



# SWPAG E-Newsletter



## CHAIR'S CORNER

### ***Stand Up for SW Standouts!***

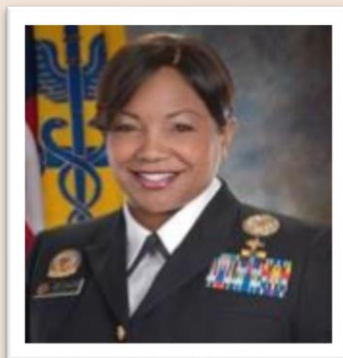
*I hope that this summer finds fellow Social Workers 'staying cool', doing well, and Standing Up! It is in this spirit that I would like to recognize three 'Stand Up!' Officers who have truly demonstrated the highest level of leadership, service, integrity and excellence. CAPT Jennifer Nussbaum, 2017 Stanley J. Kissel*



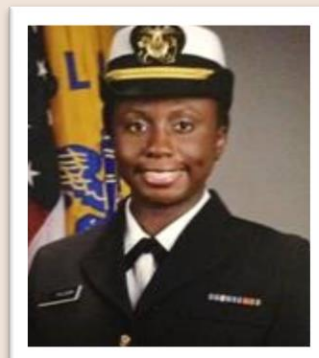
*Outstanding Health Service Professional Award recipient; CDR Malaysia Gresham Harrell, Senior Social Worker of the Year recipient; and LCDR Stephanie Felder, Junior Social Worker of the Year recipient, all deserve hearty Social Work Salute!!!*

**– CDR Sonjia Howard LISW-CP, BCD**

*Pictured from left: CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh, HSO CPO; CAPT Jennifer Nussbaum, 2017 Stanley J. Kissel Award recipient, and CAPT Josef Rivero, HS-PAC Chair*



**CDR Malaysia Gresham Harrell  
Sr. SW of the Year 2017**



**LCDR Stephanie Felder  
Jr. SW of the Year 2017**

## SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION

### ***Supporting the Surgeon General's Initiative to "Step It Up!"***

*By CAPT Julie A. Niven*

It's no secret that physical exercise can help improve most every facet of our lives – emotional, physical, mental, and even spiritual – especially if we exercise outdoors where we can find ourselves awed by the beauty of our natural environment.

Of all the causes the current and past U.S. Public Health Service Surgeon Generals have championed over the decades, VADM Vivek Murthy's initiative to increase walking in all ages, otherwise known as "Step It Up!" appeals to me more than most any other.

I love to exercise; it helps me maintain all levels of health that are important in my life. When I first heard of the Surgeon General's initiative, I was immediately interested and began to think about how and what I could do to support "Step It Up!"

- The Journey of A Thousand Steps: In order to build my own enthusiasm, I joined in on a couple of the webcasts about the initiatives. This helped to reinforce the vision and the purpose of this initiative to keep me focused on the road ahead.
- Leading by Example: I decided to start a bi-monthly walking group of U.S. Public Health Service officers at my workplace, thinking that we as officers should take the lead initially. Using the Chapter COA as a platform, I was able to generate interest and participation. Some days, participation was more stellar than on other days. Determined to forge ahead, on days when I walked alone, I learned that I could make double use of my time by reading as I walked!
- The More the Merrier: To 'step-up' support for "Step It Up!", I created a high visibility bulletin board display of the initiative emphasizing the goals of the initiative and illustrating the benefits of increasing one's walking for better health! This activity took some effort and coordination with my leadership, but it was fun too.



I have since PCS'd from the duty station where I led the walking group. Now I'm looking for ways to participate in this and other initiatives at my new workplace. If you are thinking along these same lines, I

recommend that you check out the Surgeon General’s website, which includes the Call to Action, videos, webcasts, and many other resources to help individuals, groups and communities “Step It Up!” Our USPHS leadership calls on us as a nation to **get moving!** For more information, please visit: <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/walking-and-walkable-communities/index.html> for more information and then see what you can do to support the Surgeon General’s initiative to “**Step it Up!**”

## ***Partnership for Humanitarian Relief***

*By CDR Holly Berilla, LCDR Stephanie Felder, and LCDR Kari Harris*

In late 2016, the USPHS Commissioned Corps and Remote Area Medical (RAM) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to share resources and information and provide direct clinical care to individuals in remote settings. Through this partnership with RAM, the USPHS has provided free medical, dental, and vision care to individuals in need on a first come, first served basis. The MOU has also provided an opportunity for USPHS Corps officers to receive training in a field environment.

### **RAM 2017 Chattanooga, TN Behavioral Health Professional Team**



One hundred fifteen USPHS Commissioned Corps officers participated in the first RAM event under this MOU from June 3-4, 2017, at Red Bank High School in Chattanooga, TN. Officers worked with 64 RAM volunteers to provide 641 patients (from eight states) care over the two-day clinic period. Of the 641 patients, 410 received dental care, 127 medical care, and 260 vision evaluations. Some received more than one service. Dental services included 526 tooth extractions, 171 fillings, and 204 cleanings. The onsite mobile lab created 272 pairs of eyeglasses.

In addition to the typical scope of care provided by RAM (i.e., dental, medical, and vision), Commissioned Corps officers provided 39 physical and occupational therapy consultations, 42 pharmacy consults, 70 behavioral and mental health evaluations and consultations (provided by a team of six mental health professionals, three of whom were social workers--- CDR Holly Berilla, LCDR Kari Harris, LCDR Stephanie Felder), stress management resources to 190 dental patients in a large group setting, and health education in areas other than mental health and substance abuse to 383 patients. Officers disseminated

health education materials (in English and Spanish) from local, state, and federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Food and Drug Administration.

According to feedback from individuals served and from RAM staff, the partnership between USPHS and RAM and the overall event was highly successful. PHS Officers volunteered their time and assumed

personal responsibility for transportation to the event – some traveled as far as Alaska and Hawaii. There will be additional RAM volunteer opportunities with the Commissioned Corps in the future. Keep an eye out for ways you can participate and get involved! For more information about the visit their homepage RAM .

*Pictured (L to R): Front Row: RADM Sylvia Trent-Adams, RADM Joan Hunter Middle Row: LCDR Sherry Gracey, LCDR Luz Rivera, CDR Julie Chodacki Back Row: CDR Holly Berilla, LCDR Kari Harris, LCDR Stephanie Felder*

## LIFELONG LEARNING

### ***Earn Free CEs & CEUs Online!***

*By LCDR Sean Bennett*

For many LCSWs working in administrative positions, it's often a challenge to earn CE and CEU credits. Both time and funding limitations may create barriers to obtaining the hours needed to advance professional development and to maintain licensure requirements. Below are two useful resources to help with CE/CEU credits:

1. The Indian Health Service Tele-Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (TBHCE) regularly offers courses on a range of topics via their online training portal. In order to receive notices about upcoming offerings, please visit their website or simply subscribe to the Tele-BH LISTSERV at [http://www.ihs.gov/listserv/topics/signup/?list\\_id=144](http://www.ihs.gov/listserv/topics/signup/?list_id=144).
2. The Veterans Administration (VA) TRAIN system is a comprehensive catalog of public health training opportunities, and is a free service for learners. While many of the topics focus on care for the Veteran patient, there is a wide variety of relevant subject matter for those within our discipline. For non-VA employees, you may use the following link to register and take advantage of the TRAIN learning platform: [TRAIN Registration](#).
3. The Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE) offers the opportunity to earn continuing education credits when you participate in the Military Health System (MHS) Speaker Series home study activities! You can access the home study sessions (web-based, pre-recorded courses) online and earn credits no matter your time zone or location. The purpose of the home study sessions is to educate military health care providers and enhance performance by sharing knowledge and best practices across the patient care continuum. Register online today and check out the many courses offered: <http://mhs.cds.pesgce.com>.

Consider signing up today for these professional development opportunities. Hope to see you in the virtual classroom!



## SOCIAL WORKERS TO SOCIAL WORKERS (SW2SW)

### ***Good Mentorship Is An Invaluable Career Development Tool!***

*By LCDR Stephanie Felder and CDR Jamie Seligman*

My career as a Public Health Officer started at the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2012. Being a brand new PHS officer at SAMHSA, I did not have a network of PHS colleagues to help guide me through my new career. As I started to meet PHS officers I realized, there was a common theme that I needed to enroll in the agency level and HSO Mentor/Mentee Program. I realized that having a mentor was key to being successful, especially in the Corp. I was assigned one of the best Health Services Officer (HSO) mentors Captain Jerry Mahlau-Heinert and a mentor at my first duty station CDR Jamie Seligman. Both mentors have consistently and constantly encouraged me to develop professionally, personally, and academically.

After discussions with my mentors about my career path I decided to leave SAMHSA and transfer over to the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), maintaining a great relationships with my prior team. I continue to receive mentorship from the Emergency Mental Health & Traumatic Stress Services Branch Chief Captain Maryann Robinson, FEMA Crisis Counseling Team Lead Captain Erik Hierholzer, and of course CDR Seligman. Upon my arrival at SAMHSA, I met with CDR Seligman who promptly encouraged me to present my research each year at the COA Symposium -- as a new officer I wasn't aware of these opportunities at the time. Taking his keen advice, I have submitted an abstract and presented every year at COA since coming into USPHS.

When I mentioned to CDR Seligman this year that unlike all the previous years, I planned not to do a general presentation to the symposium-at large, he highlighted that I needed to move out of my comfort zone and remain active in presenting my data. Always ready to rise to the challenge, I immediately thought why not submit a poster presentation. Having never submitted a poster presentation before (totally out of my comfort zone), I reached out to my doctoral chair at Catholic and asked for guidance. After receiving the template, I blended my current work at HRSA on HIV/AIDS and my passion, which has always been Veterans, and created a poster presentation entitled *Understanding the State of Care of Veterans Living With HIV/AIDS*. I was able to highlight the Veteran Affairs health care system and pertinent factors regarding Veterans living with HIV/AIDS. The poster was widely received, and I had the opportunity to share my passion for working with Veterans with many of my USPHS colleagues. Opportunities to reach new heights through mentorship is a life-long process that can positively change the professional and personal trajectory of a Corps officer.



## **Readiness Quick Tips-Summer 2017:**

*By SWPAG-Readiness Subcommittee*



Social Work Corps Officers: .....**Are you ready?**

**Reminder - Hurricane Season began on June 1st**

Having a “Go Bag” prepared is always important. However, during this time of year we recommend refreshing and inventorying your “Go Bag”. So, dust off your bag and make sure you have not left anything out!

Refer to the Essentials on the readiness page for full details☺:

[https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG\\_essentials\\_m.aspx](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG_essentials_m.aspx)

## **Calling on More Social Workers to Help Carry On USPHS Mission!**

*By CAPT Donald Schmidt*



Greetings fellow Social Workers! Please be aware that Open Enrollment for LCSW applications to the Commissioned Corps will begin on 14 AUG 17 and end on 08 SEP 17. If you know of any outstanding Social Workers who also embody the values and mission of the Commissioned Corps, please encourage them to apply. Their first step is to visit our website by [clicking here](#). There they will find all of the information they need. Thanks for supporting Commissioned Corps Social Work!

Newsletter created by SWPAG Communications Committee:  
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