

OPAG Minutes 04/05/2017

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 Cameron Scott (Chair)
- CDR Robert Chelberg (Chair-Elect)
- CAPT Kathleen Wooten
- CDR Chris Nield
- CDR Robert Kesead
- LCDR Craig Rennard
- LT Laura Alexander
- LT Jill Thompson

Absent:

- CDR Nima Desai

Liaisons/Co-Chairs

CDR Sarah Stienbarger
CDR Erin Giles
LT Emily Mathiak

Approval of Minutes

All in favor; Minutes approved.

Subcommittee Chair Reports

1. **Administrative Management:** CDR Rob Chelberg
Navigating transitions on both the PAC and PAG level and appreciate everyone's assistance with the process. Thanks to everyone who has stepped up to lead subcommittees and help meet deadlines. Working on policies a lot and will be working with Craig moving forward on SOPs. Templates will be distributed after the PHPAG figures them out. Succession planning is to be done in the summer so need to identify future Chair-elect and Executive Secretary so they can be prepared for their roles. Will be soliciting new members, especially younger officers that can really benefit from the group, towards the end of the year.
2. **Awards:** LT Laura Alexander
OPAG Award recipients announced. Selections will be announced at the symposium or mailed out to the individuals. Still accepting student award nominations until May 1, 2017. Information gathered to submit OPAG accomplishments for Unit Award.

3. **Communications:** LT Jill Thompson/LT Emily Mathiak
Updates made to both the minutes and roster pages on the OPAG website. HSPAC Communications Subcommittee still working to finalize category calendar and Max.gov website. Communication protocols have already been distributed and should be in use for PAC/PAG communications. Be mindful of deadlines for e-News when submitting items for publication. Template for newsletters to be distributed but nothing has been released at this time.
4. **Data & Evaluations:** CDR Chris Nield
Still haven't received any guidance on what type of data is to be collected and the direction the committee is heading. CPO interested in data regarding difficulty recruiting. Ideas for surveys related to recruiting tools such as Additional Incentive Pay & Accession Bonus. Potentially work in conjunction with Dawn Clary to gather information and not duplicate efforts. CPO Willis-Marsh has requested a white paper regarding compensation for the profession and its impact on recruitment from Dawn. Will communicate with Dawn to coordinate efforts moving forward to determine why retention and recruitment are so poor at this time.
5. **Policy:** LCDR Craig Rennard
PHPAG is the first to undergo the SOP pilot process. The goal is to draft SOPs for the PAG's functions and obtain lessons learned to be applied to all PAGs. PAG by-laws will be uniform in structure with guidance from the HSPAC policy subcommittee. They will also be discipline specific, according to each PAG. Awaiting further guidance regarding the by-laws and SOPs.
6. **Recruitment (Ad Hoc):** CDR Sarah Stienbarger
R.A. has one step remaining in application process. Husband and wife out of Gallup applying. M.G. in OK also applying. Two individuals interested in applying, however, their GPAs don't meet the requirement so trying to request a GPA exemption, as they both graduated 10+ years ago and have been working in IHS. Having difficulty arranging a meeting to discuss the exemption. Currently in open applications status for Optometry so anyone can apply at this time. Another individual not interested in CC but possibly seeking CS position. Conference call regarding mentoring (CADTMI) for those who have recently completed officer basics to discuss awards, positions, CV, COER, and things they should be accomplishing along the way. CADTMI is designed to do more intense mentoring than the PAC mentoring. Discussed trying to request/access a list of OD applicants in order to assist through the application process also.

Sarah requesting feedback whether to pursue the GPA exemption. Individuals currently working for IHS, have passed boards and fully functioning ODs. Neither have any malpractice history or other problems in the past and are fully credentialed through their facilities. Committee supportive of continuing to pursue exemption.
7. **Stakeholder & Community Engagement:** CAPT Kathleen Wooten
Still trying to figure out what is wanted by the PAC subcommittee. Aware of desire to know involvement in organizations and events/community involvement. It's believed that, since HSPAC is the second largest PAC, it is being looked to in order to demonstrate that we are the Nation's force for Public Health, that PHS is the most trained and skilled individuals, the "best of the best." Would like to be able to claim that we all have second advanced degrees and function as leaders on national boards. Wanting to be able to claim officers are excelling as more than just clinicians. Current thinking that we should have officers involved in AOA, AFOS, National Combined Council, JVN, AAO, AMSUS and PACE. Also, desire to show involvement on

community level with local organizations, schools and clinics. Unsure if wanting information regarding community participation outside of discipline.

8. **Technical Readiness:** CDR Robert Kesead/CAPT Larry Zobel

No advanced courses for ODs required for readiness. Completed deployment role for Direct Access. All information received for ODs for readiness is antiquated. Going to meet with CAPT Zobel and CAPT Dawn Clary to try to come up with something better regarding the deployment roles for optometrists. Those in IHS positions are seeing patient populations that prepare them for deployment. Want to develop a more comprehensive letter explaining what to expect when deployed. Needing a more realist approach and updated data. Latest data is from 2008. If you take courses for FMRB, that will help in preparing for deployment. You would also be ready to receive the badge then once you return from deployment. Wanting to write up a paper detailing deployment experiences in Central and South America to provide better level of expectation for those deploying in the future. Deployment expectations need to account for different scenarios though, ranging from traveling to South America or deploying to an Indian Reservation to taking part in a hurricane response. Needs depend on funding and access to medication/equipment, whether being stockpiled between deployments or looking to partner with other non-government organizations.

Currently, 120 hours of clinical experience per year are required for Optometry Retention Special Pay (ORSP). Concern about whether the 120 hours ORSP requirement is sufficient to qualify officers for technical readiness or if further criteria are needed. No distinction is made in the current requirement to account for overall years of career experience. Possible need to develop levels of requirement based on experience, similar to other services, and distinguish between beginner, mid-level and senior optometrists. All officers are basic ready and then advanced readiness is largely based on technical readiness. Will look into how other services qualify deployments.

9. **Training, Education & Mentorship:** CDR Nima Desai/CDR Sarah Stienbarger

No report

Liaison Reports

AMSUS: No Report

Chief Clinical Consultant: CAPT Dawn Clary: No Report

AFOS: CDR Greg Smith: No Report

FDA: Kim Lewandowski-Walker: No Report

PHS Recruitment/Applicant Placement: CDR Sarah Stienbarger:
Discussed during subcommittee reports.

APHA Vision Care: vacant

JOAG: vacant

Discussion Topics

Be aware of deadlines for those up for promotion and maintain readiness. Always be on the watch for opportunities to be involved. There's currently a voting member position on HSPAC that is open for recruitment and those interested are encouraged to apply.

Meeting adjourned

Upcoming OPAG meetings

June 7, 2017

August 2, 2017

October 4, 2017

December 6, 2017

All meetings are:

8:00 AM Alaska

9:00 AM Pacific

10:00 AM Mountain

11:00 AM Central

12:00 PM Eastern

Call in number for June 7, 2017 OPAG meeting:

1(877)546-1567 pw 63158