

***U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS)
Commissioned Corps***

Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ)



***Public Health Service,
Commissioned Officers' Awards Program
(COAP)***

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"Protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation."

DISCLAIMER

This pamphlet is published by the Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) as part of the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS) for use by Public Health Service (PHS) officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. This guidance document provides an overview of the PHS, Commissioned Officers' Awards Program (COAP). It is provided for informational purposes only and in no way establishes policy. If there is a discrepancy between this document and any official USPHS Commissioned Corps policy, the official policy shall in all cases prevail. This is a working document and will be updated periodically to reflect policy changes and updates. To find specific policies pertaining to USPHS Commissioned Corps' awards policies, visit the [CCHQ website](#).

Resources:

- Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [511.01](#), "Awards Program"
- [CCI 511.02](#), "Award of Uniformed Services Decorations"
- [CCI 512.01](#), "Wear of Awards and Badges"
- Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) [821.14](#), "Awards Processing"
- [COAP Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Contact PHSCOAP@hhs.gov for additional questions.

INTRODUCTION

The COAP provides a means to give formal recognition to deserving officers whose accomplishments or achievements are of outstanding or unique significance to the missions of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and non-HHS organizations to which PHS officers are detailed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the COAP is to:

- Recognize officers for outstanding or unique achievement or service;
- Encourage exemplary performance;
- Improve Espirit de Corps among officers.

AWARD WRITE-UPS – Hints & Tips

- The following list includes tips for individuals writing nominations to ensure the narrative contains all the required sections and clearly describes the accomplishments and impacts achieved.
- Include an introductory paragraph that describes the general criteria for the award being bestowed and the time period covered by the nomination.
- If applicable, state the background to provide perspective on how the honored officer addressed an issue/challenge.
- Narrative should describe how the officer met the award criteria and how his/her achievement is above and beyond the officer's position to include measurable impact as applicable.
- If the nomination includes work of others, the write-up must clarify how the individual's achievement is beyond that of others and distinctly state the impact of their contribution.
- The award must be based on achievements that have not been the basis of a prior award, unless the previous award is a portion of a long period and significant higher level of achievement.

FACTORS FOR SELECTING APPROPRIATE AWARD LEVEL

- ***Scope of Impact:*** International, National, Regional/Operating Division, Local (Center/ Institute, Division, Immediate Office).
- ***Magnitude of Achievement:*** Extent “above and beyond” position, complexity, innovation, specialized or unique skill.
- ***Leadership:*** Initiative, level of program managed/directed.
- ***Valor:*** Degree of risk to personal safety, level of heroism/courage, magnitude of savings to life, health and/or property.

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Refer to [CCI 512.01](#), “Wear of Awards and Badges,” as it prescribes the order of precedence for wearing awards and the manner in which ribbons, medals, and badges are worn on the uniform.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

- Use forms [PHS-6342-1](#), “Unit Honor Award Nomination Record,” for unit or [PHS-6342-2](#), “Individual Honor Award Nomination Record,” for individual awards.
- Nominations must be formally initiated within 13 months of the specific period of service to be recognized.
- Processing is through the organizational chain of command to the OPDIV Awards Coordinator.
- The OPDIV Awards Coordinator is the POC for questions regarding procedure, submission, and status of nominations.

Service awards require a statement from the supervisor of completion of required criteria and supporting documentation (see [POM 821.14](#)).

AWARDS ISSUED BY OTHER SERVICES

PHS Officers must send their request and copy of award documents (i.e., DD-214, DD -215, award certificate) to their OPDIV Awards Coordinator. Approval must be obtained from CCHQ/ COAP for wear of ribbons and medals earned from other uniformed services on the USPHS Commissioned Corps uniforms.

INDIVIDUAL HONOR AWARDS

Distinguished Service Medal (DSM)



This is the highest USPHS Commissioned Corps award. Criteria include outstanding contributions to the mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Such achievement may range from the management of a major health program, to an initiative resulting in major impact on the health of the Nation. The DSM can also be conferred for a one-time heroic act resulting in great savings to life, health and/or property.

Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)



The MSM is presented in recognition of meritorious service of a single, particularly important achievement, a career notable for accomplishments in technical or professional fields, or unusually high-quality and initiative in leadership. The level of accomplishment meriting this award may include: a highly significant achievement in research program direction or program administration; a series of significant contributions; a continuing period of meritorious service; or exhibition of great courage in hazardous work or in an emergency.

Outstanding Service Medal (OSM)



The OSM is presented in recognition of continuous outstanding leadership in carrying out the mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, or performance of a single accomplishment which had a major effect on the health of the Nation, or performance of a heroic act resulting in the preservation of health or property.

Commendation Medal (CM)



The CM is presented for a level of proficiency and dedication distinctly greater than that expected of the average officer. The CM recognizes sustained high-quality work achievement in scientific, admin, or other professional fields; application of a unique skill or creative imagination to the approach or solution of problems; or noteworthy technical and professional contributions that are significant to a limited area.

INDIVIDUAL HONOR AWARDS (cont'd)

Achievement Medal (AM)



The AM is presented for excellence in accomplishing a program's mission. This could be in recognition of the advancement of program objectives, or sustained above-average dedication to duty over a relatively short period of time.

PHS Citation (CIT)



The CIT is presented in recognition of a specific and noteworthy achievement generally for a short period of time. This could include contribution toward accomplishing a program objective or high-quality achievement, but at a somewhat lesser level than is required for the AM.

UNIT HONOR AWARDS

Presidential Unit Citation (PUC)



The PUC is the highest unit award issued to a uniformed service. There is no nomination procedure for the PUC. The PUC was awarded to PHS officers who:

- Served satisfactorily on active duty for any period between 9 September 2014, and 1 May 2015, for the USPHS Commissioned Corps' Ebola response efforts.
- Served satisfactorily on active duty for any period between 31 January 2020 and the end date of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Outstanding Unit Citation (OUC)



The OUC is awarded to officers of a unit that exhibits superior service towards achieving the goals and objectives of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. To merit this award, the unit must provide exceptional service, often at the national or international significance.

UNIT HONOR AWARDS (cont'd)

Unit Commendation (UC)



The UC acknowledges an outstanding accomplishment by a designated organizational unit within the USPHS Commissioned Corps that has demonstrated a significant level of performance well above that normally expected, but at a somewhat lesser level that is required for the OUC.

SURGEON GENERAL'S (SG) AWARDS

There are no nomination procedures for the SG's awards. These are conferred upon discretion of the SG.

Surgeon General's Medallion (SGM)



Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal (SGESM)



CAMPAIGN MEDALS

Smallpox Eradication Campaign Medal*



For 90 days of service between January 1, 1966 and October 26, 1977 in the smallpox campaign. *Obsolete, current awardees may continue to wear.

Global Health Campaign Medal (GHCM)



For any period of service after January 26, 2005 to any PHS officer who, in a Global Health Initiative Assignment, has served outside of the United States in foreign posts while on temporary or permanent assignment.

CAMPAIGN MEDALS (cont'd)

Ebola Campaign Medal (ECM)



The ECM recognizes a PHS officer who served on or after 31 March 2014, for a period of not less than 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days in support of an international Ebola activation of the USPHS Commissioned Corps by the President or Secretary. The SG shall determine which assignments qualify for the ECM

COVID-19 Pandemic Campaign Medal (C-19PCM)



The C-19PCM recognizes all PHS officers on active duty between 1 March 2020 and the end date of the PHE declaration for COVID-19. A PHS officer may receive only one award of the C-19PCM.

SERVICE AWARDS

Hazardous Duty Service Award (HDA)



For 200 hours served over 180 consecutive days in a position requiring frequent risks to officer's personal safety. Assignments where the officer's professional knowledge should significantly reduce or abolish the risk do not qualify. Specific assignments include, but not limited to:

- Required contact with inmates/detainees at certain Bureau of Prisons' facilities or Division of Immigration Health Services facilities;
- 8 round trips or 16 duty site destinations on frequent unscheduled aircraft flights within a 6-month period (aircraft must seat 10 or fewer passengers);
- An officer who received hazardous duty/Imminent Danger Pay;
- An officer who completes and maintains certified diver training; or
- Industrial hygiene surveys of mine sites.

SERVICE AWARDS (cont'd)

Foreign Duty Service Award (FDA)



For 30 consecutive days or 90 nonconsecutive days of service in a foreign duty post (not in a training status). Ships sailing in international waters with international port stops are eligible.

Special Assignment Service Award (SAA)



For service of 30 consecutive days on a detail to a special program initiative of other Federal or State agency. Does not include assignments that are routine function of the position, or are specifically included in the officer's billet, or involve assignments between components of HHS or details to agencies with a blanket agreement with the Corps, or are for the purpose of training.

Isolated/Hardship Service Award (ISOHAR)



For a minimum of 180 consecutive days of service in an area designated as isolated, remote, insular, or constituting a hardship duty assignment.

Crisis Response Service Award (CRSA)



The CRSA is for service in USPHS Commissioned Corps activities in a crisis situation for a minimum of 14 days. Service must be direct/on-site participation of a non-routine nature (i.e., not part of the officer's normal duty assignment). The SG declares the event/activity/site for this award.

Global Response Service Award (GRSA)



The GRSA recognizes an officer's direct participation in a USPHS Commissioned Corps deployment to a designated non-domestic or international response for a minimum of 14 days. The SG declares the event/activity/site for this award.

SERVICE AWARDS (cont'd)

Response Service Award (RSA)



The RSA recognizes an officer's direct participation in a USPHS Commissioned Corps deployment to a designated public health need or National Special Security Event, for a minimum of 7 days. The SG declares the event/activity/site for this award.

National Emergency Preparedness Award (NEPA)*



For 2 consecutive years as an active member on a Tier 1 or Tier 2 USPHS Commissioned Corps managed response team. Only one NEPA may be awarded during an officer's career and subsequent award devices are not authorized.

Recruitment Service Ribbon (RSR)



For 3 years of continuous service in a billet in which recruitment is a primary duty and responsibility. Duties may include policy development, establishment of goals and strategies, and coordination of recruitment programs and initiatives; or maintaining a current status in the Associate Recruiter Program.

Global Health Initiatives Service Medal (GHISM)



Awarded to any PHS officer who, supported a Global Health Initiative Assignment, for at least 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days while on temporary or permanent assignment.

Bicentennial Unit Commendation (BUC)*



The BUC was a service award for PHS officers who served on extended active duty the bicentennial year of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998. *Obsolete, current awardees may continue to wear.

SERVICE AWARDS (cont'd)

Regular Corps Ribbon



Awarded to PHS officers who, prior to 23 March 2010, were assimilated into the Regular Corps. Also, it is awarded to a Regular Corps officer called to active duty on or after 23 March 2010 after completion of initial call to active duty training/Officer Basic Course.

Commissioned Corps Training Ribbon (CCTR)









The CCTR is awarded to PHS officers upon successful completion of initial call to active duty training/Officer Basic Course. The CCTR was also awarded to officers who completed previous iterations of officer training (i.e., Basic Officer Training Course and Independent Officer Training Course).

RIBBONS/HARDWARE

The COAP supplies the initial medal set for the DSM, MSM, ASHESM, SGESM, and OSM. A certificate will be issued for all individual honor awards. Programs and officers may procure, at their expense, replacement award devices, and the attachments shown below:

ATTACHMENTS

In lieu of a second or subsequent award, the following are worn:

Gold Star		(5/16") on individual honor awards.
Silver Star		(5/16") in lieu of 5 gold stars.
Bronze Star		(3/16") on units or service awards.
Silver Star Bronze		(3/16") in lieu of 5 bronze stars.
Letter "V"		for valor (heroism).
Gold Frame Device		for second Presidential Unit Citation

APPROVAL LEVELS

OPDIVs have the delegated authority to approve the OSM, CM, AM, Citation, and UC.

The DSM, MSM, OUC, and all awards with “valor” are approved by the SG after review and recommendation by the PHS Commissioned Corps Awards Board (CCAB).