

# “La Gaceta”

## Hispanic Officers Advisory Committee’s Newsletter

Newsletter April 2015  
Issue 2

Chair, LT Yvonne Santiago  
Vice-Chair, CDR Edgardo Alicea  
Secretary, LCDR Carolina Luna-Pinto  
Treasurer, LT Jorge Muñiz-Ortiz

MOLC Representatives - CDR Maricella Bonilla and LCDR Vladimir Tirado



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### HOAC Activities

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## HOAC Chair’s Corner – LT Yvonne Santiago

*Bienvenidos a Todos!* Welcome all to the 2015

Operational Year for HOAC. This advisory committee supports the mission of the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) by promoting professional development of and advocating for the recognition of contributions made by Hispanic officers in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). In addition, HOAC seeks to: educate the professional community about the Commissioned Corps and HOAC; recruit and retain Hispanic officers; and raise awareness about public health issues affecting the Hispanic community.



*Author LT Santiago*

What an exciting year this will be as we celebrate 25 years since VADM Antonia Novello, 14th Surgeon General, created organizations such as ours under the MOLC. For twenty five years we have worked hard to ensure that our organization is raising awareness about the public health issues affecting the largest minority community in the U.S. This year, it is of utmost importance that we educate our community of the services now offered to them under the Affordable Care Act. We must make it a goal to continue to educate the USPHS Corps and the health community at large of our unique cultural differences and how to better provide appropriate healthcare services to the Latino/Hispanic community. As Chair, this is certainly one of the primary goals I hope our organization can continue to strive to achieve. It is also our challenge this year to continue to show the value added of the bilingual and bicultural Public Health Officer in providing healthcare services particularly during an emergency response.

Another goal for this year will be to reach out and mentor the younger generations of Latinos interested in public health. It is our job to ensure that the healthcare workforce reflects more of the community at large. We must find new ways to focus on recruitment and retention of our own officers. We’ve created some important strategic partnerships in the past year with the Office of Minority Health (OMH), the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the Hispanic Serving Health Professional Schools, the USPHS Readiness & Deployment Operations Group (RedDOG), and the USPHS Recruitment and Retention Branch to name a few. I am excited to serve as Chair this year! It is truly an honor and a privilege and I want you all to know that it is through your hard work and dedication that our organization is flourishing.

*Cordialmente, LT Yvonne M. Santiago 2015 HOAC Chair*

## Getting to Know: CDR Ivonne Arena

CDR Ivonne Arena served in the Navy for seven years prior to joining PHS. Her experience in the Navy has been very useful during her time as the Deputy Chief of Staff at the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCOE). The mission of DCOE is to improve the lives of our nation’s service members, families and veterans by advancing excellence and knowledge in psychological health and traumatic brain injury treatment and care.

When CDR Arena interviewed for the Executive Officer position, she was asked why a PHS officer wanted to join a DoD agency, “what, as a PHS officer, can you bring to DoD?” CDR Arena spoke of her prior military experience and how the management and leadership skills she developed as a naval officer could be leveraged and directly transferrable in her first tour as a PHS officer.

PHS officers are flexible, adaptable and resilient individuals who are taught to accomplish a mission by gathering information, understanding the resources available, analyzing the situation, and determining what the desired outcome is. During her tenure at the DCOE, CDR Arenas consistently worked with the Chief of Staff and administrative managers to develop financial, operational and administrative process and metrics so that when she eventually left the organization to pursue a new opportunity, all operations not only continued but grew from the foundation that was collectively built.



Author CDR Arena

## Why “La Gaceta”? In honor of first newspaper in America

La Gaceta de México was first published in 1722 making it the first newspaper to be published in America. It was started by a Juan Ignacio Maria de Castorena a clergyman and Goyeneche Castorena was the editor.

[Click here to learn more](#)

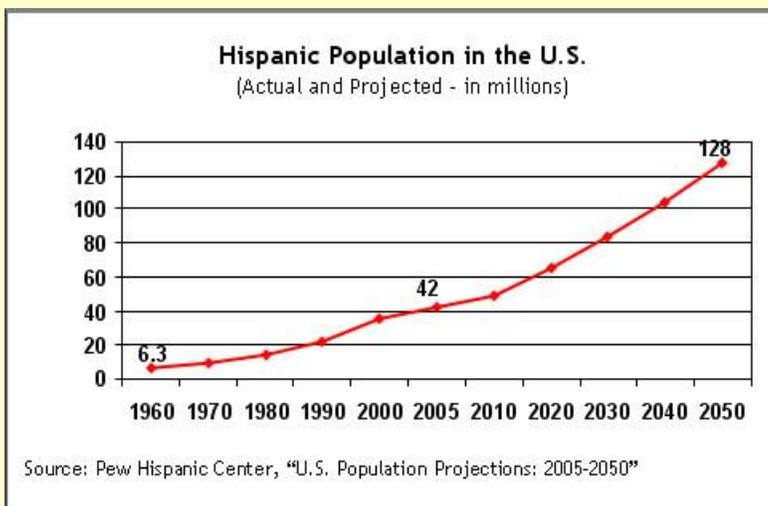


## Hispanic/Latinos News: 62% of English-speaking Hispanics are Bilingual

About six-in-ten U.S. adult Hispanics (62%) speak English or are bilingual, according to an analysis of the Pew Research Center’s 2013 National Survey of Latinos.

Hispanics in the United States break down into three groups when it comes to their use of language: 36% are bilingual, 25% mainly use English and 38% mainly use Spanish. Among those who speak English, 59% are bilingual.

## Hispanic population projections

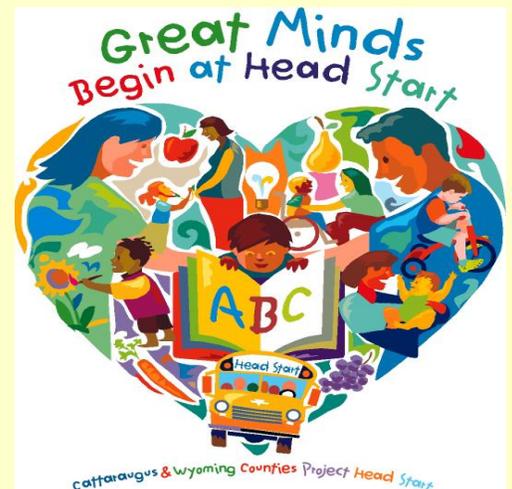


**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 “Latinos in America may be the largest minority group, but Hispanics are no longer the fastest growing minority group in the country. According to data from the United States Census Bureau, while non-Hispanic whites are still the largest racial group in the country (197.8 million), Asians were the fastest growing minority group in the United States in 2013”.

Latin Times  
 Jun 26,  
 2014

## El Paso Associate Executive Director of Region 19 Head Start Named Director of Office of Head Start

The El Paso (TX) Times (4/3, 210K) reports that Blanca Enriquez, “associate executive director of the Region 19 Head Start program in El Paso,” was appointed as the new director of the national Office of Head Start. In her new role, “Enriquez will oversee the nation’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs that serve more than 1 million children every year.” The appointment was made official “Thursday in Washington, D.C., by Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell.



## Deployment Spotlight: Blood Brothers, Los Boricuas from MMU Team 1

It feels like it was a long time ago but as I write these notes, I've realized that it has only been six months since we departed on the adventure of our lives. As MMU Team 4 finalizes the process for decommissioning the Liberian MMU, I found myself reminiscing back to October 19, 2014. This was the day when MMU Team 1 had its first team meeting in Anniston.

That night was a little awkward for me. I realized that I didn't know many of my fellow officers and that feeling, at times, was actually pretty intimidating. It even made me feel a bit out of my element for a time (hard to believe, I know, but even I can be shy sometimes). But before those feelings could become an issue, all of a sudden, CAPT Edwards called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves. It was then that I became very aware of one important fact; I was not alone. Among all of the voices, there were a few that struck a chord within me, voices that were tinged with a unique accent that I knew all too well. This accent (you all know what I am talking about) was one that we Puerto Ricans have and my eyes immediately sought out the faces and the name tags of each speaker. This was when I met my Puerto Rican brothers.

First I heard, "My name is CAPT Angel Rivas Rivera...an introduction he concluded by saying "...and I like to tell everyone that I am from Puerto Rico." Next I heard, "My name is LCDR Jose Burgos..." and finally, "...LT Abraham Marrero." Once the meeting was over I told myself, "Let's meet the Boricuas!" We got together and immediately we bonded and formed our clique.

The next night, RADM Lushniak visited the team, addressed the group and motivated us as only he can. By the end, we were realizing that this was an incredible moment and started to move really fast to mark it by taking a picture of all of us together with RADM Lushniak.



From left to right: CAPT Rivas Rivera, LCDR Torres-Cruz, RADM Lushniak, LCDR Burgos, LT Marrero and LT Klotzbuecher

As we were getting ready for the picture, LT Marrero appeared with another Puerto Rican. But this particular one threw a curve ball at us because his last name is "Klotzbuecher." As disorienting as that may be, my friends, let me tell you that even with a last name such as that, we **knew** that he was one of us. He has what we call in Puerto Rico, "La Mancha de Platano." Literally, this translates to the "Plantain Stain," and that may as well have been a brand saying, "Yes, I am Puerto Rican!"

Eventually, we posed for the picture and the rest is history. MMU Team 1 set the tone and pace for the other teams and we all had very important roles during the mission. We knew that we needed to make this work. We knew that the mission had to be a success. We knew that failure was completely unacceptable. So we did what we were chosen to do, proudly.

CAPT Rivas Rivera was the Night Shift's Chief Nurse. Though he was like a big brother, he was also the boss and made sure that everybody knew it. LCDR Burgos, a nurse, was one of the first providers to receive and treat the first MMU Ebola patient. He was the nice one. LT Marrero, being an engineer, was always looking for ways  
*cont... page 5*

## Deployment Spotlight *continues...*

to streamline and improve our processes and the medical equipment. Not surprisingly, he was the hyper one with energy to spare. LT Klotzbuecher, our communications wizard and also an engineer, did all of the networking needed to facilitate the acquisition of cell phones, internet access and the MMU newsletter. Somehow, he was the quiet one. As for myself, I was the Chief of Safety for the Night Shift and the officer with the most hours logged inside the MMU for team 1. As you all probably expected, I was the loud one.

By December 20, two long months later, we were back stateside. Once in Atlanta, many of us got separated and it was shocking how different it felt to suddenly be without friends you had gotten so used to having at your side. After reintegration, we went back to our normal lives; our families, our work and responsibilities. After all, time waits for no one. The days passed, the memories of this great moment eventually started to fade and it almost seems like it was something that happened years ago. But what will never fade is the friendship, pride, love and respect that transformed us from five total strangers into best friends and brothers in blood. I hope you are all doing well, *mi familia...*

*LCDR Torres-Cruz*



MMU board showing the hand prints of survivors

## What is the meaning of the HOAC COIN? Have you ever wondered?

The HOAC coin symbolizes the participation, accomplishments and the goals of HOAC. Uniform Services Unit Coins are traditional instruments of meritorious recognition and corps camaraderie throughout the decades.

To order coins, go to: [http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/hoac/hoac\\_coin.aspx](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/hoac/hoac_coin.aspx)

The globe to the left of center represents the pursuit of global health shared by the USPHS and HOAC, and shows Latin America at the forefront of the globe.

At the base of the emblem our slogan reads "Nuestro Future es Nuestra Salud" which translated means: "Our Future is Our Health."



The patterned borders to the left and right emulate architecture of the Mayan people, found throughout Meso America. Mayan civilization was perhaps the most scientifically advanced of all pre-European civilizations in the American continent.

The building in the center of the HOAC emblem represents the cupola of the churches found in all the Latin American countries. This building, often a church, is found in La Plaza Central, or Central Square of most cities.

## Join a Subcommittee

Subcommittee	Chair/Co-Chair
Awards and Recognition	CDR Lorena Crowley <a href="mailto:lorena.c.crowley1@ice.dhs.gov">lorena.c.crowley1@ice.dhs.gov</a>
Charter and Bylaws	LT Thomas Gammarano <a href="mailto:Thomas.gammarano@hq.dhs.gov">Thomas.gammarano@hq.dhs.gov</a>
Communications and Public Relations	LCDR Carolina Luna Pinto <a href="mailto:hjz1@cdc.gov">hjz1@cdc.gov</a> and LT Karly Gomez <a href="mailto:Karly.A.Gomez@ice.dhs.gov">Karly.A.Gomez@ice.dhs.gov</a>
Deployment	LCDR Elizabeth Garza <a href="mailto:iwm8@cdc.gov">iwm8@cdc.gov</a> and CDR Guillermo Aviles-Mendoza <a href="mailto:Guillermo.Aviles-Mendoza@hhs.gov">Guillermo.Aviles-Mendoza@hhs.gov</a>
Nomination and Membership	LCDR Antonio Vargas <a href="mailto:Antonio.Vargas@hhs.gov">Antonio.Vargas@hhs.gov</a> and LCDR Diana Vargas <a href="mailto:Diana.Vargas@foh.hhs.gov">Diana.Vargas@foh.hhs.gov</a>
Recruitment and Retention	LT Jorge Muñoz-Ortiz <a href="mailto:Jorge.MunizOrtiz@FSIS.USDA.gov">Jorge.MunizOrtiz@FSIS.USDA.gov</a>
Outreach and Education	LCDR Gerald Brozyna <a href="mailto:Gerald.Brozyna@cms.hhs.gov">Gerald.Brozyna@cms.hhs.gov</a> and LCDR Michelle Sandoval <a href="mailto:ftv2@cdc.gov">ftv2@cdc.gov</a>

[Click here to learn more about each subcommittee or contact the person listed above for more information.](#)

## HOAC's Newest Sub-committee: Deployment Activities

The newly formed Deployment Sub-committee has hit the ground running. They aim to serve as the go-to place for deployment related educational and training resources for officers interested in serving Hispanic individuals/communities and to serve as a resource and support network for HOAC officers interested in enhancing their deployment skills or learning more about deployment teams, roles and opportunities.

We are always looking for new self-motivated volunteers to join any of our initiatives, so please reach out to the HOAC Deployment Committee Chair or Co-Chair if interested. Take a look at [some](#) of the sub-committee's **2015 Activities**:

- Develop and maintain a **HOAC readiness roster** of officers
- Offer monthly **HOAC 'Deployment Spotlights'** to showcase various deployment opportunities and lessons learned
- Implement **language proficiency testing** standards to be used by DCCPR/RedDOG
- Support [National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care](#)
- Launch **first-ever HOAC community outreach event** for Border Binational Health Week/Hispanic Heritage Month
- Disseminate and analyze **Unaccompanied Minor survey** to assess language proficiency and cultural competency
- Lead **Ebola Response Needs Assessment and AAR** for HOAC (also have reached out to MOLC/CMAGs)
- Launch a **HOAC Spanish language practice program**

## HOAC Activities

<p><b><i>Mini Health Fair at Plaza Fiesta (May 17, 2015)</i></b></p> <p>In partnership with "Ventanillas de Salud", and other Atlanta-based organizations. Interested in helping? Contact the Outreach and Education Sub-committee</p>	<p><b><i>Health Education Series during the Spring and Fall</i></b></p> <p>Interested in helping? Contact the Outreach and Education Sub-committee</p>	<p><b><i>Ebola Deployment After Action Report</i></b></p> <p>Interested in helping? Contact the Deployment Sub-committee if interested in being involved</p>	<p><b><i>25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MOLC (May 21, 2015)</i></b></p> <p>With invited keynote speaker VADM Antonia C. Novello. HOAC will have coins made to commemorate this event. If interested in being involved? Contact the Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee</p>
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### **2015 HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH THEME ANNOUNCED**

Washington, D.C., April 1, 2015 — The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers (NCHEPM), announced the 2015 Hispanic Heritage Month theme: “Hispanic Americans: Energizing Our Nation’s Diversity.” The theme invites us to reflect on Hispanic American’s vitality and meaningful legacy in our Nation’s cultural framework. Look for HOAC activities to support Hispanic Heritage Month.

### **ENDING A HALF CENTURY OF STRIFE**

Panama City, Panama, April 11, 2015—President Obama announced in December that he was seeking to renew diplomatic relations with Cuba after half a century of strife, including eventually opening embassies in Washington and Havana.

## HOAC *Esprit de Corps* Merchandise

Help show your HOAC and PHS Pride by purchasing the "New" HOAC T-shirt, car static cling, or coin.



Contact LT Jorge Muñoz-Ortiz for t-shirts, stickers, and coins:  
[Jorge.MunizOrtiz@FSIS.USDA.gov](mailto:Jorge.MunizOrtiz@FSIS.USDA.gov)

## Inspirational Quotes

“Ideas are born, they struggle, triumph, change, and they are transformed, but is there a dead idea which in the end does not live on transformed into a broader and clearer goal?”

*Eugenio Maria de Hostos*

(Libertador, político, pedagogo, sociólogo y escritor puertorriqueño, llamado el Ciudadano de América)

## HOAC Newsletter Team

LCDR Raphael Torres-Cruz

CDR Miguel Cruz

LCDR Carolina Luna-Pinto

### **Interested in submitting an article to feature in any of the sections?**

- \* Articles are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and February
- \* Limit to 250-500 words
- \* Please include a title and state your name in the “by” line.
- \* Pictures are welcome!

## Mission

*The HOAC promotes professional development of and advocates for the recognition of contributions made by Hispanic officers in the USPHS.*



<http://dcp.psc.gov/osg/hoac/Default.aspx>