

# THE JOAG JOURNAL

2016 USPHS Symposium

Special Edition



---

## EDITORS

---

LT Katie Bante

LCDR Daveta Bailey



*“More than 1,100 attendees gathered for the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City May 16-19 for a very successful week of training, networking, and more. A heartfelt thanks to the Oklahoma City Branch, the planning committees, sponsors, exhibitors, speakers and hundreds of volunteers who made it all possible.”*

— USPHS COF Symposium [webpage](#)

## **FEATURES**

[Message from the Chair-Elect: 3](#)

[Honor Cadre’s Junior Officers: 4](#)

[Being an Aide-de-Camp: 5](#)

[JOAG Meeting Report: 6](#)

[Health Services Category Roundtable: 7](#)

[Uniform Inspection Booth: 8](#)

[Seizing Opportunities: 9](#)

[Choral Member’s First Performance: 10](#)

[Giving Back to Oklahoma City: 11](#)

[APAOC Representation: 12](#)

[Junior Officer Career Enhancement Booth: 13](#)

[Social Media Campaign: 14](#)

[Mentorship at Symposium: 14](#)

[A Week of Accomplishments: 15](#)

[Surgeon General’s Run: 16](#)

[Joint Combined Social: 17](#)

[JOAG’s Symposium Volunteer Survey: 18](#)

[Awards: 19-20](#)

[Recognizing Outstanding Officers: 21-22](#)

[Thanks & Photo Acknowledgements: 23](#)

*\*Hover your cursor over images*

*for photo captions\**



Photo by Kun Shen



Photo by Kun Shen

## MESSAGE FROM

## THE CHAIR-ELECT, LCDR SAMANTHA SPINDEL



Each summer, USPHS officers discuss the latest developments to advance public health in our nation at the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, sponsored by the Commissioned Officers Foundation. At the Symposium, we have a chance to learn more about what our fellow officers do at other agencies, in other parts of the country, and during deployments. This information exchange can help us develop new projects that build upon the latest knowledge. The Symposium also allows us to network with one another and build relationships with both junior and senior officers.

JOAG provides many services and support to junior officers both in the preparation for and during the Symposium. The conference serves as a terrific mechanism for JOAG to fulfill the goals established in the JOAG Strategic Plan ([https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/about\\_governingdocs.aspx](https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/about_governingdocs.aspx)). Some of these goals include supporting initiatives of the Surgeon General, serving as a resource for junior officers, promoting high standards of officership, and increasing the visibility of the USPHS.

Prior to the Symposium, JOAG developed an Oklahoma City resource guide, managed a room/car share program, and supported three junior officer scholarships, which was made possible by the successful sales of JOAG merchandise.

Below are some highlights of JOAG activities that took place during the conference. If you would like to get involved in similar activities in the future, please contact the Co-Chairs for the Outreach Committee: <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/committees.aspx>.

**Uniform Inspection Booth:** Volunteers at the booth helped over 80 officers learn about how to properly wear their various USPHS uniforms. Officers who stopped by the booth received a free uniform inspection and instructions about how to transition from the Service Dress Blue (SDB) uniform to the Dinner Dress Blue (DDB) uniform.

**Junior Officer Career Enhancement Booth:** Volunteers at the booth helped officers obtain resources and advice on career and professional development. Specifically, officers learned about opportunities available from various JOAG committees, such as the Job Shadowing Program, the Peer to Peer Network, and the Professional Development Book Club, as well as other training and education materials related to policy, health promotion/fitness and deployments.

**Community Service Events:** JOAG supported the Surgeon General's National Prevention Strategy's tenant of "Healthy Eating" by serving a fresh breakfast to over 100 homeless people. This directly supports the National Prevention Strategy's tenet of 'Healthy Eating', which includes a component of promoting food security.

**Walk:** JOAG supported the *Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities* initiative by organizing a two-mile walk through Oklahoma City's historic warehouse district.

**Combined Joint Social:** Both junior and senior officers from all categories joined together for an evening of fellowship and *esprit de corps* while enjoying live music.

I hope all those who attended the conference learned a lot and made some new friendships. For those who were unable to attend this year, I hope you felt included by following along with the JOAG Twitter feeds and Facebook posts. Thank you to the many junior officers whose hard work, dedication, and volunteerism made these activities come to fruition at the Symposium. I look forward to seeing you at next year's Symposium in Tennessee!

## WITH PRIDE AND DISTINCTION: HONOR CADRE'S JUNIOR OFFICERS AT THE 2016 USPHS SYMPOSIUM

SUBMITTED BY LCDR CELESTINA AROWOSEGBE & LCDR SARA AZIMI-BOLOURIAN



Photo by Kun Shen



Photo by Kun Shen



Photo by Kun Shen



Photo by Kun Shen

"Honor Guard, advance the Colors!" That was our cue and that was what we did. We presented the Colors at the 2016 U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Dressed in our Service Dress Whites, complete with medals, combination covers and white gloves, we marched and presented the colors in multiple ceremonies during the 2016 Symposium. A group of seven officers including CDRs Latoria Ford, Christine Le, Kun Shen, Jyl Woolfolk, Tammy White and LCDRs Celestina Arowosegbe and Sara Azimi-Bolourian, all part of the Surgeon General's Honor Cadre (SGHC), volunteered to perform at this year's Symposium. As junior officers, it was an absolute honor for LCDRs Azimi-Bolourian and me to contribute to the success of the Symposium.

The SGHC is composed of officers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, dedication to, and pride in the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Members of the SGHC are noted for their knowledge of protocol, ceremonies, close order drill, knowledge and practice of uniformed service customs, and courtesies and daily wearing of the uniform with pride and distinction. The SGHC represents the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) throughout the nation. At this year's Symposium, the SGHC presented the colors at the Anchor and Caduceus Dinner; the Symposium's opening ceremony; the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) Award ceremony; and the Health Service Officers (HSO) Chief Professional Officer (CPO) Change of Command ceremony.

We arrived at each ceremony, 30-60 minutes prior to commencement to ensure we had access to the room and rehearsed accordingly. The atmosphere was calm as we rehearsed and waited for our cue to present the Colors. "You all look sharp" was the comment we often heard from many officers as they walked past us. Although the SGHC has performed at numerous USPHS and non-USPHS events over the years, it was the first time LCDR Azimi-Bolourian and I performed at the Symposium. It felt great to be a part of the SGHC team supporting the Symposium. Having the opportunity to perform before fellow officers and guests was gratifying. It was a distinguished opportunity to increase the visibility of the USPHS, as the audience included civilians, professional colleagues, as well as active and retired USPHS officers. We believe that we inspired feelings of patriotism and pride during the different ceremonies.

It was nice to see officers from all over the country. The camaraderie among the officers was impressive. The unexpected rapport with fellow officers, some of whom we met for the first time gave us a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the Symposium was packed with useful information that was disseminated via presentations, lectures, track sessions, exhibitors etc. The pride and dignity associated with serving on the SGHC left an indelible impression on all of us. The total experience was motivating and inspirational; a mental boost in our journey to serve.

## SEEKING AN EXCITING AND REWARDING EXPERIENCE? BE AN AIDE-DE-CAMP!

SUBMITTED BY LCDR OLIVER OU

During the 2016 Symposium, I had the unique opportunity to serve as an aide-de-camp to two flag officers. It was certainly a very rewarding experience: I got to wear an aiguillette on my shoulder for the first time in my life, to observe how high ranking officers interact with other officers, and to sit at the dinner table with RADM Childs and officers from his Monrovia Medical Unit team, Team 2.

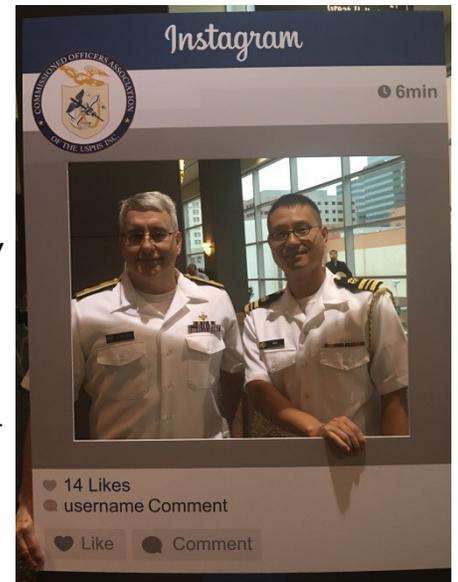
It all started when I received an email from JOAG about the opportunity for junior officers to serve as an aide-de-camp to a flag officer. I decided to volunteer because I just could not say "No" to the precious opportunity to spend time with a flag officer.

I served as an aide-de-camp to two flag officers during the symposium. I was with RADM Richard Childs on Monday and RADM James Lando on Tuesday. As an aide, I was responsible of ensuring that my flag officer, or "principal", was on time, at the correct location, and in the correct uniform. This sounded like a very simple job description, but the specific duties for an aide actually varied a lot, and depended on the principal.

I quickly learned that flexibility is critical because there were always last minute changes. The flag officers were also very flexible and understanding. For example, the time for the flag officer meeting was changed at the last minute. My principal texted me the moment he heard about this change. I appreciated that he kept in contact with me, and always kept me well informed. I was also impressed by how many people these flag officers know and how well they remember names. They talked to people constantly and showed a genuine interest in people. The strong connections between my principals and those around them were apparent. I found these extraordinary leaders have the magic ability to immediately put others at ease and make people so comfortable with them. They were like magnets – people were instinctively drawn to them.

The biggest challenge for me of being an aide-de-camp was to let my principal's agenda take precedence over my own: there were officers I would have liked to talk to, sessions I would have liked to attend, and activities I would have liked to participate in. However, serving as an aide-de-camp meant I needed to stay with my principal at all times, and make him a priority. After the symposium I can honestly say that I am glad I sacrificed my own schedule. The rewards are just much greater than my own inconvenience. In fact, I appreciate this opportunity even more when I realized the main reason for these flag officers to request an aide-de-camp was not because they could not find the meeting locations or manage their own schedules. It was because they wanted to give junior officers an opportunity to spend time with a flag officer and to observe leadership in action.

The highlight of my aide-de-camp experiences was to sit at the same dinner table with RADM Childs and officers from Monrovia Medical Unit Team 2. During the Ebola response, they provided hope through care to healthcare workers in Liberia who may have contracted the Ebola virus. What an honor and privilege it was for me to spend the evening with these extraordinary officers! There was a lot of *esprit de corps* in the room that evening. How can you not have a warm, nostalgic feeling left in you after going through so much together in Liberia? Being an aide-de-camp to RADM Childs and RADM Lando during the Symposium was a once in a lifetime experience that I will always cherish. If provided the opportunity next year in Chattanooga, I would do it again in a heartbeat. I would like to encourage all junior officers to try it. It will surely be an exciting and rewarding experience.



# ALL THE STARS & CHICKASAW CHOCOLATE ALIGNING: OUR JOAG MEETING

SUBMITTED BY LCDR ELIZABETH GARZA, JOAG CHAIR

Once a year, JOAG is able to meet in person and this year due to the hard work of LCDR Cara Halldin, JOAG Vice-Chair and COF Liaison as well as LCDR Kristie Purdy, JOAG Symposium Lead we were able to meet on-site and even made it into the official Symposium agenda! This was HUGE since in years past we haven't been able to secure a spot on-site or space on the agenda, so we were extremely fortunate to have this level of support from the Commissioned Officers Foundation this year to make this happen.

**Aligning stars...** From what I was told, this was the first JOAG meeting where we had the Surgeon General (SG), Deputy Surgeon General (DSG), Director of the Division of Commissioned Corps & Readiness and ALL of our Chief Professional Officers (CPOs) from each of the categories in attendance to address our junior officers. It was humbling and inspiring to see our leadership at the highest levels so committed to be there to engage with us junior officers and so interested in really hearing from us. The SG and DSG had time to allow for several questions from our officers and each of the CPOs were able to share their top leadership advice with us.

**Honoring our past JOAG Senior Advisor and welcoming our new JOAG Senior Advisor...**Both CAPT Dan Beck, our previous JOAG Senior Advisor (August 2010-February 2016), and our new JOAG Senior Advisor, CAPT Sara Newman (March 2016-September 2019), were able to join us in person. We were able to thank CAPT Beck for all his years of service to JOAG and we were excited to give him our first-ever moisture wicking deployment themed JOAG t-shirt. CAPT Newman then joined the podium to share why she decided to run for JOAG Senior Advisor, her thoughts on the value of JOAG to the Corps, and leadership advice targeted at junior officers.

**Thanking our JOAG outstanding volunteers from each committee...** Each year we recognize the 2 outstanding non-voting member volunteers from each of the JOAG Committees (selected by the Committee Chair/Co-Chairs), along with the Committee Secretary and any non-voting member Committee Co-Chairs. Fortunately we had several of our JOAG Committee Chairs attend in person, so they joined me at the front to deliver those awards to each committee.

**Standing room only...** we drew in the masses, not only did the SG, DSG and CPOs make it a priority to be there, junior officers crowded in and estimates were around 200 officers present at our meeting.

**Ending on a sweet note...** A special treat this year was having some local popcorn and Chickasaw Nation Oklahoma shaped chocolate that we were able to share with our awardees. The popcorn went to the first 50 officers in attendance.

I wanted to thank everyone who joined us in person or on the phone. Besides hearing from our 'stars,' the best part for me was being able to put so many names to faces, meet so many of you in person, and really learn more about the life of officers at IHS and BOP.



# JUNIOR OFFICERS' INVOLVEMENT IN CATEGORY DAY: EDUCATING OFFICERS ABOUT THE CHES/MCHES

SUBMITTED BY LCDR JENNIFER CLEMENTS & LT JANESIA ROBBS

During the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium, the Health Service Professional Advisory Council (HSPAC) invites Health Services Officers (HSOs) to participate in the HSO Category Day Roundtable Session. Roundtable Sessions are designed to allow more in-depth discussion on a wide range of topics of interest to officers. Some of the topics for this year's roundtable sessions include positive leadership, psychological first aid skills, licensure standards for federal employees, and credentialing in public health.

We, LCDR Jennifer Clements, Chair of the Health Promotion and Health Education (HPHE) track of the Public Health Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) and LT Janesia Robbs, HPHE Co-chair, had the opportunity to lead a roundtable titled, "Identifying, Creating, and Disseminating a CHES/MCHES Resource Guide within Professional Health Networks".

The objectives of the roundtable session were to:

- Share ideas on how to create and disseminate Certified Health Education Specialist/Master Health Education Specialist (CHES/MCHES) continuing education (CE) opportunities among professional colleagues.
- Identify ways to leverage existing health education CE opportunities for health educators within their workplace and professional settings.
- Highlight health educator CE opportunities within their professional networks.

Our overarching goal was for officers to leave the roundtable session with more information on the CHES/MCHES credentials, the ability to create a CE resource guide within their workplace, and increased knowledge on how to leverage existing resources and develop relevant brown bags presentations for health educators across their workplaces.

Participation in the 2016 HSO Category Day Roundtable Session as a presenter was a rewarding experience. We met officers with diverse backgrounds (clinical and non-clinical) and discussed the value of CHES/MCHES credentials in advancing the skill set of health educators. We also provided a brief overview of CHES/MCHES eligibility, exam dates, and CE requirements. Many officers who participated in the roundtables were not aware of the CHES/MCHES credentials and were excited to learn about it. We reminded officers that the CHES/MCHES credentials offer an additional opportunity to become more qualified public health leaders, stay up-to-date within their fields of practice, and thus, advance their careers.

The HPHE Track team looks forward to continuing the discussion on important health promotion and health education topics at the 2017 HSO Category Day Roundtable Sessions.



## REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2016 SYMPOSIUM: THE JOAG UNIFORM INSPECTION BOOTH

SUBMITTED BY LCDR SCOTT ECKHART & LT BETH WITTRY

The Uniform Inspection Booth (UIB) Workgroup is a component of the JOAG Outreach Committee. It primarily serves officers at the Symposium, but also at FDA Awareness Day and any other official USPHS Commissioned Corps functions if requested. The UIB provides a valuable service to officers who may not work closely with other USPHS officers and may not be familiar with proper wear of the uniform.

Participating as a UIB volunteer is a great way to serve, even if you don't feel comfortable with uniform policies. All UIB volunteers receive an orientation to understand the most common uniform mishaps and how to conduct a uniform inspection. With over 80 officers stopping by the booth, the UIB was visible and available to all officers at the Symposium, as fellow junior officers staffed the booth to answer officers' questions and conduct uniform inspections. The booth consisted of a display panel with three types of USPHS uniforms with examples of improper wear. Many officers were drawn in by the display of improper uniforms and volunteers would ask officers to identify violations on the displayed uniforms. The volunteers appreciated learning and building camaraderie with officers of all agencies and categories.

The majority of uniform inspections occurred the day of Anchor and Caduceus (A&C) Dinner. At the A&C Dinner, officers were required to wear dinner dress (DD) uniforms, to include the DD regular and jacket versions. Officers (ranks O-1 to O-3) were required to wear the Dinner Dress Blues (DDBs), which is the regular version of the DD uniform and entails a conversion of the Service Dress Blues (SDBs). Volunteers staffing the UIB received questions from junior officers about how to convert the SDBs to DDBs. The conversion from SDBs to DDBs involved three major components: 1) Ribbons changed to miniature medals; 2) No name tags worn; and 3) Use of the bow tie for male officers. Officers (O-4 rank and above) were required to wear the DD uniforms with the jacket. The DD jacket versions are more formal, and officers use the jacket with the DD blue or white uniforms.

Officers attending the A&C Dinner had questions regarding the policy and placement of miniature medals for both the DD regular and jacket versions. For the male officer's DD jacket, the policy states: "lowest row of miniature medals is positioned 3 inches below the notch and center on the lapel, parallel to the ground." For female officer's DD jacket, there is no lapel to assist with placement of miniature metals. The policy for the female officer's DD jacket states: "ribbons worn in the same relative position as on the male's DD jacket, down 1/3 of the distance from the shoulder seam to the coat hem." The placement of the miniature medals varies on female officers as the shoulder seam to coat hem distance is not the same for everyone. Several officers required assistance with placement of miniature medals and volunteers ensured officers had proper uniform wear.

For more information, please visit the policy for the Wear of Ribbons and Medals: <http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC512.01.pdf>



# SIEZING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE USPHS SYMPOSIUM

SUBMITTED BY LT KRISTIN ALLMARAS



As a junior officer with less than one year as a Commissioned Officer in the Public Health Service, I was looking forward to the opportunity to attend the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. I planned to take advantage of the many unique opportunities offered at the Symposium, so I volunteered as an aide-de-camp, signed up for the PharmPAC career counseling, assisted with the set-up of the Surgeon General's 5K Run/Walk; and attended VADM Murthy's talk, pharmacy category day, and social engagements.



The highlight of the COF Symposium was having the opportunity to serve as aide-de-camp (AdC) for two different two star admirals. RADM Giberson and I attended pharmacy category day during my first day as AdC. During this time, he gave me valuable insight into the world of pharmacy. I was appreciative of the time he took to share his PHS experience, stories, and advice with me. My second day was with RADM Elizondo of the HSO category; this day was truly enlightening! He made it a priority to ensure my day was memorable. He introduced me to officers who have made large footprints in the USPHS world, including RADM Babb, RADM Carmona, and RADM Trent-Adams. We discussed a multitude of topics and he provided me with insurmountable amounts of professional and personal advice. He elaborated on his career and gave me "tips and tricks" on how to be successful. These two days gave me more motivation and drive than I could have ever expected!



The PharmPAC career counseling provided me with great career development strategies. I was matched with a Commander from the FDA stationed in the DC area. She extensively critiqued my curriculum vitae, assisted me with re-wording some of the sections, and provided feedback that was constructive and valuable. This resulted in a more fluid and easily read draft that I am proud to distribute when necessary.

I also volunteered to assist with the set-up of the Surgeon General's 5K Run/Walk. I assisted with directing the participants off commercial buses and to the starting line. During the days leading up to the 5K Run/Walk, I recruited junior officers to participate in the run and/or annual physical fitness test. With dozens of volunteers and hundreds of participants, this event was a great success.

I could not have asked for a better experience for my first COF Symposium and to top off the week, I was able to participate in receiving the *Large Branch of the Year Award* for our local COA branch. Many junior officers have inquired about my experience and I continually share how valuable attending this conference was. I highly encourage all officers to attend the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium annually; it provides many opportunities for career development, networking across categories, and builds quality, life-long relationships.

# A CHORAL MEMBER'S FIRST PERFORMANCE WITH THE USPHS MUSIC ENSEMBLE

SUBMITTED BY LCDR MOLLY RUTLEDGE

The sixteen year old USPHS Commissioned Corps Music Ensemble consists of a Choral Group and Ceremonial Band. Including the Headquarters Groups, along with geographically diverse field groups and unaffiliated field members, the Ensemble is 200 strong. The Ensemble serves the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG), HHS agencies and partner organizations. The Ensemble is entirely a volunteer organization and performs at about fifty events per year.

I served several years on the USPHS Music Ensemble Communications Committee while part of the field choral group, but I did not have the opportunity to perform until this year. I was eager to join the Ensemble at the 2016 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. It was a truly rewarding and fulfilling experience. I arrived to the symposium with some nervous feelings mostly because I had been practicing the assigned music solely on my own for the last three months as the only field choral officer stationed in Alaska. As a field Ensemble member, officers are required to rehearse independently at least four hours per month to maintain proficiency and learn assigned music. For large events such as the symposium, rehearsal time often increases significantly and I found myself singing in my car, singing to my children, pretty much any opportunity that I came across. While the MP3 files of the assigned music I utilized to rehearse were extremely helpful, I was still anxious about how I would sound and feel with a larger group of choral and band members. I couldn't have been more pleasantly reassured. From the moment I walked into my first mandatory rehearsal at the symposium to the moment I left after the final performance, I was treated with nothing short of true officership by the other performers. Fellow sopranos were quick to identify me as being new and immediately found a place assignment for me on stage. They were at ease with sharing their music as well as encouraging in following their vocal lead whenever I needed to do so.

The OSG, together with the Surgeon General (SG), is the official authority of the Ensemble. It was especially exciting to listen to Vice Admiral Vivek Murthy greet our Ensemble as a group just prior to the concert performance. VADM Murthy voiced appreciation of our support for the symposium event which he noted enhanced the *esprit de corps*, morale, and visibility of the Commissioned Corps among Public Health Service and non-Public Health Service Programs. VADM Murthy's sincere smile was contagious and the experience of looking at my fellow Ensemble members' smiles in response to his inspired me to give the performance my all. We didn't let the SG down that evening - we went on to give one of our best performances ever. I look forward to a continued career within the USPHS that includes Ensemble performances in many symposiums to come.



Photo by Kun Shen

Photo by Kun Shen

## GIVING BACK TO OKLAHOMA CITY

SUBMITTED BY LCDRS JUNE GERMAIN, TOSCHA STANLEY, KRISTIE PURDY & LT T. AARON CARDENAZ

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day” is a familiar saying, but may not always be accessible to all – especially those experiencing homelessness.

During the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium, JOAG served the Oklahoma City (OKC) homeless community and supported the Surgeon General’s National Prevention Strategy’s tenant of “Healthy Eating” through the promotion of food security. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016, JOAG members volunteered at two organizations serving OKC’s homeless population: the Jesus House and the Homeless Alliance.

The Jesus House is an inner-city, non-denominational, outreach recovery program and homeless shelter for men and women experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental health issues. Seven officers volunteered their time in the early morning hours to serve a hot, fresh breakfast to over 120 residents utilizing the facility.

“As a group, we were able to contribute something meaningful to the local community,” said LT T. Aaron Cardenaz, JOAG Community Service Event Workgroup Lead. “The gratefulness shown to the officers and myself was very touching. I was approached countless times by those thankful for our presence.”

The Homeless Alliance (HA) provides both breakfast and lunch to the homeless population of OKC. As OKC’s only day shelter, it serves as a “one-stop-shop” for social services; multiple agencies are located on site to assist guests with ending their homelessness. Thirteen officers spent the morning assisting in multiple projects including serving breakfast to approximately 200 individuals, assembling individual toiletry bags, and organizing the facility’s library. Volunteer activities were performed in the morning before Symposium events started for the day.

“We would like to express our gratitude to local officers of the Oklahoma area in providing transportation both to and from the community service venues and host hotel,” said LCDR Kristie Purdy, JOAG Symposium Planning Workgroup Lead. “These officers were waiting with vehicles ready by 5:45 AM.”

“These events were very successful and officers expressed appreciation for having an opportunity to give back to the city during the Symposium,” said LT Cardenaz.



# ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OFFICERS COMMITTEE (APAOC) REPRESENTATION AT THE 2016 USPHS SYMPOSIUM

SUBMITTED BY LCDR SONG LAVALAIS & LCDR SIMLEEN KAUR

This past May, APAOC's Public Relations and Merchandise Committee organized the very first APAOC Social, as well as represented APAOC at the Minority Officer Liaison Council (MOLC) booth at the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City, OK.

## **First APAOC Social**

Known as the prime brunch spot for the downtown crowd, Kitchen No. 324 was selected to host the breakfast social. From its green eggs and ham to the flavor-of-the-day "cronut," the restaurant satisfied every taste bud.

The inaugural social event was a great success, attended by 25 APAOC officers representing eight different federal agencies. Attending officers networked by reconnecting with old colleagues and forging new friendships. This public gathering also helped increase visibility of APAOC officers at the Symposium. The Committee anticipates more social events in the future to connect APAOC officers throughout the country.

## **APAOC at MOLC Booth**

MOLC is comprised of the four Core Minority Advisory Groups (CMAGs) including APAOC, American Indian/Alaska Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AIANCOAC), Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) and Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee (HOAC).

Eight APAOC officers from different agencies volunteered at MOLC booth on May 19, 2016. Volunteers disseminated information on APAOC and its mission and assisted in selling merchandise such as APAOC T-shirts, coins, and USPHS window clings. The officers got the opportunity to network with MOLC leadership and fellow BCOAG officers present at the same booth.

The booth was visited by several APAOC and non-APAOC officers including Deputy Surgeon General RADM Sylvia Trent-Adams and 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General VADM Richard Carmona. The volunteers were highly appreciated for their hard work and willingness to serve in CMAGs in addition to current responsibilities from their respective agencies and USPHS categories.



# SETTING THE BAR AND BREAKING RECORDS: THE JUNIOR OFFICER CAREER ENHANCEMENT BOOTH

SUBMITTED BY LCDR DAVID HUANG, JOAG FINANCIAL LIAISON

Thanks to the hard work of the Outreach Committee, committed junior officer volunteers, and key JOAG leadership, this year's Junior Officer Career Enhancement Booth (JOCEB) reached new heights at the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium with a prime exhibit hall location, various materials on JOAG and its initiatives, and exciting new merchandise that helped to break sales records.

Traditionally, the JOCEB provides junior officers with resources and advice on career and professional development at events like the Symposium, Officer Basic Course (OBC) Open Houses, and CDC and FDA Commissioned Corps Awareness Days. Information is available about each of the JOAG committees as well as JOAG initiatives such as the JOAG Job Shadowing Program and the JOAG Peer to Peer Network. For the first time ever, the JOCEB at this year's Symposium also provided information on the new Federal Employee Wellness Facility Log, a new initiative out of JOAG's Readiness & Deployment Workgroup.

But perhaps the most highly anticipated draw for Symposium attendees is merchandise that JOAG offers for sale at the JOCEB. In line with our 2015-16 JOAG theme of *Building Public Health Leadership and Advancing Deployment Readiness*, JOAG launched two new items for sale at the 2016 Symposium: a quarantine yellow moisture-wicking shirt featuring the PHS logo on front and a map of PHS deployments on back; and a cell phone card holder (which sticks to the back of any sized phone) featuring the



PHS logo. By far the best selling item in JOAG's history, the moisture-wicking shirt exceeded expectations with approximately 370 shirts sold at the Symposium alone, including sales at the JOAG General Meeting at the Symposium. The cell

phone card holder also sold well, with many officers buying multiple quantities. All told, gross sales at this year's Symposium were twice the sales at last year's Symposium. Moreover, gross sales thus far in the operational year have almost tripled as compared to sales throughout the entire previous operational year.

Besides the new products offered for sale, JOAG unveiled two banners sporting the new JOAG logo and used them at the Uniform Inspection Booth (UIB) and the JOCEB, as well as the JOAG General Meeting held at the Symposium. These banners will be used for future events featuring the JOCEB, including OBC Open Houses and CDC and FDA Commissioned Corps Awareness Days.

If you missed out on this year's Symposium, all merchandise is available for purchase on our online store at [mkt.com/usphs-joag](http://mkt.com/usphs-joag) and at all OBC Open Houses. As a reminder, proceeds from merchandise sales go to the C. Everett Koop Living Legacy Fund, which funds scholarships for junior Commissioned Corps officers to attend the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.

It has been at least four years since JOAG has been able to fund any junior officer scholarships through the C. Everett Koop Living Legacy Fund, but JOAG was extremely proud to have been able to successfully fund three junior officers to attend the 2016 Symposium in Oklahoma City. We hope to build on the success of this year's JOCEB and offer even more scholarships at next year's Symposium. See you in Chattanooga in 2017!





## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN & JOAG PHOTOGRAPHER

SUBMITTED BY LCDR TOSCHA STANLEY & LCDR KRISTIE PURDY

For those who have embraced the use of social media with open thumbs, JOAG was able to provide these officers with our first “live” social media blitz of the 2016 Symposium through Facebook and Twitter.

LCDR Andrea Jackson was assigned as the JOAG Social Media Symposium Coordinator. Sending over 15 Tweets and 12 Facebook posts throughout the week, LCDR Jackson kept officers up-to-date on all JOAG related happenings during Symposium week. LCDR Jackson engaged officers on a variety of activities from reminders of the service provided by our Uniform Inspection Booth, providing details on the location of the JOAG General Meeting, introducing products available for sale at the Junior Officer Career Enhancement Booth, and announcing JOAG Award recipients at the Awards Luncheon.

For the first time ever, JOAG had a dedicated photographer at the Symposium to capture JOAG related events. LT Phoung Vu provided his skill and photography expertise throughout the week. LT Vu provided JOAG with over 119 snapshots he captured. These photos may be accessed at <https://community.max.gov/x/2wNtQ>

“Both of these officers did an outstanding job,” said LCDR Kristie Purdy, JOAG symposium planning workgroup lead. “The contributions they made were key to advertising and led to the success of all our events.”

## MENTORSHIP AT THE 2016 USPHS SYMPOSIUM

SUBMITTED BY LCDR BRITTANY KEENER

If you ask any senior officer for career advice, one of the first things they will tell you is to get a mentor. What exactly does that mean? Merriam-Webster says a mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person. In my experience as a junior officer, I’ve been incredibly lucky to have had several mentors from varied backgrounds. A mentor relationship can be as simple as engaging a colleague you look up to for support or advice on a daily basis, or it may be a more formal interaction such as the PharmPAC mentoring network or the JOAG Peer-to-Peer networking program.

Many categories offer mentoring sessions during the USPHS Symposium. The pharmacy category, with CDR Mari-sol Martinez’s coordination, offers a career counseling session at each year’s event where senior officers are matched with junior officers to provide CV review, general career advice, and guidance on benchmarks. I was matched with CDR Matthew Brancazio at the career counseling session at the 2015 Symposium. Although we work with different agencies, his previous experience in my agency proved incredibly beneficial. He highlighted items within my CV that required additional explanation and emphasis for those outside of my agency. The mentor/mentee relationship also has value in supporting the more senior leader to excel and lead by example. CDR Brancazio stepped up to moderate the entire pharmacy category day proceedings at the 2016 Symposium, co-presented during Tuesday’s Track 1: *Rapid and Effective Response* with LCDR Ramses Diaz-Vargas, and again, volunteered for career counseling sessions to assist several junior officers from a variety of agencies.

As a junior officer, or any officer for that matter, I would recommend surrounding yourself with positive, enthusiastic, and motivated officers such as CDR Brancazio. Their energy is contagious and their dedication and drive will inspire you to reach your greatest potential in all aspects of life. The opportunities provided at the USPHS Symposium have inspired me to mentor more junior officers and to also submit a presentation at next year’s conference.

## A WEEK OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SUBMITTED BY LT ELMINA MBOH

My name is LT Elmina Mboh. I began my PHS career in 2008 as a Senior COSTEP Officer. I currently work as a Consumer Safety Officer for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Dallas District Office. I have been a registered COA member since 2011, but had never attended the annual Symposium. This year, I finally experienced it. Thanks to my agency for awarding a scholarship to offset the cost of my attendance.

There is much to learn and much to do at the USPHS symposium. You can make it as exciting as you want it to be if you sign up for the many volunteer activities available. At the 2016 USPHS Symposium, I made every day count. I was able to accomplish so much in a few days:

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, I volunteered at the JOAG Uniform Inspection Booth. I learned new uniform skills while providing information on proper uniform wear to other officers.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, I participated in a JOAG community service event at Jesus House, a charitable organization providing meals and shelter to homeless men and women. This was the most important event of my week.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, I volunteered for the PTU Booth. Potential USPHS Physical Training Uniforms (PTUs) were on display at this booth and officers could vote for their preferred font size.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, I participated in the Surgeon General's 5K Run/Walk, and ran side-by-side with my OBC classmate and friend, CDR Vickie Kanion. We made it to the finish line!

The presentations and learning opportunities provided at this year's Symposium were very enriching and crowned my experience at the Symposium. Attendance also allowed me to earn approximately 35 Continuing Education (CE) hours, which exceeds our annual CE goal for the Nurse Category.

The highlight of the 2016 symposium was listening to our Surgeon General's presentation. After hearing him align his vision for the Corps, I felt blessed to have a boss who is so intelligent and whose heart is devoted to the Commissioned Corps.

I encourage all who have never attended the Symposium to give it a try. You will be glad you did. Become a registered COA member and help keep this event's candle burning annually. Make plans to be in Chattanooga, TN in 2017!



Photo by Kun Shen

# 2016 SURGEON GENERAL'S ON-SITE VIRTUAL AND RUN

SUBMITTED BY LCDR DAWN DINEYAZHE & LT KAYLA DEWITT

During the annual 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium, officers were provided an amazing opportunity. The Surgeon General's 5K Run/Walk is not only fun, but a great way to promote the values of the United States Public Health Service and show our commitment to health and wellness by supporting active lifestyles. This year, the on-site Run/Walk was held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at Oklahoma City's Regatta Park. Located 1.5 miles from downtown Oklahoma City next to the Boathouse District, Regatta Park has a beautiful view of the Oklahoma River. Cross category collaboration among many Oklahoma-based officers began months in advance to ensure the run would be a success.



The morning started with many officers participating in the upper body endurance, core endurance, and the flexibility portion of the APFT. More officers arrived shortly after for the 5K Run/Walk. A total of 158 officers completed the 5K challenge, despite the weather, which was unseasonably chilly for an Oklahoma May at 55 degrees with intermittent drizzle.

The run started at the pavilion and traveled through a few gently rolling hills along the Oklahoma River. ChronoTrack timing by DG Productions provided a split time at the 1.5 mile mark for those completing the run portion of the APFT. The overall winner was LCDR Kurt Kesteloot with a time of 19:27 (pace of 06:16). The top female runner was LTJG Mariela Rivera with a time of 21:57 (pace of 07:04). Medals were awarded to overall male and female as well as the top 3 in each age category. Each participant received a t-shirt commemorating the 2016 run.



This year's run was unique in that it offered the first ever Surgeon General's 5K Virtual Run/Walk/Roll. A Virtual Run is a race that can occur at any location and provides the same benefits of a regular, organized race including bibs, t-shirts, and medals. CDR Josef Otto of the Therapy category led the establishment of the Virtual Run. The purpose of the Virtual Run was to utilize a low cost method of educating communities about the importance of physical activity to improve health and prevent disease. It also provided a means to connect officers, many of whom were unable to attend this year's Symposium, but still desired a way to demonstrate officership and support by forming running groups at their respective duty stations.



The Virtual Run also took months of planning. A subcommittee of five officers organized the logistics. Much teamwork was needed to find a vendor, test the registration site and decide on the t-shirt and medal designs. The team also worked on marketing the event through various social media group messaging. The organizers teamed up with PHS Athletics to make it an official event in which officers could participate in. By race day, there were 265 registrants from all over the country, from Alaska to Georgia.

Thank you to all of the runners who participated in this event. In a true esprit de corps, we hope that participation in the Surgeon General's Virtual Run will continue to grow for many years to come.

★ WANTED ★



USPHS Joint Combined Social  
Officers and Friends  
at Wormy Dog Saloon  
May 18, 2016 Wednesday 1930-2330

311 E Sheridan Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Save The Date



## AN EVENING OF FELLOWSHIP AT THE JOINT COMBINED SOCIAL

SUBMITTED BY LTJG WHITNEY MOSELEY

The 2016 Joint Combined Social was deemed to be a memorable experience and a success, taking place in Bricktown at the Wormy Dog Saloon, which was within walking distance of the Symposium in Downtown OKC. Admission to the social was free of charge to officers and \$5 for guests. Officers enjoyed fellowship with one another and the sounds of the live band, Dirty Erin of Oklahoma, who's bandmate included Chuck Tillman - the husband of a fellow Corps officer!

"The Combined Social was a great way for officers from across the nation to network with each other while having fun too," said LCDR Nahleen Lopez, Joint Combined Social Chair. "A huge thank you to the local Oklahoma Branch for providing the funds to reserve the venue space and the entertainment. We would like to thank the officers and the individual organizations that contributed to the success of the event. The hospitality in Oklahoma City was well received by many officers attending this year's Symposium and social."

The Joint Combined Social Committee met soon after the holidays to begin work on planning for the 2016 Symposium social. They worked cohesively together to identify a cost effective venue to meet occupancy needs. "We searched for a space so officers could let their hair down, mingle, and network with fellow officers from across the nation amidst a very busy week," said CAPT David Lau, planning lead.

LTJG Whitney Moseley served as the local JOAG representative for the Joint Combined Social planning committee. "As the local representative, you're able to lay eyes on each venue the committee identifies as a possibility to host the social," said LTJG Moseley. "We were able to assess the layout with accommodations in mind for such a large party so officers could be able to catch-up and socialize, and to ensure space for entertainment and parking availability as well."

Junior officers who are interested in being the local JOAG representative for the 2017 Joint Combined Social planning committee in Chattanooga, TN are encouraged to contact the Outreach Committee's Symposium Planning Workgroup Leads LCDR Kristie Purdy at [Kristie.Purdy@ihs.gov](mailto:Kristie.Purdy@ihs.gov) or LCDR Tosha Stanley at [tts1@cdc.gov](mailto:tts1@cdc.gov)

2016 USPHS Symposium

# JOAG Volunteer Satisfaction Survey



## JOAG

**100% of volunteers said they'd volunteer again at the next Symposium**

30 Volunteers participated in our survey. The events most volunteered for were:

**JOCEB- 43%**

**Community Service- 50%**

**Uniform Inspection Booth- 60%**

## Thoughts on Volunteer Ops:

### Community Service

These service oriented events were rewarding and humbling.

Great for building your network!

### JOCEB

It was fun to meet and greet officers.

### Uniform Inspection Booth

Suggestions for JOAG volunteer opportunities at future Symposiums:



### Food

Food banks, soup kitchens & other feeding programs



### Children

Activities with children or at-risk youth



### Others

Helping veterans; participating in community health fairs; hosting a uniform donation for officers.

powered by



# SHARING THE STAGE: JOAG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SUBMITTED BY LCDR ELIZABETH GARZA, JOAG CHAIR

Each year at the annual Symposium, the Commissioned Officers Foundation hosts an awards luncheon where prestigious awards are given including the COA Local Branch of the Year as well as the COA Health Leader of the Year. This year there was special recognition of the Surgeon General's Fitness Team Roll Call (given by PHS Athletics) as well as a special recognition of RADM John Batt (Ret.) as the Father of Modern Public Health Response (given by VADM Richard Carmona, RADM Bob Williams (Ret.) and CAPT Dan Beck).

**Sharing the stage...** what an honor for JOAG to be on this stage. For me, the most humbling and awe-inspiring moment was having VADM Carmona by my side to present the JOAG VADM Carmona

Inspiration Award to CAPT Paul Jung. I had assumed VADM Carmona wanted to present the award since he'd be there in person. He however told me a few minutes beforehand he wanted JOAG to take the lead and that I should call him up on stage and that he'd be there to support me. So some of you saw me trying to hide my nervousness; I kept looking over to see when he wanted to jump in, including giving him the chance to announce the winner, yet he wanted me (a junior officer!) to lead and make the announcement. VADM Carmona is a true inspiration, role model and one of the strongest advocates of JOAG that I've ever met. He stopped by our JOAG booth and when we gave him one of our new JOAG deployment themed t-shirts, he mentioned to me how proud he was of JOAG and that he still had one of his old JOAG t-shirts. He sent a note to me after-

wards saying "...The Awards Ceremony was outstanding. It was my privilege and pleasure to be a part of the event. JOAG continues to inspire me! The Corps and our nation will be in good hands with you and your fellow JOAG officers moving up."

JOAG had the honor to present the following awards this year to some outstanding leaders:

## 2016 JOAG VADM Carmona Inspiration Award was given to CAPT Paul Jung

During his tenure as Surgeon General, VADM Carmona exemplified qualities that junior officers throughout the Commissioned Corps have come to admire. These qualities include outstanding leadership by example, mentorship and empowerment of junior officers, unwavering support of the Commissioned Corps and its mission, and overall inspiration and motivation to the PHS community. This award recognizes a senior officer in or retired from the Commissioned Corps who strives to exhibit the qualities above ascribed to VADM Carmona. Nominations for this award may only be submitted by junior officers.

The criteria for receiving the award are outstanding support to help junior officers develop within the PHS; providing mentorship exceeding the typical expectations of a leader; acting as a role model by displaying the qualities of superior officership; exemplifying superior leadership in all activities, both within and outside of position duties and other Commissioned Corps related activities; and inspiration for junior officers to grow not just as officers, but as individuals.



This year's recipient is truly a special officer. Even with the very stiff competition we had this year for our nominees it was clear from the beginning that CAPT Jung truly exemplified the spirit and intent of the Carmona Award. I had the honor of working closely with CAPT Jung this past year as part of the OSG Strategic Planning Workgroup Doctrine Team, led by RADM Giberson, and he was the inspiration for me when I was coming up with the text to go with our deployment map on the back of our new JOAG t-shirt. It says we're the "only uniformed service for public health" and then I added text directly pulled from our statutory responsibilities which talks about our purpose and use. By law we are designed to "respond to public health emergencies foreign and domestic". This is pulled straight out of 42 USC 204(c)(2)(C).

**Junior Officer of the Year Award was given to LCDR (sel.) Katrina Piercy**

The Junior Officer of the Year Award recognizes a junior officer who has made a significant contribution to the overall mission of the U.S. Public Health Service. The recipient serves as a leader within their specialty or field, demonstrates outstanding service as a junior officer with recognizable achievements within and outside his/her Agency/Operating Division, and has provided an innovative approach and/or a unique contribution to the mission of the U.S. Public Health Service.

CAPT Scott Gaustad, a member of the Annual Physical Fitness Test Working Group, accepted the JOAG Junior Officer of the Year Award on behalf of LCDR (sel.) Katrina Piercy who was on maternity leave.

**JOAG Excellence Award was given to LCDR Simleen Kaur**

The JOAG Excellence Award recognizes a non-voting junior officer for demonstrating outstanding, dedicated effort, leadership ability, and commitment to JOAG.

**New for next year...** JOAG designed a new JOAG VADM C. Everett Koop award to "honor a junior officer who has exhibited direct contributions and/or leadership in using scientific evidence to advocate for, change, improve, strengthen, inform, develop and/or implement health-related policy." LCDR Cara Halldin, our JOAG Vice-Chair and EC Liaison to the Awards Committee was able to work with Dr. Koop's widow and a close friend of his to ensure this award would appropriately honor his legacy. The OSG has approved our proposal for this award, so we hope to be able to award our first JOAG VADM Koop recipient at next year's 2017 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Chattanooga, TN June 4-7.

We're so proud of all of our award recipients and nominees. It's never too early to start thinking about who you think should be up on stage next year in the JOAG spotlight!



## 2016 JOAG OUTSTANDING NON-VOTING MEMBERS

SUBMITTED BY LT KATIE BANTE, CPC CO-CHAIR

Each year JOAG recognizes the 2 outstanding non-voting member volunteers from each of the JOAG committees. These officers are selected by the chairs of each committee and are recognized at the annual Symposium along with that respective committee's secretary. Several of the JOAG committee chairs attended in person, so they joined our JOAG Chair, LCDR Garza, to deliver these recognition awards. These last pages highlight those outstanding officers.

We appreciate the contributions of all of the junior officers who play a role in JOAG. And while we encourage you to apply for voting membership, we acknowledge that a voting member position is not always practical due to work and other obligations.

If you are not able to commit to a voting member position, please consider one of the many other leadership opportunities JOAG has to offer. You may find yourself the next outstanding non-voting member of JOAG!



# THE JOAG JOURNAL

A NEWSLETTER BY JUNIOR OFFICERS FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS

## 2016 JOAG OUTSTANDING NON-VOTING MEMBERS

PLEASE VISIT THE [JOAG COMMITTEES/  
WORKGROUP CHAIRS PAGE](#) TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT JOAG COMMITTEES AND  
FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT LEADERSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES MAY EXIST.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND  
VOLUNTEER SOLICITATIONS ARE  
REGULARLY SHARED THROUGH THE  
JOAG LISTSERV. SUBSCRIBE [HERE](#).





Photo by Kun Shen

## THANK YOU!

Thanks to all of the officers who contributed articles, volunteered their time to review articles and to those who assisted with the development of this special edition of the JOAG Journal.

All photos featured within articles were contributed by either the submitting author, CDR Kun Shen (watermarked), or JOAG photographer, LCDR Phoung Vu. Special thanks to CDR Shen and LCDR Vu for their photography contributions.



Follow us on Twitter @PHS\_JOAG or join our Facebook group, *USPHS Junior Officer Advisory Group*

