



Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service  
Scientist Professional Advisory Committee

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*From the SciPAC Chair*



## **Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC)**

### **Annual Report September 2018 – August 2019**

Prepared by:  
CAPT Jennifer D. Thomas  
SciPAC Chair

and

CDR Lauren Zapata  
Rules and Membership Subcommittee  
Annual Report Team Lead

## A. SCIPAC EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTIVITY

The SciPAC Executive Board for the period September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019 was:

CAPT Jennifer D. Thomas

*Chair*

Team Lead, Biological Rapid Response and Advanced Technology Laboratory, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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CDR Loren Rodgers

*Vice Chair*

Team Lead, Surveillance and Data Science Team, Surveillance and Data Branch, Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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LCDR Alice Shumate

*Executive Secretary*

Researcher, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Co-Director of the NIOSH Center for Maritime Safety and Health Studies

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LCDR Jason Wilken

*Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) Liaison*

Career Epidemiology Field Officer, State of California

Center for Preparedness and Response, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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CDR Robin Toblin

*Immediate Past Chair*

Associate Director, Division of Population Health Science, Office of Science

Center for Tobacco Products, Food and Drug Administration

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### **Mission:**

The duties of the Executive Board (EB) shall be to provide leadership that ensures timely completion of responsibilities listed in the Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC) Charter and to recommend to the SciPAC strategies/actions that address issues that affect the professional careers of Scientist officers. In cases where no established policies exist and immediate action is necessary, the EB is authorized to act but shall immediately notify the membership of its action.

**Chair: CAPT Jennifer D. Thomas**

SciPAC EB members provided advice and consultation to leadership and to the members of the 11 subcommittees (SCs) of the Scientist PAC. The EB met for 90 minutes monthly and conversed by e-mail and phone between meetings. The EB provided comments on policies/documents from Commissioned Corps leadership (e.g., a template envisioned to be used by all PACs for their charter) as well as feedback on documents from the SCs (e.g., standard operating procedures, SciPAC policies, curriculum vitae, surveys).

In addition to the daily functions, the EB went above and beyond to accomplish new initiatives that substantially benefited the Scientist PAC. This year, the EB:

- Ensured Executive Board review and approval of the Rules and Membership, Recruitment and Retention, and Career Development Subcommittee SOPs.
- Conducted the second SciPAC Program Evaluation via a survey of the functions of the four SCs whose SOPs will be reviewed in the next operational year (OY) so that those SCs could make improvements ahead of their official SOP update.
- Began quarterly telephone communication with the Deputy Surgeon General, at her request.
- Expertly and rapidly responded to data calls by the Chief Scientist Officer for the Office of the Surgeon General, highlighting response efforts of Scientist Officers to senior leadership.
- Represented SciPAC monthly at teleconferences of the Combined PAC Chairs Group.
- Reviewed, edited, and posted 218 messages to the 438-subscriber SciPAC listserv.
- Migrated SciPAC monthly meetings from outdated teleconference “bridgelines” to the WebEx platform.
- Established and documented procedures to include presentations as part of monthly SciPAC meetings, and scheduled and managed that presentation series
- Ended the OY with an increased balance.

Additionally, our SCs achieved many great accomplishments this year, which include the following:

- Launched @PHS\_Scientist Twitter handle, posted 25 cleared tweets generating 7,676 views
- Developed and finalized a critical SciPAC SOP, entitled “Honor Awards Policy for SciPAC Activities”
- Summarized unintended adverse effects of the Affordable Care Act on permanent-grade promotion and seniority credit, which was shared with the Deputy Surgeon General
- Disseminated pertinent, clarifying information regarding newly enacted policy changes to the Health Professions Special Pays for Psychologists
- Developed, distributed, responded to, and trained Scientist Officers on the new CV guidance
- Developed new guidance for writing Officer Statements
- Developed, organized, and implemented a diverse and scientifically relevant agenda for Scientist Category Day at 2019 USPHS Symposium, attended by over 70 Scientist Officers
- Hosted the USPHS Battle of the Categories Blood Drive at the 54th USPHS Symposium, collecting ~100 units of blood, the majority of which were donated by Scientist Officers

- Remedied personally identifiable information issues on the SciPAC website by prioritizing rapid review of content and fixing of links associated with promotion, subcommittee Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), SciPAC governing documents, and readiness
- Updated the entire SciPAC website to fix broken links and to revise content, remove content that was no longer useful, and consider changes that could make the site more useful, appealing, and increase visibility of Scientist Officers
- Analyzed the 2018 ‘State of Scientists’ (SOS) survey and presented key findings to the Category through an oral presentation and to the greater Corps through a well-attended poster at the 2019 USPHS Symposium
- Honored RADM Palmer Orlandi’s and CAPT Armen Thoumaian’s careers as Scientist Officers by organizing in-person gatherings for speaking engagements on the SciPAC monthly call and Retiring Distinguish Scientist awards
- Tracked and submitted all SciPAC honor awards to the CPO Awards Board and service awards to Commissioned Corps headquarters
- Reviewed, scored, and ranked applications for SciPAC’s Responder of the Year Award, Derek Dunn Memorial Senior Officer Award, Shalon Irving Memorial Junior Officer Award, and Mentor of the Year Award
- Provided resources and offered guidance to 32 interested applicants in the EIS/LLS classes for 2018 and 2019. Six individuals in either LLS or EIS have become Scientist Officers.
- Welcomed 16 Scientist Officer new CADs by attending 8 OBCs and providing written information on how to get involved in SciPAC
- Created a standardized “SciPAC Recruitment Presentation” for use by Scientist Officers at recruitment or alumni events, and presentation of it at a recruitment conference (HOSA)
- Filled 6 Voting Member vacancies in accordance with the procedures specified in the SciPAC SOP, including a complex situation involving retirement of a Voting Member and her replacement by an alternate
- Established a team to compile SciPAC’s end-of-year report to support Immediate Past Chair
- Increased mentor match agreements by 79% (from 57 [9/1/2018] to 102 [7/31/2019])
- Facilitated 30 mentor-mentee matches during OY 2019

**Vice Chairperson: CDR Loren Rodgers – See Section B, Rules and Membership Report**

**Executive Secretary: LCDR Alice Shumate**

- Reviewed, edited, and posted 218 messages to the listserv. (438 listserv subscribers). Aided new officers in subscribing.
- Tested multiple meeting platforms, then selected and successfully migrated SciPAC monthly meetings to the Webex platform.
- Implemented updates to the meeting attendance tracking system, easing the reporting burden on Scientists and the Executive Secretary.
- Established and documented procedures to include presentations as part of monthly SciPAC meetings, and scheduled and managed that presentation series.

- Created best practices document for future Executive Secretaries to smooth transition process for new SC Chairs and Executive Secretary, covering Listserv policy and reminders, monthly meeting reports and minutes, and meeting presentation scheduling.
- Updated the SciPAC Communications Policy Listserv Appendix, allowing for listserv policies to be fully codified in the SciPAC Communications Policy SOP for the first time.
- Worked with Website SC to trouble-shoot PII concerns in the SciPAC minutes and develop and implement a new procedure for archiving minutes.

### **COF Liaison: LCDR Jason Wilken**

- Changed PAC fundraising focus from merchandise sales to soliciting donations at Scientist-led social events.
  - SciPAC raised \$1,738 this OY. The greatest source of this year's funds (\$603) were raised at social events.
  - Our end of OY balance is \$792 greater than the beginning of the OY. Since 2011 (the year of earliest available records), this is the third time the PAC ended an OY with greater funds than the beginning of the OY, and the first time this happened two consecutive years.
- Increased PAC funds allowed us to pay for committed costs and fund new initiatives:
  - Paid for two Distinguished Retiring Scientist plaques.
  - Donated \$50 towards the COF Symposium All-Categories social.
  - Provided reimbursement for the State of Scientists survey and the SC survey.
  - Paid for Recruitment and Retention SC business cards (new initiative).
  - Paid for Category Day social (new initiative).
- T-shirt stock was depleted (only 3 XL shirts remain). 46 SciPAC coins remain in inventory. Next year's COF Liaison should consider coordinating purchase of additional coins and consider new merchandise options.
- Supported the SciPAC Program Evaluation by developing the second annual 10–15-minute SC Survey, designed to gather data about Scientists' use of and knowledge of SCs services. Each year, questions focused on two SCs that will revise their SOPs in the next OY, and one new SC.
  - Worked with Mentoring, Readiness, and Website SCs to develop questions specific to these SCs.
  - Created an online survey and deployed to the PAC, receiving ~97 responses over a 2-week period.
  - Provided line-list and frequency data to the three SCs listed above for each of their questions.
- Served as the PAC's MAX.gov administrator, ensuring that officers have access on an as-needed basis to restricted pages, troubleshooting for SCs, and maintaining and updating PAC pages.

### **Summary**

The 2017-2018 OY was important for the Scientist Category as evidenced by increased involvement in SciPAC activities across all 11 SCs and strong monthly meeting attendance. While diverse, the Category has strengthened in unity and esprit de corps as a direct result of the dedicated Scientist Officers serving on active duty.

## **B. SC REPORTS**

The SCs within SciPAC focused on maintaining excellence while beginning new initiatives and tasks. The following section describes the major duties, accomplishments, impacts, and recommendations of each SC. The reports below were developed and submitted by each SC Chair(s).

### **AWARDS**

**Chair: CDR James L. Kenney**

**Co-Chair: LCDR Nancy Tian**

#### **Major Duties:**

- Prepare and schedule annual nominations for the Scientist Responder of the Year, the Shalon Irving Junior Scientist of the Year, the Derek Dunn Senior Scientist of the Year, and Scientist Mentor of the Year Awards. Develop draft example award write-ups and evaluation criteria for Scientist award nominations. Distribute reminders regarding annual awards notices to SciPAC members.
- Coordinate the award nomination process for the Scientist Responder of the Year Award so the recipient's name is submitted to the Director of the Readiness and Deployment Operations Group (RedDOG) by December 1<sup>st</sup> for consideration for the USPHS Responder of the Year Award. Assist the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) in his/her submission to the Director of RedDOG. Assistance may include, but is not limited to, drafting a nomination letter to the Director of RedDOG detailing the recipient's accomplishments and rationale for consideration for the USPHS Responder of the Year Award. Ensure that the recipient of the Scientist Responder of the Year Award is presented with a plaque during Category Day at the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Coordinate the award nomination process for both the Junior and Senior Scientist of the Year and Mentor of the Year Awards to ensure that recipients are presented with a plaque during Category Day at the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Draft an awards briefing summarizing the accomplishments of each awardee, (i.e., the Scientist Responder of the Year, Junior Scientist of the Year, Senior Scientist of the Year, and Mentor of the Year) for use by the SciPAC Chair and/or CPO during Category Day at the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. In addition, provide names of the awards recipients to the Category Day Chair for use in the USPHS Scientific and Training program.
- Recommend Scientist Officers for the CPO's approval to serve on the judging committee; provide guidance and nominee ranking criteria to assist the confirmed members of the judging committee in their judging duties; evaluate nominee award packets, including basic readiness requirements, to ensure that they meet the criteria for the submitted awards before sending them to the judges for review and rankings; advise SciPAC on ways to pro-actively encourage supervisors to nominate Scientist Officers for awards.
- Rate each nomination and average all ranked nominees; as permitted, discuss and comment on nominee rankings prior to selecting final nominations for each award.
- Forward the reviewers' nominations and justifications for each award to the CPO for approval and confirmation.

- Solicit pictures and biographies from each awardee for publication on SciPAC's website and Newsletter.
- Update the Awards SC's SOPs.
- Update the Awards SC's webpage on the SciPAC website.
- Order awards plaques in time for Category Day at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Track SciPAC-related Awards.
- Identify and award retiring Scientists.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Created 10 teams with team leaders and co-leaders to coordinate the nomination for the SciPAC awards and other related items.
- Ensured timely development and dissemination of calls for nominations for each of the four SciPAC Awards.
- Selected SC members to comprise the selection board for the four SciPAC awards, and assigned team leads for different SC endeavors.
- Verified basic readiness of nominees for all four SciPAC awards. Requested a screenshot of nominee's basic readiness status for inclusion in the nomination packet.
- Coordinated the review and selection process for all four SciPAC awards.
- Submitted awardee's pictures and brief biographies to the SciPAC Category Day SC and the Website SC for posting to the SciPAC website.
- Ordered award plaques for all four SciPAC awards and coordinated presentation of the plaques at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Ordered two award plaques for distinguished retiring officers to be presented by our CPO in the Scientist category.
- Developed Category Day award presentation script and accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- Developed tracking tool to ensure continuity of awards within the PAC from one year to the next and continuously updated the SAA, UC, and individual awards status.
- Collaborated with the SciPAC Policy SC to write a new SciPAC Awards SOP entitled, 'Honor Awards Policy for SciPAC Activities'.
- Currently updating the Awards SC SOP entitled, 'Standard Operating Procedures of the Awards SC' to address typos, clarify and better reflect the current processes used by the SC.

### **Impact:**

- Ensured recognition of Scientist Officers for the exceptional service through the Scientist the Responder of the Year, Junior and Senior Scientist of the Year, and Mentor of the Year Awards.
- Ensured recognition of two senior scientist officers that were retiring through plaques recognizing their contributions to the Commissioned Corps and SciPAC.
- Ensured officers are recognized for their PAC-related contributions with a tracking system for award continuity.
- Ensured SOP accurately reflected the current processes used by the SC.
- Ensured the policy accurately provides guidance for Scientist Officers to be recognized for their SciPAC related activities.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to update the Awards SC SOP as needed.
- Ensure the Awards SC SOP remains consistent with the SciPAC Charter and other governing documents.
- Ensure the award submission is well aligned with the award board meeting time.
- Ensure the award submission process is posted to the SciPAC website.
- Continuously communicate with the OSG and CPO award boards to track the status of the individual and group awards.
- Work with the Mentoring SC to encourage Mentor of the Year nominees.
- Develop a better system to identify retiring Scientists.
- Continue trying to assist RedDOG in establishing evaluation criteria for their All Category Responder of the Year Award, so SciPAC can harmonize our criteria to ensure our Scientist Responder of the Year Awardee is considered for their prestigious award.

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT****Chair: LCDR Tyann Blessington****Co-Chairs: LCDR Rory Geyer and LCDR Oliver Ou****Major Duties:**

- Provide guidance in preparing promotion materials, including the SciPAC CV.
- Coordinate the SciPAC CV and OS Review Service.
- Review, update, and maintain the Scientist Officer Handbook.
- Compile and disseminate job/position announcements.
- Provide information and generate data into factors that relate to promotion success.
- Provide career development training.
- Coordinate and disseminate career development information to Scientist Officers.
- Update and maintain the Career Development SC SOP.

**Accomplishments & Impacts:****SOP Team**

- The Career Development SC SOP was revised during the 2018-2019 OY. The new SOP (pending final EB approval) provides information on the duties and responsibilities for the SC and the operations and procedures currently employed by this SC. The new SOP provides detailed descriptions of the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of each team, as well as the operational specifics needed to successfully complete the SC activities. The defined structure provides guidance to future SC Chairs, Co-Chairs, Team leads, and members and ensures that the broad mission of the SC is achieved.

**CV/OS Review Team**

- Forty-four Scientist officers participated in the CV/OS Review service and received feedback and recommendations from 43 volunteer senior officer reviewers. Many of the reviewers met with their mentees during individual meetings to discuss opportunities to strengthen their promotion documents and provide advice, thereby, increasing the officer's chances of promotion. The CV/OS Review Team coordinated the volunteer



reviewers, the collection of promotion materials, and the matching of reviewers with mentees.

- Eleven Scientist officers (25%) requesting this service were successfully promoted.
  - Of those that were eligible for temporary O-4 promotion, 36% (8/22) were successful.
  - Of those that were eligible for temporary O-5 promotion, 27% (3/11) were successful.
  - Of those that were eligible for temporary O-6 promotion, 0% (0/11) were successful.

#### CV Guidance Update Team

- The CV Guidance Team completed and distributed new CV guidance updates, which included format updates, guidance, and examples of the Scientist CV and CV summary sheet, and continuing education documentation. The new guidance was distributed, and in partnership with the Training Team a training seminar led by CDR Renee Calanan was held for all Scientists in October 2018. Changes were based on the need to highlight officer accomplishments related to benchmarks and reflected a harmonization of multiple separate guidance documents.
- An OS guidance document, to include a non-descript OS example, was developed with the review and analysis of recently promoted senior officer OS documents. The OS guidance has been drafted and is pending final EB approval. The OS guidance will provide Scientists with further clarity on the format and content of a high-quality OS specific to Scientist officers.

#### Jobs List Team

- Scientist officers received a weekly list of available billets in eight different field areas and disciplines: 1) emergency response, 2) epidemiology, 3) laboratory science, 4) policy development, 5) programmatic work, 6) psychology, 7) regulatory science, and 8) research. The 2018 SciPAC survey found that more than most (57%) Scientist officers review the listing many or most weeks. Hiring officials have become aware of this service and its ability to target highly qualified Scientist officers, now each weekly posting includes several positions outside of USAJOBS that were sent directly to the Jobs List Team.

#### Promotion Panel Team

- The Promotion Panels Initiative continues to generate data-driven insight into factors that may relate to success or non-success of promotion-eligible Scientist officers. This year data was collected through an anonymous survey and included Scientists who were selected for promotion in Promotion Year 2018 for temporary O-4, temporary O-5, and temporary O-6 promotion. Topics covered in this year's survey included: demographics, career progression and potential, performance rating and reviewing officer's statements, mentoring, deployments, professional contributions, and service to the USPHS. A report titled, "Scientist Category Career Development Profile: Promotion Year 2018", has been drafted and is pending final EB approval. The analysis will provide Scientists with insight into the perceived strengths of promoted officers' promotion packages, inform mentors

and mentees about characteristics of promoted officers, and serves as a mechanism for long-term trending.

#### Scientist Officer Handbook Team

- The Scientist Officer Handbook Team continues to review and update sections of Handbook on a rotating basis. This fiscal year, six sections covering 1) Basic Readiness, 2) Commissioned Corps Awards, 3) Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER), 4) Mentoring Commissioned Officers, 5) Promotion, and 6) Uniform Wear, were updated and are pending final EB approval. These updates provide guidance to newly commissioned Scientists and those who seek additional information on critical topics of the commissioned corps and how they relate to Scientist officers.

#### Training Team

- The Training Team partnered with the CV Guidance Update Team to present a training on the new CV guidance updates.
- Additionally, the Training Team developed a training on proper uniform wear titled, "Appropriate PHS Uniform Wear, Common Mistakes, and Helpful Resources". The training seminar was presented by LCDR Shayne Gallaway after the SciPAC general meeting's announcements in April. The Training Team received positive comments and 164 Scientist officers were documented in attendance for the meeting and training event. Additionally, the presentation and resources were distributed with the meeting invite to all Scientist officers on the SciPAC listserv.

#### Website

- Many of the established website links managed by the Career Development SC were inactivated in the fall of 2018 due to personally identifiable information (PII) concerns across all official Commissioned Corps websites. Pertinent links to promotion-specific information and guidance were re-established and links to the newly developed CV Guidance documents were created to support Scientist officers preparing for promotion.
- The Career Development SC website was updated to reflect accurate and updated information on the roles, responsibility, and tasks of the SC.

#### Administration

- The SC Secretary collected monthly updates and accomplishments from all the Team Leads and assisted with streamlining communications and documentation for the SC.
- The SC collaborated with the CV/OS Review Team and SC Chair and Co-Chairs to draft, approve, and distribute 64 Letters of Appreciation to CV/OS Reviewers and Promotion Specific Mentoring Mentors.

#### Other Accomplishments

- Promotion Specific Mentoring Service: Seventeen Scientist officers participated in the Promotion Specific Mentoring Service (a.k.a. previously referred to as "Promotion Doctor" service), that was designed to assist Scientist officers who had been unsuccessful in achieving promotion after multiple attempts. Participants received feedback and recommendations from 21 volunteer senior officer reviewers. Many of the reviewers met with their mentees during individual meetings to discuss opportunities to strengthen their

promotion documents and provide advice, thereby, increasing the officer’s changes of promotion. The SC Chair and Co-Chairs coordinated the volunteer reviewers, the collection of promotion materials, and the matching of reviewers with mentees.

- Four Scientist officers (25%) requesting this service were successfully promoted.
  - Of those that were eligible for O5 promotion, 33% (4/12) were successful. Three officers that were promoted after participating in the Promotion Specific Mentoring were also participants in the CV/OS Review Service.
  - Of those that were eligible for O6 promotion, 0% (0/4) were successful.
  - One officer requested assistance on achieving permanent promotion and at the time of this report permanent promotion results were not available.
- New Hat Corner, a platform to highlight career transitions: In an effort to highlight career progress, a new initiative was proposed that would highlight Scientist officers who recently experienced career transitions, including a transition to new agency or position, a geographic move, or other major changes. The SC submitted an article titled, “The New Hat Corner: Interview with officers who have experienced career transitions” to the Newsletter Team within the Visibility SC.

**Changes:**

- Upon approval of the Career Development SC SOP, the structure, team names, roles, and responsibilities will be slightly modified. The new SOP also includes considerably more information on the purpose, objectives, and operational specifics for each Team. Changes were made to reflect the broadening responsibilities of the SC. Many of the SC Team roles continue to provide guidance and support for officers as they prepare PHS promotion and they also provide data on factors that influence career success. Many of the roles highlighted in the new SOP can support officers in other aspects of career development, such as obtaining new billets, training to support upward mobility, and enhance officership. The below table highlights the evolution of SC Teams and roles from the 2014 SOP, current operational status, and those proposed in the 2019 SOP.

<b>Teams/ Roles included in 2014 SOP</b>	<b>Current Teams/ Roles</b>	<b>New Teams/ Roles Proposed in 2019 SOP*</b>
CV Reviewing Workgroup	CV Guidance Update Team	<i>Promotion Guidance Team</i>
OBC Training Workgroup	This effort has been moved to the Recruitment & Retention SC	
Scientist Officer Handbook Workgroup	Scientist Officer Handbook Team	Scientist Officer Handbook Team
Training Workgroup	Training Team	Training Team
Secretary	Secretary/ Administration	Role is included in the <i>Administration &amp; Communications Team</i>
	CV/OS Review Team	<i>Promotion Document Review Team</i>
	Jobs List Team	<i>Job List Panel Team</i>
	Promotion Panel Team	<i>Promotion Panel Initiative Team</i>
	SOP Team	SOP Team

Teams/ Roles included in 2014 SOP	Current Teams/ Roles	New Teams/ Roles Proposed in 2019 SOP*
	Website Liaison	Role is included in the <i>Administration &amp; Communications Team</i>

\*Subject to approval and implementation of the new 2019 SOP. Updated organizational structure and names are italicized.

- To address the many facets of career development, the CV/OS Review Team has established a process to coordinate and manage year-round review of CV and OS documents. The CV/OS Review Team has proposed additional review services for the review of federal version resumes.
- Based on feedback received last OY, the Jobs List Team has separated job announcements into categories/disciplines and highlights. Newly added positions are also highlighted to enhance the visibility of recent updates.
- To accommodate the schedules of those eligible to be interviewed for the Promotion Panel Initiative and to streamline data collection and analysis, the Promotion Panel Team designed and implemented and distributed an online survey to those eligible and willing to participate in the Initiative.
- This was the first OY where the Career Development SC coordinated the Promotion Specific Mentoring Service. The service was previously coordinated by members of the EB; however, since the objectives and scope correlated with those of this SC, the service coordination and management were transferred.
- The New Hat Corner initiative was developed to highlight aspects of career transition and progression that had not been addressed by other teams and to facilitate outreach and mentoring for Scientist officers considering similar career transitions.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to broaden the work of the SC and explore avenues that emphasize a wide and holistic view of career development, beyond promotion success. Special emphasis on elements of career progression that demonstrates Scientist officers’ ability to excel in changing environments, multi-faceted skill-set, flexibility, and resilience should be considered.
- The approved SOP will should be distributed to all SC members and available to the category via the SC webpage. Changes to Team names, roles, and responsibilities should be reflected on the SC webpage. SC Chair/Co-Chairs, Team leads, and SOP Team should develop ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the new processes and collect comments related to the changes.
- A training session should be presented in early fall on the approved OS guidance document and example, which will aid officers as they prepare and develop their own OS.
- Training seminars covering personal perspectives on Scientist officer career transitions should be considered. Additional opportunities to collect requests for trainings from Scientist officers should be considered.
- Opportunities to record future Career Development trainings and seminars should be explored.

- Comments on the use and review of the 2018 CV Guidance should be considered during the next OY. Input from CV reviewers and mentors should be sought. Future high-profile guidance development should be developed and implemented approximately every other year, to allow the CV Guidance Team adequate time to implement, train, and evaluate newly developed guidance documents.
- Continue to foster opportunities that support Scientist officers in obtaining new billets, including promoting the Jobs List service to Commissioned Corps Agency Liaisons and agency hiring officials, promote the use of CV review service throughout the year and the use of the CV review service to review federal version resumes.
- Merge all promotion document review services under a single effort and team coordination. Two separate services and processes may not be necessary. The promotion success rate for the CV/OS Review service was approximately equal to that of the Promotion Specific Mentoring service. Additionally, most promoted officers using the Promotion Specific Mentoring service were also participating in the CV/OS Review service. The single proposed review service can encourage Scientist officers who had been unsuccessful in achieving promotion after multiple attempts to provide their reviewers some information on comments received from the promotion board members and areas where scores could be improved.
- Seek additional avenues for distribution and outreach to enhance awareness of the Scientist Officer Handbook.
  - In collaboration with the Website Liaison, the Scientist Officer Handbook Team should ensure the newly 2019 updated Handbook sections are compliant with website inclusion requirements. The other sections, updated in previous years, should be considered for website inclusion, as well.
  - All Scientist Handbook Sections should be combined in a single PDF document and provided to the Mentoring SC and Recruitment & Retention SC leads for mentoring an on-boarding use.
- Expand the annual promotion survey to include officers who have not been successful at promotion. Historically, only officers who successfully promoted were asked to complete the promotion survey. Evaluate promotion data collected over the past several years for shifting trends.
- During close-out meetings with the Chair/Co-Chairs and Team Leads, the majority of Team Leads agreed that monthly team meetings are not needed, but quarterly or special purpose meetings would be valuable. All teleconference meetings should have key objectives, beyond routine update submissions, such as introducing special topics, collaboration opportunities, and special concerns.
  - The Chair/Co-Chairs should consider separate and more frequent meetings or communications with the newly formed Administration & Communications Team, due to the Team's supportive and collaborative role with the Chair/Co-Chair and Team Leads and liaison role with external SC members (Website SC and others).
- An internal SC training or guidance document on how to navigate, operate, and update Max.gov documents should be considered. Consult the Website SC to determine if guidance/training has been previously developed.

- Early in the 2019-2020 OY, the SC Chair/Co-Chairs should issue a notice for additional Scientist officer volunteers to staff the vacancies and additional roles needed to accomplish the Career Development SC activities.

### **CATEGORY DAY**

**Chair: CDR Eric Zhou**

**Co-Chair: CDR Deborah Dee**

#### **Major Duties:**

- Solicit team leaders and prepare the agenda for the Scientist Category Day.
- Ensure Category Day activities/topics are of current scientific or professional interest.
- Solicit abstracts from Scientists officers and systematically review each to select the highest quality abstracts for presentation during Category Day.
- Recruit a keynote speaker to support the theme of the Symposium.
- Coordinate with symposium planners throughout the year to ensure logistical support for Category Day and to inform officers about symposium-wide events.
- Provide detailed information regarding relevant USPHS Symposium events.
- Organize and advertise a Scientist officer social event that coincides with Category Day.
- Provide networking opportunities that focus on meeting officers throughout the category.
- Engage in mentorship through a session dedicated to key topics on mentoring.
- Provide recognition to winners of yearly Category awards through the presentation of plaques and holding a ceremony.
- Provide the CPO with an opportunity to address the category to discuss current topics that are of significance to officers and to accept questions from the category.
- Conduct a post-Category Day survey to inform future Category Day planning.
- Review and update the SOP annually.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Successfully developed, organized, and implemented a diverse and scientifically relevant agenda for Scientist Category Day (May 8) at the 2019 USPHS Symposium, which was held in Minneapolis, MN, (see agenda) and attended by over 70 Scientist officers.

#### **Executive Members (SC Chair, Co-Chair, and Executive Secretary)**

- Solicited and appointed the leadership within the SC, including the Executive Board, 12 Teams, and 33 Team Leads or Co-leads.
- Attended the All Categories Representatives meetings.
- Hosted the SciPAC Category SC meetings as needed.
- Review and obtain approval from SciPAC leadership (including CPO and SciPAC Chair and Vice Chair) on the proposed Category Day agenda

#### **Abstract Team**

- Solicited abstracts for Category Day presentations in three tracks: Science/Epidemiology, Program/Policy, and Deployment/Leadership. Also offered 2 presentation styles: Traditional (15-minute briefing style) and SciTalk (10 minutes allotted).
  - Received and reviewed 22 abstracts.

- Selected 6 presentations for inclusion in the Category Day agenda as SciTalks.
- Selected 3 presentations for inclusion in the Category Day agenda as Traditional presentations.
- Selected 1 for poster presentation.
- Presentations reflected common interests across the category
- Presentations included one focused on the history of SciPAC.

#### Keynote Team

- Developed a list of potential keynote speakers, primarily from the University of Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Health, and selected and secured Erin Krebs, MD, MPH, from the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. The title of Dr. Krebs' keynote address provided information on how to "Team-based Care for Patients with Chronic and Long-term Opioid Use."

#### Agency Networking Team

- Executed one networking session to facilitate networking and professional development among Scientist officers.
- Provided officers at Category Day with a ticket that had two randomized numbers, each of which assigned officers to specific tables in each of two respective networking sessions.
- During each session, officers spent 15 minutes at each table answering questions from a prepared questionnaire and sharing the answers with the officers at the table. At the end of the event, volunteers were called to share their experience with officers attending Category Day.

#### State of the Category Team

- Our Chief Scientist Officer, CAPT John Eckert, provided the State of the Category address, which was developed based on questions submitted in advance by Scientist officers. This address was amended onsite to discuss more fully the comments made to Scientist officers during the lunch-hour visit by the Surgeon General and other dignitaries.

#### Onsite Team

- Presented photos of SciPAC and Category Day SC leadership to foster networking and to acknowledge their contributions to SciPAC and Category Day, respectively.
- Demonstrated flexibility by changing the agenda at the last minute to incorporate the certificate presentation to the officers who contributed to the Scientist-led Blood Drive.
- Maintained a consist pace throughout the day to ensure all presentations and activities were completed within the allowed time.

#### Mentoring Team

- Developed and facilitated an interactive workshop to problem solve four case studies on mentioning junior and senior officers.

#### Panel Team

- Discussed “The importance of partnerships during emergency responses, with a focus on PHS deployments” with 4 panelists from NIH, CMS, and FDA, who had participated in diverse types of deployments.

#### Social Team

- Planned a Scientist Category Day Social following the completion of the Category Day program. The social was attended by ~30 Scientist officers and with over \$200 of food sponsored by SciPAC.

#### Evaluation Team

- Collected and analyzed 42 post-Category Day evaluations completed by Category Day attendees and non-attendees, representing an increase in survey completion of 15 members (58%) compared with those completed in 2018.

#### SOP Team

- Reviewed and updated the Category Day SC Standard Operating Procedures to ensure documentation, continuity, and sharing historical knowledge of typical procedures.

#### Appreciation Team

- Developed and provided over 64 personalized letters of appreciation (LOA) and submitted the LOA roster by June 30, 2019.

#### Awards Team

- Coordinated the awards portion of Category Day by composing the Award presentation slides and awards script for use by the CPO.
- Contacted officers involved in SciPAC Category Day to compose the Unit Commendation (UC) Award Roster and submitted to roster by June 30, 2019.

#### Website Liaison

- Updated the 2019 Category Day information on the SciPAC website.

#### **Impact:**

- ~70 Scientist officers actively participated in the 2019 Category Day, providing each with extensive opportunities to network within and contribute to the SciPAC and develop professionally.
- 18 officers demonstrated officership while also gaining professional development and experience by serving as speakers and/or panelists for Category Day.
- 36 officers held leadership positions within the Subcommittee, enhancing their officership and leadership skills
- More than 30 Scientist officers attended the SciPAC Category Day social, facilitating camaraderie among Scientist officers and additional networking opportunities in a casual setting.
- A total of 77 officers actively contributed to the 2019 Scientist Category Day.

#### **Recommendations:**



- *Executive Members:* The topics of presentation should be of the general interest of SciPAC officers. Provide as much opportunity as possible to officers on leadership and networking.
- *Abstract Team:* Will be helpful to work with leadership and other teams early in the planning process to decide how moderators will be identified (i.e., will each team identify moderators for their session?) Develop moderator info sheet with tasks for moderators, in collaboration with onsite team. Send frequent reminders to abstract presenters about length of talk, slide submission deadlines.
- *Keynote Team:* First select the topic of interest. Focus on high impact and highly relevant public health issues that would be of interest to Scientist officers. Universities and state health departments are ideal places to locate highly qualified candidates. Have each team member rate each candidate independently, and follow-up with a call to identify the consensus speaker and backup speakers, building into the process SciPAC leadership approval as well.
- *Agency Networking Team:* Continue with the described process above. Draft a shorter list of questions with a specific focus. (It was a bit hard to answer all the questions by all the officers at each table in the allotted time).
- *State of the Category Team:* Schedule a meeting with the current CPO early in spring of the OY to discuss their vision for the State of the Category Address and what support they may desire. This may change annually, depending on hot topics in the Corps at the time. Use an easy to access platform (e.g., Survey Monkey) to ensure high response rates when polling the category regarding their concerns or areas of emphasis for the address.
- *Onsite Team:* Include 3-4 officers on the team. If possible, include Onsite Team Lead(s) in all COA planning meetings and lunches. Work with Category Day Leads to develop a list of deadlines at the beginning of the planning process. When seeking volunteers, indicate that all Onsite Team members must attend COA in person.
- *Mentoring Team:* Request feedback on ideas for additional, engaging activities for mentoring.
- *Panel Team:* It would be nice to move away from tables and have panelists stand or move through the audience, perhaps eliciting more interaction and participation.
- *Evaluation Team:* We may want to engage officers sometime during the fall to gather information on what they want to hear.
- *SOP Team:* Teams should provide their SOP revisions to the SOP team by no later than July 1 to allow time for the revisions to be incorporated into the SOP and to have the SOP sent to Category Day leadership for final approval.
- *Appreciation Team:* The roster for LOAs and the UC award should be assigned to one team, the Appreciation \*or\* Awards Team, to increase the efficiency and to avoid errors.
- *Awards Team:* The roster for the UC and LOA should be assigned to either the Appreciation Team or the Awards Team. (Awards Team believes it fits best with the Appreciation Team). The role of the liaison between the SciPAC Awards Committee and the SciPAC Category Day Awards Team created some confusion. Is this liaison position needed?) In the past, the Awards Team has communicated effectively with the Awards Committee Chairs to obtain information on the Award recipients.
- *Social Team:* Recommend the Social Team Lead delegate specific individuals' responsibility for identifying the social location; overseeing communication about the social; and coordinating food. The delegation of responsibility will empower individual

officers to come up with a plan/task list. The Social Team can help each other with the different things that need to get done (location requires a lot of moving parts, whereas communication could be done almost entirely by one person). The lead could modify plans as needed, check in to mark progress, and maintain accountability for everything getting done.

## **MENTORING**

**Chair: CDR Lana Rossiter**

**Co-Chairs: LCDR John Pesce and CDR Cara Halldin**

**Leadership:** LT Jason Caballero, CDR Demissie Zewditu, LCDR Shayne Gallaway, LCDR Patrick High, CDR Emily Jentes, CDR Andrea McCollum, LCDR Jorge Muniz-Ortiz, CDR Matthew Newland, CDR Sara Pulliam, CDR Alfredo Sancho, CDR Mark Scheckelhoff, LT Dantrell Simmons, CDR Jeremy Wally, LCDR Elizabeth Edwards, LT Debra Chen

### **Major Duties:**

- Providing support and services to all mentors and mentees.
- Promoting the program.
- Keeping records of the matched pairs and providing recognition to those involved.
- Monitoring the success of the program and making any necessary changes.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Updates were made to the Mentoring Guidebook.
- Specific questions were designed and deployed in the annual 2019 SciPAC survey to gauge the interest and participation of Scientist officers in the Mentor Matching Program and to gather information about the use of existing SciPAC mentor guidance resources.

### **Mentor Matching Team**

- Increased mentor match agreements by 79% (from 57 [9/1/2018] to 102 [7/31/2019]).
- Facilitated 30 mentor-mentee matches during 9/1/2018-7/31/2019.
- Streamlined mentor matching agreement renewal process.
  - Recruited and on-boarded two new team members (LT Leora Feldstein, LT Michelle Hughes) to manage this renewal process.
  - Conducted quarterly mentor matching renewals for 60 agreements that recently expired or were scheduled to expire; 50 matches (83%) were renewed during 11/1/2018-7/30/2019.
- Redesigned and simplified the mentor match agreements database to include the necessary information for the mentor matching team.
- Implemented the use of max.gov for storage of the mentor match agreements database and mentor matching agreements.
  - Transitioned duties of mentor matching agreement coordinator to LT Jason Caballero.
- Revised process for development of Letters of Appreciation (LOAs) for mentors to ensure all were completed in a timely fashion prior to the end of the OY.
- Queried all newly promoted O-5 and O-6 officers to assess their willingness to serve as a mentor

### Agency Specific Advisers Team

- The team's mission is to provide advisers to Scientist Officers who are changing OPDIVs and interested in OPDIV-specific mentorship.
- The team sent out an email asking for officers who would like to volunteer to be mentors. A total of 18 officers have volunteered to become Agency Specific Advisers. A fillable form and database of Agency Specific Advisers have been created. In addition, we have matched one officer with two advisers.

### Category Day Team

- Category Day 2019 was a big success with a session where participants discussed one of four scenarios of Scientist officers at different ranks and phases in their careers. Each scenario was followed up with recommendations for mentors for each of the officers in the scenarios.
- The Team also hosted an informal mentoring session the day before Category Day. This was an opportunity for officers to stop by and interact in small groups to discuss topics related to mentoring and career development.

### **Impact:**

- Lessened burden on both mentee and mentor to renew annual agreements via an email renewal process.
- Increased timeliness and response of renewals via quarterly renewal process (instead of annually), while simultaneously providing an immediate opportunity for officers to identify the need for a new mentor if they chose not to renew their agreement with their mentor.
- Enhanced awareness of the benefits of having multiple mentors and the benefits of serving as a mentor to fellow officers.
- Enhanced awareness to the benefits of mentoring which includes career progression, personal wellness, and overall guidance.
- Recognized all mentors for their contributions during this OY in meeting the mentorship benchmark.
- Approximately 45% of all Scientists (145 unique officers serving as a mentor and/or mentee) are actively involved in a formal mentoring relationship within the category.
- Connected junior officers seeking mentors to the matching team at the COF Symposium through the Category Day mentoring events

### **Recommendations:**

- Continue to engage current and new members.
  - Increase the number of active mentor-mentee agreements.
  - Explore mentorship for O-5 and O-6 officers to support them in their career growth, beyond promotion to the senior ranks.
- Continue to collaborate with other sub-committees to highlight mentoring benefits and techniques to promote mentoring, including the peer support network and the agency specific advisor group.
- Reach out to all officers who previously served as mentors, but whom are not actively engaged in a mentor-mentee relationship.

- Develop a by-name list of all officers and reach out to individual officers who are currently not actively engaged in a mentor-mentee relationship.
- Build on the work of the Agency Specific Advisers team to match more officers interested in other OPDIVs
- Analyze and use the SciPAC survey results to improve mentorship materials, outreach, and access to mentorship for officers.

## **POLICY**

**CHAIR: CDR Adam Bjork**

**Co-Chair: CDR Jessica Chiaruttini**

### **Major Duties:**

- Policy review
- Policy development
- Policy monitoring
- Policy SC SOP triennial review

### **Accomplishments & Impact:**

#### **Policy Review**

- Reviewed unintended adverse effects of the Affordable Care Act on permanent-grade promotion and seniority credit. The resulting two-page summary included data retrieved from the “Blue Book” to summarize issues related to constructive credit. The document also described impacts on permanent-grade promotion eligibility and seniority credit, concluding that inclusion of seniority credit for promotion considerations might introduce bias if used to assigned preference during the temporary promotion review process.
- Disseminated pertinent, clarifying information regarding newly enacted policy changes to the Health Professions Special Pays (HPSP) for Psychologists. These communications informed all Psychologists across the Scientist and Health Services Officer Categories of the effects of this significant policy change on the discipline and assisted Psychologists in their understanding of the actions required of each officer.
- Researched and drafted a summary document of changes in the 2018 tax laws that may affect officers. SciPAC sent this document to all scientist officers for use when completing the 2018 tax returns.

#### **Policy Development**

- Drafted, revised and issued a new policy governing awards for SciPAC activities. This policy clarifies for Scientist Officers those activities that should be considered for a PHS award while providing guidance on how these awards should be processed.
- Recommended revisions to the PY 2019 Scientist Category benchmarks at the request of the Scientist CPO and SciPAC Chair. The project included comparisons of each precept and benchmark to every other PHS professional category to ensure consistency and to ensure that the benchmarks remain relevant to Scientist Officers. The Scientist CPO adopted the majority of our recommendations. All scientist officers up for promotion in the coming promotion year will use the revised benchmarks.

- Collaborated with the Visibility SC on the development of an SOP for SciPAC communications via the Facebook platform. This SOP is an appendix to the SciPAC Communication Policy and is with the SciPAC Executive Board for final review.
- Reviewed, edited, approved, and posted to the SciPAC website the SOPs for SciPAC communications via Twitter and listserv, documents developed in collaboration with the Visibility SC and the SciPAC Secretary, respectively. These SOPs are appendices to the SciPAC Communication Policy and outline the purpose, roles and responsibilities, and the process of approval for associated content. These first published media platform SOPs also serve as a guide for future platform SOPs.
- Sent edits and comments on the draft SOP for SciPAC website communications, developed in collaboration with the Website SC. The final draft—expected by the end of OY 2018–2019—will be an appendix to the SciPAC Communication Policy.

#### Policy Monitoring

- Identified a list of publications and websites to monitor for policies which may impact PHS Officers as a whole and the Scientist Officers in particular.
- Provided situational awareness to the Policy SC on monthly calls about policies that may affect PHS and Scientist Officers.

#### Policy SC SOP Triennial Review

- Not applicable for OY 2018–2019 (next triennial review is scheduled for OY 2020–21).

#### Other Accomplishments

- Drafted a document that summarizes Policy SC recommendations for classifying SciPAC documents. The intent of the proposed document classification system is to prevent sensitive information, documents still in development, and other information only intended for a specific audience from being forwarded or otherwise shared with unintended audiences.
- Assisted with the development and drafting of an Awards SC SOP entitled, “Honor Awards Policy for SciPAC Activities”. The awards administered by the Awards SC allow SciPAC to honor those Scientists who have made outstanding contributions to fellow officers and to the public health of the nation.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Recommend maintaining the position of Secretary for the SC, whose duties include monitoring of attendance for monthly SC calls, requesting and compiling updates from SC teams for monthly SciPAC calls, and drafting of letters of appreciation. Recommend adding the role of Liaison to the Website SC to the Secretaries duties, unless another Policy SC member is also a member of the Website SC, as was the case in OY 2018–2019.
- For 2019–2020, the SC needs to post finalized SOPs on the SciPAC website for the Facebook and website communication platforms: The Facebook SOP is with the Executive Board for final review. A final draft of the Website SOP for Policy SC review expected from the Website SC by the end of OY 2018–2019.
- The SC identified several potential topics for the Policy Review Team to review, summarize, and disseminate to Scientist Officers, including:

- Overview of the Commissioned Corps Issuance System (<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/CCISForeword.aspx>)
- Deployments with other agencies outside of RedDOG.
- CCI 672.03: Domestic/Family and Workplace Violence (signed by aASH Don Wright 8/10/17, replacing CC29.3.3, dated 24 July 2001). The major updates include: reformatting, technical name updates, introducing domestic/family and workplace violence awareness training at COTA, informing officers of their responsibilities to legal family members, providing guidance to supervisors and officers who are victims, and updated Medical Affairs responsibilities.

## **READINESS**

**Chair: LCDR Elizabeth Irvin-Barnwell**

**Co-Chairs: LCDR Angela Thompson-Paul and LCDR Rebecca Levine**

### **Major Duties:**

- Identify emergency response training opportunities and deployment processes.
- Assist and promote the effective use of scientists in response to emergencies affecting public health.
- Assist scientist officers in maintaining basic readiness by meeting or exceeding weight and fitness standards.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Supported scientist officer readiness by reaching out to officers who were in jeopardy of not being basic ready in October (n=39) and November (n=15); continued to provide assistance to officers who requested information/assistance with completing necessary items for maintaining their basic readiness status.
- Produced two guidance documents to assist Scientists with updating their information in order to maintain basic readiness status; specifically, the SciPAC Basic Readiness Checklist and Entering APFT Information into CCMIS.
- Developed and conducted four 30-day Health challenges for SciPAC officers.
- Developed cross-PAC collaboration and co-led TPAC Fitness Challenge (15 weeks) open to all PHS officers; developed 15-week schedule for Health Communications for the TPAC Fitness Challenge; and wrote 8 of 15 weekly health/motivational messages for TPAC fitness Challenge participants.
- Reviewed results and awarded nine achievement certificates, including four for improvement in APFT performance.
- Held three Response Preparedness Seminars: November 2018, “Tier 2 PHS Response Teams: Panel of Experts”; March 2019, “Scientist Deployment Skills Inventory Survey”; June 2019, “Readiness and Duty Requirements: Then & Now” (attended by 123, 114, and ~94 scientist officers, respectively).
- Received and processed 4 deployment response narratives detailing Hurricane Michael recovery efforts, the funeral of former President George H.W. Bush, and two deployment experiences regarding the Hurricane Florence response. As a result, a total of 29 deployment posts are now available on the deployment narratives website.
- Published an article (“Beads of Wisdom”) in SciPAC Newsletter’s 2019 Spring Issue, which showcased fellow Scientist Officers’ deployment roles and tips.

- Compiled and sent 12 monthly Healthy Scientist Bulletins to SciPAC officers, detailing fitness and nutrition information, readiness tips, and monthly deployment resources, such as on-call information.

### **Impact:**

- Outreach to non-basic ready Scientist officers has led to a dramatic decrease in the number of officers deemed not basic ready.
- 12 monthly Healthy Scientist Bulletins, reached all SciPAC officers on the listserv and increased readiness knowledge among Scientist officers.
- The Response Narratives serve as a method to highlight officers who have participated in Agency and Corps deployments. Additionally, the narratives serve as a learning experience for officers who have not yet deployed and for those preparing to deploy.
- The Response Preparedness Seminar Series increased knowledge in a number of areas, including tips on deploying, how to join a Tier 1 team, and guidance on the new height and weight standards.
- The readiness documents have provided Scientist officers with critical information on maintaining their basic readiness.
- More than 50 Scientist officers participated in one or more of the 4 30-day healthful challenges.
- Health messages developed collaboratively for the TPAC Fitness Challenge reached 249 officers across all categories who were actively participating in the challenge, plus all officers on the SciPAC listserv increasing their knowledge in areas of health and fitness.
- Due to the new format of incorporating seminars into the time of the SciPAC call, we believe we reached a broad cross-section of USPHS scientist officers who now have additional information and knowledge to better understand readiness and the deployment process. For the third seminar addressing the new readiness policy changes from RedDOG, the numerous questions from officers after the seminar's conclusion indicated that there was a large audience that was actively engaged in trying to understand these important updates.

### **Recommendations:**

- Consider feasibility of administering the Deployment Skills Inventory Survey on a biennial basis.
- Discuss the need for additional workgroups as identified by senior SciPAC leadership (e.g. Deployment Skills Inventory Survey Workgroup).
- If possible, the Fitness Achievement Workgroup would like for recognition at the Corps-level for excellence in fitness.
- Recommend soliciting for narratives every month, and through various platforms (not just the listserv or during the SciPAC calls). In addition, solicit for narratives after a large-scale deployment.
- The Readiness Mentoring Workgroup has developed a draft proposal for the Advanced Readiness Initiative which will be sent to the SciPAC Chair and EB for review and discussion. While the Readiness Workgroup still assists officers as requested for Readiness needs, there has been a decrease in workload and assistance requested with the elimination of the individual information on basic readiness. It would be interesting to

see analyze the time trend for basic readiness in the next few months to see if there is a decrease in basic readiness with the elimination of the individual-level information.

## **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

**Chair: LCDR Jonathan Leshin**

**Co-Chairs: CDR Robin Toblin and LT Debra Chen**

### **Major Duties:**

- Create, review and revise resources for recruitment and retention.
- Enhance efforts to recruit and retained highly qualified Scientist officers.
- Provide guidance for recruitment of Scientist officer applicants through available mechanisms, including the Epidemic Intelligence Service and Laboratory Leadership Service.
- Develop and facilitate support activities for new call to active duty officers.
- Develop and administer surveys or interviews to retiring and/or decommissioning officers.
- Generate the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the SC.

### **Accomplishments & Impact**

#### **Resources Team**

- Revised the Top Tips for Scientist officers and posted it to the SciPAC website.
- Created a standardized Power Point presentation for use by Scientist officers at recruitment or alumni events to provide visibility to Scientist officers serving in the USPHS including a specialized presentation for psychologists.
  - The SciPAC Recruitment Presentation was shared at a recruitment conference, HOSA, in collaboration with BCOAG.
- Revised a document to share with Scientist officers at OBC that highlights leaders in SciPAC and helpful tips/points of contact for new CADs to immediately get involved in mentoring, the Peer Support Network, and attending SciPAC calls.
  - This handout, along with the Top Tips for Scientist Officers, are distributed to all Scientist Officers attending OBC.
- Published a revised SOP.

#### **Interested Applicant Team**

- Designed and purchased 500 SciPAC business cards for use and distribution at recruitment events.
- Developed a pre-generated response for interested applicants who are not licensed psychologists to inform them the category is currently closed.
- Worked with the website team to update the recruitment page.
- Began forward planning for future presentations to recruit candidates who are clinical psychologists or interested in the EIS/LLS programs. This included meeting with the PsyPAG chair to coordinate planning.

#### **New Recruit Team**

- In the beginning of the year, the team worked to disentangle applicants from the previous



year's two teams. Following that, applicants were sorted into various groups, based on their status in the onboarding process. Applicants were engaged and offered guidance.

- Multiple candidates were referred to CAPT Eckert to assist with onboarding issues.
- In July, this team was asked to stand down. A message indicating that all future recruitment questions must be routed through either HQ or Agency Liaisons was distributed.
- A detailed breakdown of the applicants and last known status can be appended via email if requested.
- Team has begun the shutdown process.

#### OBC Engagement Team

- Welcomed 16 new Scientist officer CADs attending 8 OBCs.
- Collated the names, duty stations, and email addresses of new Scientist officers. to share with the Peer Support Network Teams for retention activities.
- Shared photos of OBC events with SciPAC website and Facebook representatives for visibility.
- Assisted SciPAC leadership and CPO during OBC event activities when necessary.

#### Peer Support Network Team:

- The length of time an officer could remain connected with a peer mentor was increased from one to three years. This allows all officers to remain connected through their first promotion cycle.
- The PSN Team connected all incoming officers with peer support. This means that 11 new scientists were connected to peer support. An additional 7 are anticipated to be matched by the end of August.
- Peer support provided guidance on multiple issues to new officers. Most common issues included awards, which chartered groups to become involved with, COERs, and promotion guidance.
- The PSN Team Lead began conversations with the Mentoring SC's Mentor Match Team to ensure coordination so that new officers were connected to an official mentor who is a senior officer and provides different services to a new officer than the PSN.

#### New CAD Seminars Team

- 18-25 officers attended each of the 7 CAD seminars during October 2018-July 2019.
- 18 officers participated as speakers or panelists or answered questions from new officers.
- Scientist officers were distributed widely across the country. In response, rooms were reserved at FDA and CDC so that people could attend in person.
- Seminars were available for in-person attendance and via Business Skype to increase participation.
- Junior officers paired with senior officers to present information on topics related to PHS from a junior officer's perspective, including:
  - Deployments
  - CV writing
  - Promotions
  - Navigating life changes in the Corps

- Awards
- Benefits/Perks of Commissioned Corps (including the VA loan and MWR network)
- COERs
- One topic generated a high level of interest and this was how to identify and join a deployment team. Thanks to several deployment team leaders who served as volunteer panelists, the team was able to help link new officers to teams.
- A new seminar this year was navigating life changes in the Corps. This replaced a lecture on finding a new job, which was largely aimed at EIS officers. This seminar may need to be re-introduced next year given that there are going to be EIS officers once again in the mix.
- Documents and past slides can be found at max.gov.

#### Epidemic Intelligence Service/Laboratory Leadership Service (EIS/LLS) Team

- Maintained communication with the CDC Commissioned Corps Affairs office to stay abreast of the onboarding process.
- Responded to 14 requests for information or guidance from interested applicants.
- Identified senior officers to serve as resources for specific topics of concern (e.g., medical clearance, supervisor questions, deployment) for applicants.
- Provided resources and offered guidance to 32 interested applicants in the EIS/LLS classes for 2018 and 2019.
- A total of six individuals in either LLS or EIS have become Scientist officers.

#### Separation Survey Team

- Developed a pilot web survey and optional extended interview to collect information about officers separating or retiring.
- Worked with HSPAC and DePAC to collaborate on separation-related surveys. Further collaboration with other PACs is anticipated.
- Two individuals who separated/retired completed the web survey and extended interviews have been recorded.
- Data have been collected and organized in preparation for further analysis.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Maintain all R&R documents. These include the Top Tips for Scientist Officers, the recruitment presentation, and the OBC handout.
- Currently, clinical psychology and EIS/LLS are the only mechanisms for entry into the Scientist category at this time. Therefore, all recruitment efforts should be focused on these pathways.
- Follow up with Executive Board on status of the clinical psychologist specific presentation. Presentation was with CAPT Eckert for review by OSG/OASH as of July 1.
- Once presentation is completed, begin identifying interested officers to present at schools of clinical psychology. Business cards have been purchased to assist with this effort.
- The OBC Engagement team needs continual support in recruiting officers to attend the OBC open house and graduation.
- Make sure the OBC Open House team at HQ knows the name of the new OBC Engagement team lead.

- Continue to coordinate new officer names and emails between OBC Engagement team and Peer Support Network.
- PSN will continue to need additional officers with 4-8 years of experience to provide junior level mentorship.
- Continue to coordinate new officer names and emails between Peer Support Network and the Mentoring SC Mentor Match Team.
- New Call to Active Seminars should continue. They are massively successful and extremely well attended.
- EIS/LLS will require close management. The information we are able to get on this program in terms of who is joining and total interested number is limited. This is one of only two mechanisms to onboard new officers and we want to keep this pipeline as wide open as possible.
  - Officers interested in the EIS/LLS program have had some issues with medical clearances not being processed properly.
- Ensure that there is a Scientist presence at the EIS conference and that potential candidates are met with, either in the form of a breakfast or dinner.
- EIS team lead is likely to be more of a mentor than an advocate due to current recruitment policies, but someone to serve as point of contact will be very useful.
- Separation Survey Team should continue to collaborate with other PACs
- The incoming SC chair should work with Executive Board leadership to convey the following concerns up the leadership chain:
  - The time from open recruitment to onboarding can take more than a year. Some applicants cannot or choose not to wait.
  - The application review process is not transparent to the applicants and they feel disenfranchised with the organization/leadership because of this. They often send repeated inquiries to DCCPR without receiving an answer about the status of their application. A process to handle this should be developed.
  - Medical boarding is not transparent and the applicants are often evaluated many months to more than a year after they submit their application and AFTER they have been boarded and (sometimes) found a position.

## **RULES AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Chair: CDR Loren Rodgers**

**Co-Chair: CDR Dan-My Chu**

### **Major Duties:**

- SciPAC Charter triennial review.
- SciPAC SOP annual review.
- SciPAC SC SOP triennial review.
- SciPAC New Voting Member Selection.
- Support SciPAC Chair in creation of Annual Report

### **Accomplishments & Impact:**

#### **SciPAC Charter**

- The SciPAC Charter was revised during the 2016-2017 OY and approved by the voting membership on August 31, 2017. The OSG subsequently approved the Charter on

October 18, 2017. The Charter is not scheduled to be revised until April of 2020. However, the Rules and Membership SC has been collecting notes of changes that can be considered in the next revision. Most noteworthy among these will be complying with any directives from OSG, which might necessitate utilizing a new template. The impact of this change will be assessed once the new template is available.

#### SciPAC SOP Review

- The SciPAC SOP is critical for communicating the key objectives and functions of each Executive Board role, SC, and Liaison role to all Scientist Officers. CDR Dan-My Chi and CDR Sara Vagi led a review and revision of the SciPAC SOP to ensure the document accurately reflects SciPAC functions and activities. This draft has not been formally circulated through the Executive Board for approval, but is ready to be transitioned to the next SC leadership team.
- Over the course of the 2018-2019 OY, the SciPAC SOP was closely reviewed, reformatted and updated to better reflect current activities, standards and needs, and to incorporate major updates and Executive Board comments into the document. Changes include clarifications for eligibility for Vice Chairperson, adding procedures for approving benchmarks, and clarifying procedures for approving documents.

#### SciPAC New Voting Member Nomination Process

- The Rules and Membership Chair reviewed the current membership and identified five vacancies available for prospective voting membership (this was later increased to six vacancies due to the retirement of a voting member). The formal call for voting member nominations was submitted via the SciPAC listserv. The process was started in late March with applications due in early April to ensure a sufficient transition period between executive board and SC chairs, based on the experience and recommendations from the previous OY, which were documented in the newly revised Rules and Membership SOP.
- The Rules and Membership Chair received and compiled 28 potential applicants' self-nomination packets; requested supporting data from the SciPAC Executive Secretary (SciPAC call attendance); scheduled a Voting Membership Selection Team SC meeting; and distributed the self-nomination packets to the SC members for rankings. Prior to the teleconference, the Chair compiled the rankings and distributed to SC members.
- The Voting Member Selection Team of the Rules and Membership SC then met by teleconference to discuss each of the applicants, review the diversity, distribution, and qualifications, and select five officers and three alternates to recommend for voting membership. A nomination package was subsequently prepared and submitted to CPO for consideration. Multiple alternates were elected in order to accommodate a vacancy that was created due to the retirement of an active Voting Member. This created a complex situation that affected the voting membership roster, which was further complicated because one of the selected voting members was to be called into membership due to being alternate to fill the vacancy. The Rules and Membership SC worked closely with the SciPAC Chair, Chief Professional Officer, and Office of the Surgeon General to resolve this transition in accordance with the procedures specified in the SciPAC SOP.

- The OSG approved the six officers for SciPAC Voting Membership, and the Rules and Membership Chair notified each officer individually by phone to inform them of their selection and welcome them to the PAC. Officers who were not selected were also notified of the decision by the Rules and Membership Chair via email. Feedback from the SC was provided regarding areas where the officer could increase their support of the PAC.
- Per the revised Charter, two alternate Voting Members were also selected (in addition to the alternate that was called into service as a voting member in August, 2019). These officers were also notified of their selection via email, which was made based on their ranking in the Voting Member selection process.

#### Rules and Membership SC SOP Update

- The Rules and Membership SOP Team completed an extensive update to the Rules and Membership SC SOP. Changes included:
  - adding details, timelines, and additional content to unambiguously guide the SC through key procedures, such as Voting member selection, and the process for revising and approving SOPs.
  - Adding a new role: assisting the SciPAC Chair with the Annual Report.
  - Adding references and removing overlap with other sources.
  - Adding an extensive list of attachments, including forms and email templates that will greatly facilitate operations in subsequent years.
- The content and overall style of this SOP has been found very useful, and thus it has served as a model for other SC SOPs, further helping standardization.

#### SciPAC SC SOP annual updates

- A team was established, led by CDR Sara Vagi, to monitor, receive, edit, and facilitate Executive Board review of SC SOPs. The team utilized and updated a submission schedule for SC SOPs, with each SC submitting its SOP once every three years. The new submission schedule and process allowed for spaced review of SC SOPs by the Executive Board.
- The team used SciPAC's Max.Gov page to coordinate submission and review of SC SOPs, and the SciPAC calendar to share submission deadlines.
- The Rules and Membership SC ensured Executive Board review and approval of the Rules and Membership, Recruitment and Retention, and Career Development SC SOPs.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The SciPAC Charter is scheduled to be revised in 2020, with submission to the EB on Jan 27, 2020. However, be aware that the OSG has given notice that a new Charter template is forthcoming, and this should drive the timing and content of the next Charter update.
- The outgoing Chair has a collection of Miscellaneous notes that can aid the next update to the SciPAC SOP. This will be communicated in the SC leadership handoff meeting.
- Ensure the SciPAC SOP and Charter are sent to all voting members at the start of the OY.
- Revise the SciPAC SOP at the beginning of the OY and send for vote to the voting membership.

- Update the responsibilities of each SC in the SciPAC SOP to reflect the SCs' SOPs as approved by Executive Board to ensure consistency between the SciPAC SOP and the SCs' SOPs.
- Per the SOP submission matrix, Visibility SC SOP will be due to the Rules and Membership SOP Team by November 1, 2019. Recommend beginning those revisions as soon as possible in the OY.
- Use both email and Max.Gov for relaying Voting Member self-nomination packages to the Voting Member Selection Team.
- Consider implementing a rigorous process to ensure that all Voting Membership applications are tracked/filed/acknowledged, etc.
- Recommend maintaining the position of Secretary for the SC, whose duties include acting as Liaison to the Website SC, assisting with scheduling meetings, assisting with non-close-hold portions of the Voting Member selection process, and drafting end-of-OY report and letters of appreciation. Useful qualifications include Adobe Acrobat skills, close attention to detail, and proficiency with Max.Gov.

**SCIENCE**

**Chair: LCDR Eric Jamoom**

**Co-Chair: CDR David Huang and LCDR Ginny Bowen**

**Major Duties:**

- Compile and maintain an active list of Scientist officers' scholarly works.
- Demonstrate how Scientist officers directly contribute to the priorities of the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) and World Health Organization (WHO)'s Global Health Threats.
- Coordinate a teleconference seminar series focused on practical science skills as well as relevant science activities within the priority areas of the OSG and WHO Global Health Threats.
- Revise, administer, analyze, and present data from the annual State of the Scientists (SoS) Survey.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

**Bibliography & Publications Team** (Lead: LCDR Sade Kembi)

- Collaborated with the Visibility Team on data collection – requires reinforcement of a new collaboration plan in effect for next OY.
- Finalized and published report for 2017 Scientist officers' publications on SciPAC website.
- Processed, organized, and updated previous submissions for the SciPAC bibliography (Table 1).
- Planned reports/summaries allow individuals, including USPHS leadership to view productivity of Scientist Officers.
- Production of 2018 bibliography underway.

<b>Table 1. Summary of productivity of Scientist Officers (2010 – 2017)</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Publications</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Reports</b>	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017	504	4	11	105	<b>624</b>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Publications</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Reports</b>	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Total</b>
2016	440	3	1	89	<b>533</b>
2015	150	7	6	96	<b>259</b>
2014	205	9	49	121	<b>384</b>
2013	319	15	66	277	<b>677</b>
2012	296	16	44	264	<b>620</b>
2011	256	8	24	309	<b>597</b>
2010	207	14	35	262	<b>518</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2377</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>1523</b>	<b>4212</b>

Research and Practice Team (Lead: CDR Cesar Perez; Co-Lead: LT Suresh Jayasekara)

- There are two webinar formats: science and practice and journal club. The knowledge gained from the articles and the discussions facilitated the growth of Scientist Officers.
- Conducted two webinars over the OY on various topics of interest to Scientist Officers (Table 2). SciPAC officers engaged in thought-provoking discussions.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Type of Presentation</b>	<b>Presentation Title</b>
October 23, 2018	LCDR Mary Puckett	Journal Club	Discussion of the paper: “Rural Health Network Analysis Can Inform Patient Care and Organizational Collaboration in a Rural Breast Cancer Screening Network”
June 4, 2019	CDR Adrienne Goodrich-Doctor and Lcdr Jeffery Sumter	Science & Practice	“21 <sup>st</sup> Century Emergency Response Efforts of the Corps”

State of the Scientists Survey Team (Lead: Lcdr Ginny Bowen; Co-Lead LT Brad Goodwin)

- Analyzed and compiled key findings of the 2018 SOS survey; presented findings to the full PAC in Feb 2019 in a presentation titled, “The State of Scientists: Results from the Annual Category Survey.”
- Re-designed SOS survey at the request of PAC leadership to capture new elements; shortened average survey time to <10 minutes using a modular format.
- Administered the 2019 SOS survey (reflecting 2018 experiences) and achieved a 65% response rate in ~6 weeks.
- Disseminated survey findings Corps-wide with a poster (“The State of Scientist Officers: Insights from the Annual Category Survey”) at the 2019 USPHS Symposium in Minneapolis.

- Analyzed 2019 survey results and developed two 2-page briefs describing Scientists' contributions to the Corps mission (i.e., deployment, government shutdown) and changes in time-to-promotion over the past seven years.

Surgeon General's Priorities Team (Lead: LT Lindsay Womack; Co-Lead CDR Kanta Sircar)

- Last OY, the National Prevention Strategy (NPS) Team expanded its reach to include all of the Surgeon General's Priorities, including the NPS, and was renamed as such.
- The team discussed several ideas for taking the new Surgeon General's stated priorities and generating one or more manuscripts or whitepapers to highlight the value of Scientists and/or Commissioned Corps Officers.
- Planned product(s) will increase attention and visibility of USPHS Scientists with respect to the Surgeon General's priorities to the broader public health community.

**Recommendations:**

- *Bibliography and Publications Team:* Continue to streamline the process for soliciting and inputting new submissions in collaboration with the Visibility SC's Manuscripts Team. Leverage a bibliographic management software like EndNote to reduce burden of data collection for information across the PAC in conjunction with the Visibility SC's Manuscripts Team. Determine how best to use the data and reports to highlight our vast scientific accomplishments and acumen to PHS leadership. The output of the group could be robustly developed.
- *Research and Practice Team:* Continue to develop methods for increasing attendance and presentations for webinars that are more interactive and applied to the information that would be useful to Scientist officers. Plan on doing an activity at least quarterly at a regularly scheduled time. Consider seminars related to duties expected of federal government Scientists that may not be taught in graduate training (i.e., serving on objective review panels, performing a technical review on a grantee's application, project management 101, etc.).
- *State of the Scientists Survey Team:* Work with PAC leadership early in the OY to identify any time-sensitive (i.e., new or one-time-only) data elements that may need to be added to the survey. Secure PAC buy-in on survey administration; engage in larger conversation about consolidating SciPAC data collection efforts throughout the year. Discuss ways to ensure an 80% response rate and maintain respondent anonymity where possible; some officers were vocal about feeling like their 'right to decline participation' was violated. Continue producing 4-5 data briefs per year by working on new analyses throughout the year. Budget for poster-printing costs in addition to Survey Monkey fees and incentives.
- *Surgeon General's Priorities Team:* Continue to work towards refining its direction and target manuscript(s). Identify Scientists that are SMEs and working in Surgeon General's priorities or World Health Organization's Global Health Threats. Strategize approaches to leverage SMEs to identify gaps in either the SG priorities or WHO global health threats.
- The Science SC website should continue to be updated regularly to reflect the current state of the SC and its activities.



## **VISIBILITY**

**Chair: CDR Kamil Barbour**

**Co-Chairs: LCDR Colleen Scott and LT Ruth Link-Gelles**

### **Major Duties:**

- Publish *The Scientist Officer* (SciPAC Newsletter).
- Increase Esprit de Corps through diverse initiatives, including local social events and meet-and-greet events.
- Highlight high-level scientific publications led by Scientist Officers.
- Increase networking at scientific conference networking and information sharing among Scientist Officers.
- Increase membership of and moderate the SciPAC Facebook group to help promote awareness of and comradery within SciPAC by promoting accomplishments of individual Scientist Officers and frequent updates during the PHS Symposium.
- Establish and manage an official SciPAC Twitter Handle to promote visibility of Scientist Officers and the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps by establishing an outward-facing, timely platform for sharing news and accomplishments.
- Document the history of SciPAC.
- Highlight major life events of Scientist Officers.
- Create and present a poster at the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Capture the diverse activities in which Scientist Officers are involved.

### **Accomplishments and Impacts:**

- The SciPAC Visibility SC hosted the Battle of the USPHS Commissioned Corps Categories Blood Drive on May 7th during the 54th USPHS Symposium in Minneapolis, Minnesota to address genetic blood disorders, particularly Sickle Cell Disease. Impacts include:
  - Collecting nearly 100 units of blood through on-site and virtual donations (in five states).
  - Having nearly 10% of COF attendees donating or attempting to donate blood.
  - Having 39% of participants at Symposium being first-time donors.
  - Receiving participation from all 11 USPHS Categories. The categories with the largest proportion of donations were:
    - Scientist Category (1st Place)
    - Environment Health Category (2nd Place)
    - Dietitian Category (3rd Place)
- The Newsletter workgroup led by LCDRs Israel Cross and Hilda Razzaghi published 2 editions (3<sup>rd</sup> is currently under review for publication in August) of Scientist Newsletter via the Scientist listserv and the Scientist website.
  - Implemented a Newsletter Template to standardize the look and feel of the newsletter; thus, shortening lead time to publication.
  - Working to incorporate 508 compliance requirements for newsletters to be shared on the SciPAC website.
  - Streamlined newsletter publication process, allowing the team to more time to focus on content moving forward.

- ATL Socials Team led by CDR Zewditu Demissie held 8 socials (plus one scheduled for August) and DC Socials Team led by LCDR Alesha Harris held 3 socials (plus one scheduled for early August) reaching 270 officers.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Atlanta Halloween Party held at LCDR Colleen Scott's home.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Atlanta Mardi Gras bash held at CAPT Jennie Thomas' home.
  - Three Trivia nights were held at Mellow Mushroom, December 2018, March 2019, and June 2019.
  - Scientist Officer picnic, May 2019.
  - EIS Officer happy hour, 2019 EIS Conference.
  - One BeltLine run/walk, Spring 2019.
  - Happy Hour Social to welcome new CADs (EIS and LLS officers), August 2019.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual DC Halloween Party held at CAPT John Eckert's home.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual DC Mardi Gras Party held at CDR Qiao Bobo's home.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual DC Summer BBQ held at LCDR Eric Jamoom's home.
  - Scientist Officers will also attend the HHS Night at the Ballpark together at an upcoming event in August.
  - The Atlanta and DC events served to increase camaraderie within the PAC and gave junior officers a less formal atmosphere to ask questions and receive advice from senior officers.
  - Raised \$603 for SciPAC via fundraising at the various events.
- Manuscripts Highlights Team led by LCDR Teresa Wang has refined its SOP for conducting manuscript searches to include self-reported information from fellow officers
  - Drafted an article, "Spotlight on Scientist Officer Publications from 2018" submitted for publication in The Scientist Newsletter Summer issue; featuring key findings from 10 articles
  - Shared a comprehensive summary of findings with the Science Committee's Bibliography team; this will enable the Bibliography team to concentrate on collating other information regarding conferences, presentations, and abstracts
  - Team will be furthering highlighting the top ten articles and their corresponding Scientist Officer authors through listerv/Facebook/Twitter
  - SOP changes resulted in search efforts across 339 individual officers, identifying 531 publications by 144 Scientist Officers, and allowing these works to be highlighted within the PAC and externally to increase visibility of the PAC's work
- Scientist Twitter Team led by LCDR Alaine Knipes launched the official @PHS\_Scientist Twitter handle.
  - The OS Privacy & Data Protection Division in the Office of the Chief Information Officer at Health and Human Services granted SciPAC Twitter team official approval for the establishment of the official PHS\_Scientist twitter handle.
    - First original tweets were approved by Chief Professional Officer CAPT Eckert and the SciPAC EB in March 2019 and were Tweeted in April 2019.
  - Twitter team is quantifying impact of activities on this new platform using analytical tools; from April to July 2019, SciPAC Twitter handle has:
    - Now followed by 32 people.
    - Posted 25 tweets.

- Attracted 441 individual profile visits.
  - Generated 7,676 impressions (=views by users on Twitter).
  - Received 231 engagements (=clicks, retweets, replies, follows, likes).
  - Increased tweet engagement rate from 32/day (April 2019) to 128/day (July 2019) \*Note: Engagement rate (=# engagements/#impressions).
- Facebook Team led by LT Ruth Link-Gelles has increased posting and sharing of Scientist information by 217% since FY2018 (146 posts this FY).
  - Posts have accrued 95 comments (79% increase) and 1,263 reactions (109% increase, showing active engagement by the PAC).
  - The SciPAC FB page has been used to promote the work of Scientist Officers, advertise SciPAC socials in DC and Atlanta and at conferences, and welcome newly commissioned Scientists to the Corps.
- Poster was successfully created and presented at 2019 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium by LCDR Julie O'Donnell.
  - Focus was on scientist officer work on the opioid overdose epidemic, highlighting the work of 3 Scientists (from NCIPC, NCCDPHP, and NCHHSTP).
  - Increased visibility within the PAC of Scientists Officers' work on the opioid overdose epidemic.
- Conferences Team led by LCDR Jessica Tomov connected over 14 Scientist Officers presenting at IDWeek, APHA, CSTE and American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.
  - Created conference agendas highlighting Scientist Officer Presentations.
  - Established networking opportunities for Scientist Officer attending these 4 conferences.
  - Allowed officers from across different agencies to meet, share work, and trade advice, increasing cohesion within the PAC.
- SciPAC Fist Bump Team led by LCDR Shondelle Wilson-Frederick released a total of 12 Fist Bumps.
  - Five electronic Fist Bumps were released through the SciPAC listserv.
  - Seven celebratory Fist Bumps were published in the SciPAC Newsletter Summer edition.
  - Disseminated personal and professional accomplishments within the PAC.
- SciPAC History Team led by LCDR Michael Shayne Gallaway continued documenting the history of SciPAC.
  - Successfully searched, mined, and extracted relevant SciPAC facts from over 400 publications, periodicals, and archived documents.
  - Organized facts and incorporated information into a visual timeline that was presented at the USPHS Symposium and used to aid development of Science Category value added summary by CPO, Chair, etc. for DSG.
  - Collaborated with the SciPAC social media team to share historical factoids on Twitter bi-monthly.
  - Ongoing work to move all of the information collected and summarized onto what will become the new and improved SciPAC history page 2019-2010.
- LCDR Colleen Scott has served as the Visibility Website Liaison.
  - Reviewed and processed website change requests for the Visibility team SciPAC webpages; updating content and activities.

- Supported 508 compliance for Newsletter Team website content.
  - Organized session for Website SC to help work with Newsletter Team staff on how to ensure all future Newsletters are 508 compliant.

**Recommendations:**

- *History Team:* Continue building out the timeline with specific scientist contributions and flesh out more recent years with accomplishments. Develop and build out the new SciPAC website content for SciPAC History
- *Newsletter Team:* Develop a better interface between the Website SC and the Newsletter team for 508 compliance and posting content on the SciPAC website – work together to streamline Newsletter editing and publication process to incorporate 508 compliance
- *Manuscript Highlights:* Engage early and often with Science SC’s Bibliography Team to streamline the search process, delineate specific activities, and reduce potential burden (e.g. call for self-reported information) on fellow officers. Over the past two years, the Manuscript Highlights Team has forged a fruitful collaboration with the Science SC’s Bibliography Team, but opportunities to optimize the collaboration still exist. Moving forward, it may be worth strategizing how best to only do single call for published works and presentations per officer. Previously, the Manuscript Highlights Team and Bibliography Team would focus on published works and presentations separately. Moreover, given that the next call for self-reported information will focus on works published in 2018, there is an opportunity to send an initial call-out as early as December. A subsequent reminder could then be provided in January. This would allow the Manuscript Highlights Team to hit the ground running and focus more on highlighting published works, rather than spending the majority of its time collating information and sharing it with the Bibliography Team. One potential is to set up a joint email account to which all Manuscript Highlights and Bibliography Team members have access, so that there is a single repository for this information
- *Twitter Team:* Obtain written permission from officers and their supervisors profiled in tweets or images. Include a photo with each tweet – if an original photo of the officer/activity is not available, find an image in the public domain using Google to search for “free images”; explore available images after narrowing your results for “usage rights” by selecting “free to use, share or modify, even commercially”. Another great source for available photos is CDC Public Health Image Library. Make sure to use high quality resolution images. Tweets with images are more likely to capture the attention of Twitter users, ultimately increasing interactions and viewing metrics for @PHS\_Scientist tweets. Include links to Twitter handles for individuals (ie. @Surgeon\_General, @HHS\_ASH, @CDCDirector, @NIHDirector, etc.), agencies (@CDCgov, @USAID, @StateDept, etc), organizations/universities (@UMassAmherst, @UCSF, etc) that are related to the individual or topic featured. Tweets with links attract the attention of Twitter users who are visiting the linked pages, ultimately increasing interactions and viewing metrics for @PHS\_Scientist tweets. Work with other Visibility SCs to identify information that may be shared via Twitter (i.e. professional accomplishments, volunteering, everyday fun)
- *Facebook Team:* Continue to build the SciPAC Facebook presence and engagement with officers.
- *Socials Team:* Develop an explanation of why we fundraise (or if we even will continue

to do so) at social events and also have language describing why we have scientist socials. Some sort of message coming from leadership would be ideal.

## **WEBSITE**

**Chair: CDR Adrienne Goodrich-Doctor**

**Co-Chair: LCDR Iram Hassan and LCDR Xinzhi Zhang**

### **Major Duties:**

- Remedy Personally Identifiable Information (PII) issues on SciPAC website.
- Review and update all content on SciPAC website per requests from SciPAC leadership and other SCs.
- Revise and update the Website SC (SC) SOP.
- Revamp History page on the SciPAC website, in collaboration with the Visibility SC.
- Develop and establish written procedures for Editor Teams and the Calendar Team.
- Develop Website SC questions for inclusion in the Annual SciPAC SC Survey.
- Provide website training to SC members and website SC liaisons.
- Develop draft SciPAC Website Information Update Standard Operating Procedures.

### **Accomplishments & Impacts:**

#### **Remedy PII Issues on SciPAC Website**

- In September 2018, HHS broke all links to documents on USPHS organization websites due to identification of PII on some sites. In response CAPT Thomas asked that we prioritize review of content and fix broken links associated with promotion, SC SOPs, SciPAC governing documents, and Readiness first. All priority content was reviewed/updated, and links restored by October 29, 2019 (except content delayed due to need for updates – completed as a part of the Website Update), including review of the SciPAC Google Calendar for PII.

#### **Review and Update All Content on SciPAC Website**

- Review of the website for PII uncovered many areas of the site that were outdated. In response, the Website SC led an effort to update the entire website to not only fix broken links but to update content, remove content that was no longer useful, and consider changes that could make the site more useful, appealing, and aid to heighten visibility of Scientist Officers.
- Phase 1: The Special Projects Team reviewed 11 USPHS organization sites and provided recommendations for revision and update to the website. The suggestions from the team were provided to Website SC Liaisons, Executive Board (EB), and SciPAC Liaisons to aid in their review of website and documents.
- Phase 2: Website SC Liaisons and other responsible parties were asked to review the content and documents on their associated SC pages and provide updates. In response, 13 website change requests were submitted, and all tasks associated with these requests were completed.
- Phase 3: Upon review of inputs from Phases 1 and 2. SC Leadership recommended: 1) Revamp and redesign of the homepage, 2) Update of the National Prevention Strategy page, and 3) Removal of the Presentations page. All three recommendation were

approved by CDR Rodgers on August 6, 2019 and associated tasks were completed by August 29, 2019.

#### Revise and Update the Website SC SOP

- Website SC SOP updates were made to the Editor Team designations, Editor Team roles and responsibilities were clarified, and the SC membership requirements were updated.
- New content was added to the SOP to include responsibilities for the Co-Chair, Executive Secretary (new position), Website Liaisons, Website Calendar Team, and procedures were added to ensure all web content and documents are reviewed for PII prior to submission to the Website SC and prior to posting.
- The updated SOP was submitted to the EB on July 5, 2019 for review and approval.

#### Revamp History Page on SciPAC Website

- Met with the Visibility SC to review and agree on a plan for revamping the page. Engaged in follow-up meetings and discussions to track progress of content being developed for the webpage.
- Received content from the Visibility SC on August 26, 2019; assigned an Editor Team to review content and will work with the Visibility SC to complete the revamp in the first quarter of the 2019-20 OY.

#### Develop and establish written procedures for Editor Teams (4)

- Written procedures were not available at the start of the OY.
- Developed and executed SC training and used content and input from experienced members of the SC to develop written procedures that can be used by all Editor Teams and for use to train new SC members.
- Draft written procedures were developed and shared with Editor Team members on November 26, 2018. The teams used the procedures and submitted revisions; the procedures will be revised and finalized to capture these revisions and any lessons learned during the next OY.

#### Develop and establish written procedures for the Calendar Team

- Written procedures were not available at the start of the OY.
- Input from experienced calendar team members was used to develop draft written procedures which were provided to Calendar Team Members on January 17, 2019. The teams used the procedures which included instructions for posting events and reminders to the calendar, review of calendar posts for PII, and a new mechanism to track how many posts are added to the calendar monthly and the SC or EB member the posts supports (to clearly show how the work of the team supports SciPAC and Website SC goals).
- On July 3, 2019, the Calendar Team held a training session for team members and other Website SC members to review general team procedures as well as those used to track Calendar Team work activities.
- Although the procedures were developed, they were not finalized due to a request received from the Office of the Surgeon General requesting removal of the SciPAC Google Calendar (see under “CHANGES” below).

### Develop Questions for Inclusion in the Annual SciPAC SC Survey

- Developed questions for inclusion in the Annual SciPAC SC Survey - contributed 12 questions on March 7, 2019. Questions were revised based on feedback from the EB and resubmitted on July 9, 2019. After additional questions, the survey questions were finalized and were finalized on August 2, 2019.
- Feedback from survey questions were received on August 21, 2019. Feedback was reviewed with SC members at the August 27, 2019 SC meeting. Input from the survey will be considered for update of the website as well as development of OY 2019-2020 SC goals and special projects.

### Provide Website Training to SC Members and Website SC Liaisons

- “SciPAC Website 101” was developed and executed to train new members and Website Liaisons and to serve as a refresher to other members. The training was executed and recorded on December 20, 2019. Website SC members and Liaisons attended the training and the recording was shared with those unable to attend. The training included an overview of website policy including 508 compliance and PII requirements and general procedures for updating the website; presentations were provided by LCDR Oliver Ou and LCDR Xinzhi Zhang.

### Development of Draft SciPAC Website Information Update Standard Operating Procedures

- The SC was provided a draft to review and update. SC Leadership realized that the draft provided did not align with the needs of the SOP, so the SOP was redrafted by SC leadership and the Website SOP Team and provided to the Policy SC for review on August 28, 2019.

### Additional Accomplishments

- Completion of 59 total Website Change Requests (some including changes to multiple pages and development of new webpages).
- Archival of SciPAC content on Max.gov (including SciPAC meeting minutes from previous OYs). Currently considering archiving presentations and newsletters. Archiving content on Max.gov enables the website to provide the most up to date information while allowing Scientist Officers to retain access to important content and enables sharing of content that may include PII and other information useful to officers that is not appropriate for posting on the public website.
- Worked with the Readiness SC to confirm/establish an SOP for posting Response Narratives to the SciPAC Website.
- Drafted a revamp of the Website Analytics Report.

### **Changes:**

- Added review of PII to the Website SC SOP, SC training materials, draft Website Communications SOP (for the SciPAC Communications Policy), Website Editor procedures and Calendar Team procedures to ensure review of website content prior to submission for posting and additional review by the Website SC prior to posting.
- Established an Executive Secretary role within the SC.
- Removal of the SciPAC Google Calendar from the SciPAC Website Homepage.

- We were requested to remove the calendar from the site on July 23, 2019. The calendar was removed, the data from the associated Gmail account was backed up, the content within the Gmail account was deleted, and Gmail account deactivated permanently. All actions were complete as of July 25, 2019.
- Prior to removal of the calendar, 59 total entries (events and other reminders) were added to the SciPAC Google Calendar this OY.
- Upon removal of the calendar, the Calendar Team and SC leadership began developing an alternate plan to use the website to inform website users of SciPAC related events and deadlines.
- Established a Special Projects Team. This team mostly consisted of new members and other members who wished to assist the SC in a variety of ways. The team assisted with the Website Update (see above). The team also assisted with review of documents for PII.

**Recommendations:**

- While the major webpages have been updated there are some child pages that need to be reviewed. The child webpages need to be reviewed to determine if they add value and should be subsequently removed or revised.
- Phase 1 of the Website Homepage Revamp is complete. Move to Phase 2 to complete revamp of the homepage. Phase 2 will include addition of a slideshow that captures the PAC in action. It may also include a list of upcoming events and an option for website users to provide confidential comments to the PAC.
- Coordinate with SC Chairs to determine other options for sharing presentations with Scientist Officers – currently considering sharing presentations via the newsletter and sharing via Max.gov.
- Review feedback from the Annual SciPAC SC Survey to consider what areas to focus on for updates of the website as well as development of OY 2019-20 SC goals and special projects.
- Continue working with the Visibility SC to revamp the History page.
- Work with the Policy SC and EB as needed to finalize the SciPAC Website Information Update Standard Operating Procedures.
- Execute a strategy to replace the SciPAC Calendar on the SciPAC Website to ensure Scientist Officers are aware of events and important deadlines. Determine if there is a mechanism that we can utilize to allow officers to subscribe, so they are notified by e-mail of events and deadlines. Develop written procedures and a mechanism to track team activities.
- Work on procedures/practices for removing and archiving old and out of date materials from the website – use of Max.gov.
- Finalize process for the Website Analytics report – use findings to report to SciPAC EB, developing goals and special projects for the SC, and for inclusion in the end-of-OY summary report.
- Proactively review content and documents shared with the SC through the listserv and received by other channels to determine if the information should be shared on the website. Work with the appropriate Website SC Liaison to prepare website change request.
- Coordinate with the Awards SC, Visibility SC, and other SCs through the Website Liaisons as needed to increase visibility of Scientist Officers that receive awards (other



than SciPAC annual awards) – include picture and/or award information on the SciPAC website.

- Present the website (highlighting major changes) during SciPAC meeting to help ensure scientist officers are aware of the resources available on the website.

## **C. LIAISON REPORTS**

### **Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB) LIAISON**

**Liaison: CDR Cara Halldin**

#### **Major Duties:**

The duties of the CCWIAB Liaison include representing the interests of women Scientist Officers to the CCWIAB, attending both CCWIAB and SciPAC meetings, and reporting back to each respective group. CCWIAB members are expected to chair or co-chair a committee or ad hoc initiative during their term on the Board. CDR Halldin previously chaired the CCWIAB Pregnancy Committee and was appointed as CCWIAB Co-Chair by RADM Wanda Barfield, CCWIAB Chair, serving a term through December 2019. The Scientist Officer CCWIAB voting member term is 3 years.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Provided our category with monthly updates on relevant CCWIAB activities to ensure our category is well informed.
- Offered information and opportunities for Scientists to become more actively involved in CCWIAB, including participation on committees or ad hoc initiatives of interest to women Scientist Officers.
- Helped communicate women officers’ concerns between SciPAC and CCWIAB, particularly surrounding: medical waivers for pregnancy, postpartum, and breastfeeding and newly adopted Commissioned Corps weight standards; the Corps willingness to adopt relaxed requirements on women’s hair, appearance, and uniform standards implemented by the U.S. Navy; and pregnancy loss and postpartum depression resources.
- Informed the SciPAC about the new Executive Leadership Seminars sponsored by the Women’s Leadership Support Group and CCWIAB.
- Informed the SciPAC about the publication of updated resource guides on the CCWIAB Resource Website (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/ccwiab/ccwiabresources.aspx>).
- Worked with other CCWIAB voting members and volunteers to increase awareness at the USPHS Training and Scientific Symposium for supporting breastfeeding officers and availability of a lactation room.
- Worked with SciPAC leadership to identify an interested officer to shadow CDR Halldin’s work on CCWIAB to ensure a smooth transition in December 2019. LT Marissa Zwald was selected from the pool of applicants and has shadowed CDR Halldin since January 2019.

#### **Impact:**

- Increased Scientist Officer participation in CCWIAB committees.
- Version 3.0 of *Resource Guide for USPHS Officers Getting Married or Getting Divorced, and for Dependents Surviving the Death of a USPHS Officer* was published in

May 2019 (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/ccwiab/ccwiabresources.aspx>), which incorporated feedback from officers, including Scientists.

- Co-authored a manuscript with other CCWIAB volunteers, which was cleared by multiple HHS agencies where authors are stationed and is now under review with the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG). Once cleared, the article, “Optimizing Breastfeeding Support for Women Officers in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps” will be submitted to *Public Health Reports*, and advocates for continued support in the workplace for breastfeeding-friendly policies.
- The Pregnancy Committee within CCWIAB developed a resource guide for pregnancy loss, providing one document that consolidates a great deal of information for officers and their dependents on the subject. The document is currently under OSG review and will be published on the CCWIAB Resource Website once approved.

## **COA LIAISON**

**Liaison: CAPT Martin Sanders**

### **Mission:**

To keep Scientists informed of major and emerging issues that the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) manages on behalf of its members, and to elicit input from the Scientists to ensure the Scientists’ needs are met at the national level of COA.

### **Major Duties:**

- Serve as a member of the Board of Directors of National COA and attend all meetings.
- Provide updates to the Scientists at SciPAC meetings or as needed to ensure our category is informed of critical issues that impact the Corps and COA activities in serving its members.
- Foster communications between SciPAC members and the COA Board of Directors.
- Encourage Scientists to participate as a committee member on one of the National COA committees.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Provided our category with monthly updates on critical issues facing the Corps that the COA has been addressing at the national level to ensure our category is well informed.
- Offered information and opportunities for Scientists to become more actively involved in the COA at the national level.

### **Impact:**

- Kept Scientists informed of critical issues on which COA is engaged.
- Ensured that Scientists have a voice with the COA Board of Directors.

## **JOAG LIAISON**

**Liaison: LCDR Victoria Jeisy-Scott**

### **Major Duties:**

The JOAG Liaison is a junior Scientist Officer and voting member of JOAG who is selected by JOAG to serve as a liaison to the Scientist PAC. The duties of the JOAG Liaison include

representing the interests of Scientist Officers to JOAG, regularly attending both JOAG and SciPAC meetings, and reporting back to each respective group.

**Accomplishments:**

- Provided our category with monthly updates on relevant JOAG activities to ensure our category is well informed.
- Offered information and opportunities for our Scientists to become more actively involved in JOAG.
- Shared JOAG-compiled resources for Symposium, which help officers keep Symposium costs down and maximize their time at Symposium.
- Actively recruited junior Scientist officers to participate in JOAG and consider applying for Voting Membership.

**Impact:**

- Kept junior Scientist officers well informed of upcoming JOAG events such as general meetings, Journeyman Speaker Series, awards, membership and JOAG activities related to the COF conference.

**MINORITY OFFICERS LIAISON COUNCIL (MOLC) LIAISON**

**Liaison: CDR Cesar Perez**

**Mission:**

The MOLC was established by the U.S. Surgeon General and the USPHS to advise and serve the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) on issues of professional development, and to advocate for the recognition of contributions made by minority officers in the USPHS. The MOLC is made up of four Chartered Minority Advisory Groups (CMAGs) in the USPHS: American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AIANCOAC), Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC), Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG), and Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee (HOAC). APAOC liaison representatives are serving as the MOLC chair in 2018.

**Major Duties:**

The MOLC Liaison is a Scientist Officer and one of its CMAG liaison representatives in MOLC who serves to communicate information between MOLC and SciPAC. The liaison attends meetings, reports major events or activities and coordinates related projects between both groups.

**Accomplishments:**

- Provided SciPAC with monthly updates on relevant MOLC activities to increase the awareness of SciPAC on major events and initiatives led by the four CMAGs, MOLC's leadership, and the impactful work MOLC and its CMAGs do to serve the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- Provided monthly written report to SciPAC Secretary.

**Impact:**

- Increased SciPAC officers' knowledge of MOLC.

- Informed SciPAC officers on events such as the MOLC monthly meetings, specific activities conducted by CMAGs, and the annual MOLC breakfast at the 2019 USPHS Symposium.

### **PREVENTION THROUGH ACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PACE)**

**Liaison: CDR Erika C. Odom**

#### **Major Duties:**

- PACE meetings as SciPAC Liaison.
- SciPAC reports.
- SciPAC website.
- SciPAC presentation.

#### **Accomplishments & Impacts:**

- Attended bi-monthly PACE leadership meetings to capture updates on the evolving structure of PACE, opportunities for leadership within the PACE and SGETs (Surgeon General's Education Team), requests for participation in community activities, and calls for award self-nominations.
- Provided 12 monthly updates and reports from PACE leadership meetings to the SciPAC general body.
- Updated the SciPAC National Prevention Strategies website to include information on PACE providing visibility to the PACE program and indicating its origin in SciPAC.
- Developed a presentation and disseminated information on PACE's structure, activities, and opportunities for leadership to the SciPAC body.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Utilize the SciPAC listserv to post notices from PACE.
- Determine a mechanism to account for Scientist officer participation in PACE activities.

### **PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUP (PSYPAG) LIAISON**

**Liaison: CDR Sara Pulliam**

No report received

### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY ADVISORY GROUP (SOAGDAG) LIAISON**

**Liaison: LCDR Luis Iturriaga**

#### **Major Duties:**

- Report to SciPAC on the activities of SOAGDAG.

#### **Accomplishments & Impacts:**

- Increased the visibility of the purpose and functions of SOAGDAG. SOAGDAG is a viable advisory group to the Surgeon General with increased distinction among different agencies within the USPHS. SciPAC officers were given the opportunity to apply to become a voting member of SOAGDAG.

- Healthy Minds Initiative (HMI) – a joint activity with the Social Workers PAC to promote healthy minds in SGM populations. Applying the HMI increased mental health awareness and promoted suicide prevention in SGM populations.
- Mental Health First Aid - nationwide public education program that teaches how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in layman terms for the public who may not have a sophisticated understanding of mental health issues and services.
- PrEP/PEP support initiative – a joint activity working with the Pharm PAC and PACE Program providing guidance in developing lesson plans/materials to support widespread education of PrEP/PEP.
- SOAGDAG Educational Seminar Series (ESS) - continuing the ESS to promote speakers and content in support of SOAGDAGs mission.

**Recommendations:**

- A joint effort between SciPAC and SOADDAG to increase visibility and address public health concerns utilizing officers from both advisory groups in a shared project.

**D. CONCLUSION**

This year, in collaboration with our Chief Scientist Officer, SciPAC focused on highlighting the pivotal role Scientists occupy in the Commissioned Corps. Next year, SciPAC should focus on helping its officers comply with new policies and with policy changes in order to remain on active duty as an asset to the nation in the service of its health.

*Respectfully submitted December 2019*

CAPT Jennifer D. Thomas  
Scientist PAC Chair 2018-2019