

The U.S. Public Health Service

Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) Newsletter - Spring 2016

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Introducing the New EHOPAC Newsletter!

By CAPT Alan Parham, Chief Professional Officer, on behalf of the EHOPAC

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the new EHOPAC (PAC) Newsletter! This is the start of a quarterly newsletter designed to focus on important information related to the EHO Category and Commissioned Corps (CC) issues that directly impact you. I still remember as a young Junior Officer (I'm not going to say how long ago!) getting the hard copy minutes from the quarterly PAC minutes in the mail (as in delivered by the mailman) and reading every page because it was one of the only information avenues to learn about current issues within the EHO Category or CC. Times have changed, and I do not have to tell you that we are all inundated with information overload every day, so finding the balance of how best to share information without sharing too much or too often is difficult. Change brings about innovation and this quarterly newsletter is designed to focus in on the most important PAC issues and provide them in an easy to read newsletter format. The PAC will still make detailed meeting minutes available and continue to hold Open PAC web meetings that you can participate in, but I know everybody is busy. If you don't have time to call into PAC meetings or read the more detailed meeting minutes, this newsletter is a great way to stay informed on the most important PAC updates on a quarterly basis.

The PAC's role is to represent EHOs in the field and advise CC leadership and the Surgeon General on issues that impact our Category. To do that, it is important you know what those issues are and that you provide input and feedback to the PAC. In this first edition of the PAC Newsletter you can find information on how you can contribute to the newsletter with another innovative idea. We want you to submit questions and comments before each quarterly Open PAC meeting. Those questions/comments will be addressed by PAC leadership at the Open meeting.

As CPO, very often I get to say the words "EHOs Leading the Way!" I think this is another example of EHOs doing just that by looking for better, innovative ways to support and communicate with EHOs in the field. As I have said many times before, I am very proud of our Category and I hope you are. Thank you for all you do.

Very Respectfully,

CAPT Alan Parham

Meet your EHOPAC

EHOPAC Leadership

- Chief Professional Officer - CAPT Alan Parham, ATSDR
- EHOPAC Chair - CDR Carolyn Oyster, USCG
- EHOPAC Vice-Chair - CDR Jill Shugart, CDC
- EHOPAC Secretary/Treasurer - CDR Jaime Mutter, CDC
- EHOPAC Ex Officio - CAPT David Cramer, IHS

EHOPAC Voting Members

- CDR Timothy Albright, FDA - Marketing & Recruitment
- LCDR Travis Bowser, IHS - Training
- CDR Darren Buchanan, IHS - Information Technology
- LCDR Matthew Deptola, NIH - History
- LCDR William Fournier, NPS - Mentoring & Orientation
- CDR Katie Hubbard, IHS - Awards
- LCDR Chyla Hunter, FDA - History
- CDR Monica Leonard, CDC - Marketing & Recruitment
- LT Daniel Malashock, DHS - Communications Liaison
- CAPT John McKernan, EPA - Career Development

- CDR Derek Newcomer, NIH - Policy & Standards
- CDR Stephen Piontkowski, IHS - Career Development
- LCDR Carla Tuite, FDA - Training
- CDR Chris van Twuyver, FDA - Readiness
- LCDR Elena Vaouli, ATSDR - Communications

Chief Professional Officer Message

CAPT Alan Parham, ATSDR

This year seems to be flying by! It seems like we just started 2016 but here it is May already and there is a lot going on. I want to provide you with a few updates but first let me say thank you to the EHOPAC for all their hard work. Unless you are involved with the EHOPAC, you do not realize how much goes on behind the scenes and how the majority of their work involves trying to make improvements for both current and future Commissioned Corps EHOs.

Kudos to EHOPAC leadership for striving to improve how we communicate information about current issues and the work that is going on. I hope you will find this new newsletter format useful.

EHO (and Engineer) General Duty Application Window will open June 1-30, 2016

To begin the application process, EHO candidates must call the Commissioned Corps Call Center at 1-800-279-1605 between June 1st and June 30th to be considered. EHO Applicants must meet the current EHO appointment standards found at: <http://usphs.gov/profession/environmental/requirements.aspx>. As a reminder, former Junior COSTEPS that completed a COSTEP within the last four years and have obtained their qualifying degree can initiate the application process at any time during the year by calling the Commissioned Corps Call Center. Likewise, if a former USPHS officer is interested in reapplying for Active Duty they can do so at any time during the year by calling the Call Center.

Until recently individuals with three or more years of civil service time in Department of Health and Human Services OPDIVs were precluded from appointment to the Corps; however, that policy was recently rescinded so if you know of civil service employees that would be an asset to the EHO Category and are interested in converting, please share this information about the open application period.

Commissioned Corps Headquarters (HQ) Update

As CPO, I work closely with many HQ staff and I probably do not have to tell you that the last year or so has been a challenging time for HQ due to limited staff and resources combined with trying to handle multiple domestic and international deployments as well as moving almost all administrative and pay processes to the Direct Access system. I realize this often impacts service to officers in the field. CPOs (myself included) continue to provide feedback to HQ on issues and make recommendations on improvements. Currently, almost every administrative function at HQ is being entered into both the old system and in Direct Access which is an enormous burden for staff. Until this is resolved, any major improvements or changes will be difficult but that is the goal and we will continue to move forward. As CPO, I will continue to advocate on your behalf. At this time, I do not have a projected date for when Active Duty pay will move to Direct Access but I hope it will be soon.

Congratulations to this year's EHOPAC Award Winners!

It is a pleasure every year to read all the nominations for the annual EHOPAC awards because the nominations highlight some of the great accomplishments by EHOs. As usual, it was a very competitive year. Please join me in congratulating the following well deserved award winners:

John G. Todd Award - CAPT Richard Turner

The John G. Todd Award is the highest honor given by the EHOPAC. The award recognizes an exemplary senior-level environmental health professional for significant career contributions in achieving the PHS mission of improving the Nation's health through the practice of environmental health.

Thomas E. Crow Award - CDR Vincent Garcia

The Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award recognizes significant contributions by an individual who has enhanced professional growth and career development of environmental health professionals working in the U.S. Public Health Service by serving in a mentoring capacity

John C. Eason Award - LT Katie Lynne Bante

The John C. Eason Award was established to recognize the accomplishments of talented newcomers to the field of environmental health and moreover, to recognize the promise these individuals hold for the future of the Public Health Service.

Edward Moran Award - CDR Lisa Delaney

The Edward (Ted) Moran Award recognizes an outstanding mid-level environmental health professional who consistently achieves high standards in the practice of environmental health, occupational health and safety, industrial hygiene, or radiological health.

2015 Responder of the Year - CAPT Calvin Edwards

The EHOPAC Responder of the Year Award recognizes individual excellence in achieving the USPHS mission of improving the Nation's health through the practice of environmental health during emergency preparedness, disaster response, and contributions to national or international public health threats in the previous fiscal year (FY15).

Congratulations EHOPAC Award Winners!

Chair's Report

CDR Carrie Oyster, USCG

Welcome to our inaugural EHOPAC (PAC) newsletter. We hope you enjoy this quarterly newsletter as a modernized approach to document PAC activities. Please let me know if you have ideas for our newsletter, information you want discussed during our open PAC meetings and/or methods to improve our communication with you (Carolyn.j.oyster@uscg.mil).

We are also streamlining the open PAC meeting format to improve communication on big ticket projects and modernizing our PAC website, which can be found on the CCMIS website at: <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/>. This is a work in progress with many thanks to the IT Subcommittee! We want to be forward leaning and keep you knowledgeable regarding the EHOs serving you. To do this, we are now posting Voting Member stats on our website. And, we are improving the "search-ability" feature for documents posted on our PAC site. Please check out the site and let me know your thoughts!

To increase participation across the category we created an anonymous Q&A website to capture questions/concerns you may be hesitant to ask. During each of our open meetings, after the CPO Report, we will answer questions posed to this website during the previous quarter. Please feel free to use this venue: (https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1zpMFEPm3EliKVVUgXs9KRp4ab4jTQVHzeVOv9DMhqs/viewform?edit_requested=true). A link to the website and additional details are available within this newsletter and will remain a permanent post on all future publications.

Again, we hope you enjoy this newsletter and like the changes we are making!

Vice Chair's Report

CDR Jill Shugart, CDC

Greetings from Atlanta!

A special thanks to LT Daniel Malashock for offering to be our editor and layout designer for our first newsletter! LT Malashock is our new Communications Liaison this year and works closely with EHOPAC leadership and LCDR Elena Vaouli in this new capacity. We hope you enjoy these great updates showcasing the outstanding work the EHOPAC Voting Members are doing for the Commissioned Corps, the EHO category, and our respective agencies. It has already been a busy year!

I also wanted to thank all the agency sponsors and preceptors who will be hosting EHO JRCOSTEPs and interns this year. This is a vital part of our recruitment efforts and we are grateful for your support! Finally, keep thinking about training ideas and opportunities for the EHO category! Please email your suggestions to LCDRs Travis Bowser at travis.bowser@ihs.gov and Carla Tuite at Carla.tuite@fda.hhs.gov.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Oklahoma City!

EHOPAC Subcommittee Highlights

Awards & Recognition

- **2016 EHOPAC Awards.** – Please join us at the 2016 Commissioned Officers Association USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma as we announce the recipients of the 2016 EHOPAC Awards! Recognized by their peers, these four Environmental Health Officers have demonstrated outstanding work in and contributions to the field of environmental health and the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Recipients will receive their awards at the 2016 National Environmental Health Association AEC Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Communications

- **Attending COA?** – Planning to attend COA in Oklahoma City? Find out who is attending the conference and let them know you're going by participating in the latest poll on our EHO Closed Facebook Group page! Not a member of our closed page? Requesting to join is as easy as clicking a button. Check it out for more info and don't forget to "Like" our Facebook pages (Open and Closed) to keep up to date on important information we share.
- **Build Your Network!** – We are improving our LinkedIn page to help you network with your EHO colleagues and others in the field. Network with us by searching for and requesting to join our U.S. Public Health Service - Environmental Health Officers page (URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3778002>)
- **EHOPAC Survey** – Coming soon! The EHOPAC wants to hear from you about how we can improve and enhance our communication across the category. We will be releasing a category-wide survey to all active duty EHOs in the summer. We look forward to your participation and input!

Career Development

- **Changes to the CV Cover Sheet** – Be on the lookout for a new CV Cover sheet, expected to be completed by this summer. Inclusion of a CV cover sheet will soon be a requirement when submitting your CV to your eOPF.
- **2017 Promotion Benchmarks** – New EHO Category Promotion Benchmarks for FY 2017 are being drafted.

Policies & Standards

- **Standardizing PAC Work Plans and SOPs** –Reviewing 2016 work plans and standard operating procedures (SOP) submitted by the EHOPAC subcommittees. Will select the best examples from the 2016 submissions and design templates for use during 2017. This will assist subcommittees in identifying their goals and objectives, and improve communication among the EHO category. The standardized SOP will improve continuity of operations during transition between subcommittee chairs.

Training

- **Join us at Category Day!** – Our Category Day Planners have an exciting list of events for you! Join us at the COA Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City! We would like to acknowledge and thank CDR McLanahan, LCDR Pharo, LT King, and LT Gooch for all their hard work pulling together a variety of events and managing logistics for EHOs at the Symposium.
- **Training Calendar Coming Soon!** – We are creating a calendar to advertise training opportunities and events, and make that information more accessible to you. Please stay tuned!

Marketing & Recruitment

- **Applicant Updates** – As of May 2016, 66 environmental health officers have been boarded by DCCPR under their new hiring process which began in 2014. Of the 66 boarded EHOs, 36 have secured positions and 8 are in need of jobs. The remaining 22 applicants who were not commissioned by the USPHS were for various reasons which include: (7) were medically disqualified; (1) secured a non USPHS job; (4) withdrew their application; and (10) had their applications expire. Applicants have one year from their boarded date to secure a federal position.
- **As of March 2016**
 - 66 EHO Applicants Successfully Boarded
 - 33 Have Secured Federal Positions
 - 8 Are In Need of Securing a Billet

Mentoring & Orientation

- **Officer Basic Course 2016 Graduates** – So far this year we have had 5 EHO Officers graduate from OBC. We would like to thank CAPT Alan Parham, CDR Mike Quinn, and LT Laura Annetta for attending OBC courses and welcoming each of the new graduates with a personalized welcome letter and EHO Category Coin from the EHOPAC.

Readiness

- **EHO Readiness** – As of May 2016, out of 347 total EHO Officers, 92% are basic ready, 2% are exempt, and 6% are currently not qualified or basic ready.
- **Readiness Across Categories** – As of May 2016, the EHO Category ranks 5th across all 11 Commissioned Corps Categories in terms of the percent of officers within each category that have met all readiness qualifications.

Liaison Reports

American Academy of Sanitarians Liaison

- **EHOPAC & AAS Awards Ceremony** – Will be held at the 2016 NEHA Annual Education Conference in San Antonio on Monday June 13 from 8 PM to 9 PM. Join us at the Marriott River Center immediately after the Exhibition Grand Opening Party. The room number is yet to be determined, however please check for location at registration desk.

USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Events

You're invited!

- Join your fellow EHOs this May 15-19, 2016 at the USPHS Symposium in Oklahoma City!

Highlights for EHOs

- EHOPAC Meeting: Monday 15:00 – 17:00 CDT
- EHO Mentoring: Tuesday 07:00 – 09:00
- EHO Category Day: Wednesday 07:45 – 17:00
- EHO Social: Wednesday 18:30 – 20:30

Other Events of Interest

- Pre-conference courses: Sunday and Monday
- Anchor & Caduceus Dinner: Monday night
- ASH Keynote: Tuesday 16:30 – 17:30
- SG Keynote: Thursday 16:30 – 17:30
- Ensemble Concert: Tuesday 18:15
- Zika Presentation: Wednesday 17:15 – 18:00
- Combined Social: Wednesday 19:30 – 23:30

For more information

- Please see flyers distributed on EHO Listserv.
- The full symposium agenda can be found here: <http://symposium.phscof.org/agenda>

Purchase a New EHO Category Coin!

- Now available at the COA Symposium! To purchase a new coin, please see CDRs McLanahan or Shugart during any of the EHO-related events at COA.
- The EHOPAC is selling category coins for \$10. The coin features the EHO logo on one side (as shown on the right) and the CC logo on the other. Anyone interested in purchasing coins after COA should contact CDR Jamie Mutter at zwy4@cdc.gov (a \$4 surcharge will be added to all orders requiring shipment).
- For more information, please visit our website at: https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/ehocoin_pre2016.aspx

About this Edition

QUESTIONS OR PREVIOUS EDITIONS

For questions on this document please contact LT Daniel Malashock at Daniel.Malashock@hq.dhs.gov. For previous editions please visit our website at dcp.psc.gov/osg/eho/.

EDITING, DESIGN, & LAYOUT

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Issue Design and Layout: LT Daniel Malashock

Issue 508 Compliance: CDRs Darren Buchanan and Charles Woodlee

DISCLAIMER

Any opinions or thoughts presented in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not represent the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or any other government agency.

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