.



LCDR Jonathan Kwan  
Track Chair



2015 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium Category Day EpiC Round Table Discussion  
top photo (from L to R) LCDR Richard Dunville, LCDR Michelle Sandoval, and LCDR Niketta Womack





# Generalist Track

## *Mission*

To promote career enhancement opportunities in “generalist” or MPH interdisciplinary topics and core MPH competencies that apply to all public health tracks: communication and informatics, diversity and culture, leadership, professionalism, program planning, public health biology, and systems thinking.

## *Accomplishments*

- Developed “Generalist Track” flyer used during the 2015 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Partnered with the Global Health Track:
  - Hosted “Non-clinical deployment roles: Domestic to International” roundtable at the 2015 USPHS Symposium HS PAC Category Day.
  - Developed “Non-clinical deployment roles: Domestic to International” handout that highlighted the RedDOG Tier I and II teams and included a list of deployment related training/courses for non-clinical roles.
- Sponsored lunch and learn seminar “Over 20 years as a Generalist: Perspectives from a Career Officer” presented by CAPT Van Morfit.
- Partnered with the Health Promotion/Health Education Track:
  - Educational panel: “Value of Credentialing: CPH vs. CHES & MCHES”
  - “8 Weekly Review Sessions for the Certified in Public Health Exam”
  - PHS Athletics on behalf of the PHPAG and participated with officers in several PHS Athletics Events.
- Participated in National Walking Day to promote the Surgeon General’s Every Body Walk! Initiative.



LCDR Elizabeth Garza  
Track Chair



LCDR Jaclyn Ruiz  
Track Co-Chair



**Generalist Track Co-Chairs participate in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure PHS Athletics Event in Washington D.C.**  
LCDR Elizabeth Garza (3rd from the right), LCDR Jaclyn Ruiz (farthest on the right)

# Health Promotion/Health Education (HPHE) Track

## *Mission*

To identify and promote educational and professional licensure opportunities so officers can advance their careers. This workgroup provides information on effective health promotion techniques and provides opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles.

## *Accomplishments*

- Recognizing the growing number of PHS officers becoming Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES), the Health Promotion Health Education (HPHE) Track formed a CHES Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities Subcommittee to create and manage a monthly CE resource for officers.
- Our goal this year was to increase access to quality health education/health promotion trainings to HSO officers, which led the Track to prepare a monthly list of free and low-cost CE opportunities ranging in public health topics and learning formats. Each month, the subcommittee highlighted an average of 25 free and low-cost CE opportunities, resulting in more than 300 CE opportunities to date. The new CE opportunities resource was initially distributed exclusively among HPHE Track membership but quickly spread, gaining wider distribution, throughout the PHPAG and the HS PAC. The subcommittee plans to collaborate with the other professional advisory groups and committees to ensure all officers are aware of the invaluable tool and can easily access the list online and through listservs.



**LCDR Jennifer Clements**  
Track Chair



**CDR Marvic Fields**  
Track Co-Chair

# Policy Track

## *Mission*

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*

Happy Holidays from the PHPAG Policy Subcommittee. We are thankful to say 2015 was a successful year.

- Hosted two webinars, “Policy 101” and “Emergency Preparedness and Policies,” which reached approximately 40 officers. In December or early January 2016, the committee will offer a webinar entitled “Understanding Medical and Public Health Policy within the Department of Homeland Security.”
- Updated the Policy Resource Guide; it provides information to help officers understand, implement, and evaluate policy. We look forward to sharing policy resources with you in 2016.



**CDR Letia Boseman**  
Track Chair



**LCDR Elizabeth Russell**  
Track Co-Chair



## *Mission*

To provide resources and guidance to support Health Service Officers who either work in a global health capacity or are interested in global health to develop and enhance their career within the Commissioned Corps.

## *Accomplishments*

2015 was an exciting year for the Global Health Track (GHT)! We conducted the following activities, which resulted in collaboration with junior and senior officers across multiple agencies, categories, and tracks:

- Hosted four webinars:
  - “Introduction to the Global Health Security Agenda” presented by CAPT Michael Schmoyer and CDR Guillermo Aviles-Mendoza
  - “An Introduction to the Global Health and Global Human Services Work of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and how HHS fits into the U.S. Government Global Health Architecture” presented by LT Alyson Rose-Wood
  - “Maternal and Child Health Issues Related to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa” (co-hosted with HPHE track) presented by CAPT Susan Hillis and LT Michelle Dynes
  - “Introduction to the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)” (co-hosted with HPHE track) presented by CDR Matthew Newland, CDR Janette Yu-Shears, and LCDR Stephanie Davis
- Presented one roundtable during the 2015 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium HSPAC Category Day: “Non-clinical Deployment Roles: Domestic to International” (co-hosted with the Generalist track).
- Finalized and shared the “Offices with Global Health Assignments” resource document with PHPAG leadership.
- Hosted three TDY spotlight presentations to highlight assignments with global health impact.
- Disseminated an HSO Global Resources guide, which was developed by a GHT member.
- Developed a GHT membership survey to capture global health experience and serve as a resource to fellow officers.
- Catalogued GHT resources (presentations, documents, etc.).
- Disseminated 2015 GHT mission statement and activity list.



LT Stephanie Briguglio  
Track Chair



LCDR Tara Donzila  
Track Co-Chair



LT Felicia Warren  
Track Co-Chair

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW PHPAG  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & VOTING MEMBERS (Effective Jan 2016)**

**2016 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

LCDR LaJeana Hawkins, Chair  
LCDR Monique Salter, Chair-Elect  
LCDR Margaret Whittaker-Caulk, Executive Secretary  
CDR Melanie Ross, Senior Advisor

**EXISTING MEMBERS, Term Ending 2016**

CDR Adam Tahiru  
LCDR Jessica Andrade  
LCDR Heidi Hudson  
LCDR Jonathan Kwan  
LCDR Jaclyn Ruiz  
LCDR Niketta Womack  
LCDR Frankeena Wright  
LT Stephanie Briguglio  
LT Jennifer Clements

**NEW VOTING MEMBERS, Term Ending 2017**

LCDR Emily Crarey  
LCDR Julie Erb-Alvarez  
LCDR Kimberley Ricketts  
LCDR Alyson Rose-Wood  
LCDR Katrina Sloan  
LCDR Damon Smith  
LT Jennifer Freiman  
LT Jenna Johnson  
LT Janesia Simmons



## Message from Our 2016 PHPAG Chair



LCDR LaJeana Hawkins  
2016 PHPAG Chair

“I am very honored and excited to serve as the 2016 Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) Chair! Working with the PHPAG since its inception, I have had the opportunity to be a first-hand witness to the PHPAG’s continued growth. It has been a pleasure to serve as a contributing member to some of many amazing accomplishments of the PHPAG. I am proud to be a part of such a dynamic group.

Looking forward to next year, there are four priority areas I would like for the PHPAG to focus on. First, increase the number of Public Health Officers actively involved with the PHPAG through recruitment campaigns that promote continued visibility of the PHPAG’s role to serve as a resource in the coordination, development, training, and evaluation of activities related to public health professional disciplines. Second, continue to provide the latest continuing education and credentialing opportunities to expand the existing skill set of our Public Health Officers. Third, reviewing and revising the PHPAG by-laws and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each subcommittee and public health track to fit the current needs of the PHPAG. Lastly, increase collaboration and coordination of webinars, brown bags, and other activities for officers across the Professional Advisory Groups (PAGs).

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the exceptional past PHPAG chairs. The last 5 years have been exceptional for the PHPAG, and I look forward to continuing this tradition of serving as a resource to Public Health Officers. In closing, I wish to offer a special thank you to CDR Melanie Ross for her guidance, leadership, and encouragement over the past year. Thank you all in advance for your support and continued dedication to the PHPAG. I look forward to working with you in 2016!”

# Announcements

## Are You Ready for the Annual Physical Fitness Test?

(submitted by LCDR Joyce Oberly)

Being Basic Ready is a requirement of all PHS Officers. One aspect of maintaining basic readiness is the successful completion of the Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT). As of July 1, 2016, all PHS officers must comply with the new APFT Guidelines and PHPAG wants you to be prepared and score your personal best. The test includes exercises assessing cardiovascular endurance, upper body strength, and core muscle strength. To do your best and prevent injury, training for the APFT is encouraged. PHPAG suggests finding a partner or coach to help you prepare. Review the parameters for your age group and gender to know what level you will try to achieve. Also give yourself enough time to prepare and train. If you're new to running, start slow and easy then build up to your goal distance and time. The same logic applies to your strength training. Preparing for the test is more fun when you're with others. Consider joining a PHS Athletics team event. Anyone can join the team, including your friends, family and co-workers. The events are held throughout the year, all over the nation. If this sounds like fun, you can find more information at [www.publichealthserviceathletics.org](http://www.publichealthserviceathletics.org)

As you enter the home stretch towards your APFT test day, you should schedule a practice test to complete all activities within 2 hours. The practice test will give you a good idea of what to work on prior to the actual test day. After you have successfully completed your APFT, remember to document your scores using two methods. First, update your APFT results via self-service in Direct Access at <https://portal.direct-access.us>. Second, fax the completed PHS form 7044 to Medical Affairs at (301) 480-0373 or (301) 480-0385. Good luck everyone!

## Show your pride and esprit de corps by ordering the newly released PHPAG coin today!

Ordering Instructions: Contact LCDR Monique Salter for an online form.  
Email: [Monique.salter@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Monique.salter@fda.hhs.gov) Phone: 240-402-2987

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

Shipping and Handling: USPS Priority Mail Flat Rate, \$5.50, and add \$0.75 for tracking



## Special thanks to the PHPAG Communications Subcommittee for their efforts in creating this 5th Annual PHPAG Newsletter

### Meet Your Editors



Chief Editor  
LCDR Johnni Daniel, DHSc, MPH  
Epidemiologist  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Assistant Editor  
LCDR (sel.) Felicia Warren, MPH, CHES  
Public Health Advisor  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Assistant Editor  
LCDR Jamar Barnes, MPH  
Public Health Analyst  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention