

# **Analysis of Health Services Officers Promotable Officer Profile Survey: PY 2013 & 2014**

**Health Services Professional Advisory Committee  
Career Development Subcommittee**

**LCDR Joel Richardson**

**Acknowledgements:  
CDR Joseph Roth  
CDR Christopher Cline  
CDR Donna Phillips**

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## Purpose

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At the request of Health Services Officer (HSO) leadership, the Analytics Team of the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee's (HSPAC) Career Development Subcommittee was tasked with identifying and analyzing qualities/characteristics of successfully promoted officers who have been selected for promotion in PY 2013 and 2014. Coupled with current HSO benchmarks, the information contained in this report allows the reader to form a picture of the "Promotable Officer Profile". This assessment was conducted in the hope that the data would be used to inform HSPAC members and leaders about promoted officer characteristic trends and guide officers seeking advancement.

## Methods

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The data utilized in this study, found in **Table A**, was collected by way of anonymous survey results from U.S. Public Health Service officers in the HSO category from both the 2013 and 2014 promotion years. Due to lack of significant differences between the promotion years, data from both 2013 and 2014 were combined in this report to make a more robust initial data set.

All officers selected for Temporary or Permanent promotion in 2013 and 2014 received an e-mail from the HSPAC Chair on 7/31/14, requesting that the officer complete the survey, with a hyperlink to the survey website contained in the e-mail. A follow-up e-mail from the HSPAC Chair was sent to the same distribution list on 8/22/14, reminding officers to complete the survey if they had not already done so.

**Table 1. Data Points Collected through Survey Results**

- **Promotion cycle**
- **Current billet grade**
- **Current Temporary and Permanent grades**
- **Number of years in USPHS Commissioned Corps**
- **Overall COER score**
- **Highest Individual USPHS award received**
- **Number of Individual USPHS honor awards**
- **Number of Unit USPHS honor awards**
- **Total number of USPHS service awards**
- **Number of Deployments**
- **Prevalence of officers who are Supervisors**
- **Level of Commissioning Degree**
- **Level of additional Commissioning Degree(s)**
- **Continuing Education requirement compliance**
- **Prevalence of additional Public Health training or certification(s)**
- **Number of Transfers**
- **Prevalence of Agency-level Committee leadership**
- **Prevalence of participation in HSO Mentoring Process**

The survey was distributed to a total of 366 officers, with a total of 326 responses received (response rate = 89.07%). Of those responding, 190 were Temporary promotees, while 137 were Permanent promotees. An additional twelve Permanent and two Temporary respondents did not complete the survey; those survey responses were not included in overall analysis.

A copy of the survey's contents can be found in **Appendix A** of this report. The content of the survey closely follows the 2013 HSO Benchmarks. Survey results were grouped by promotion type (Temporary or Permanent). Various descriptive statistical techniques were then performed on the resultant data groupings in an effort to describe the characteristics of those HSOs promoted in 2013 and 2014.

## Limitations

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A limitation of this study is that only those officers who were selected for promotion in PY 2013 and 2014 received the survey. Officers who were not selected for promotion were not invited to complete the survey. Investigators were not able to secure the list of non-promoted officers as they were considered confidential information. Thus, no correlational conclusions can be accurately made from the data, and this report does not attempt to do so.

Due to a low number of respondents who were promoted to O-2, that data group has been omitted from this report. Because of the resultant small sample size, any conclusions drawn from analysis of the O-2 subset may have led readers to inaccurate conclusions as to promotion characteristics, and thus the decision was made to omit that subset of the data.

Another limitation from the study centered on the e-mail distribution lists used to deliver the surveys. While the distribution lists were found to be complete and accurate, some officers were found to have multiple, separate e-mail addresses in the distribution list. With no way of knowing which e-mail was the preferred account for each officer, some officers received multiple survey invitations. If officers in turn filled out the survey multiple times, it may have skewed data in unexpected ways.

Additionally, it should also be noted that there were 26 promoted officers who did not respond to this survey and therefore, it is possible that the characteristics of these officers could possibly skew the data as presented. Lastly, any survey containing self-reported information carries with it inherent flaws, as there will be concerns as to the validity of self-reported data that cannot be objectively verified.

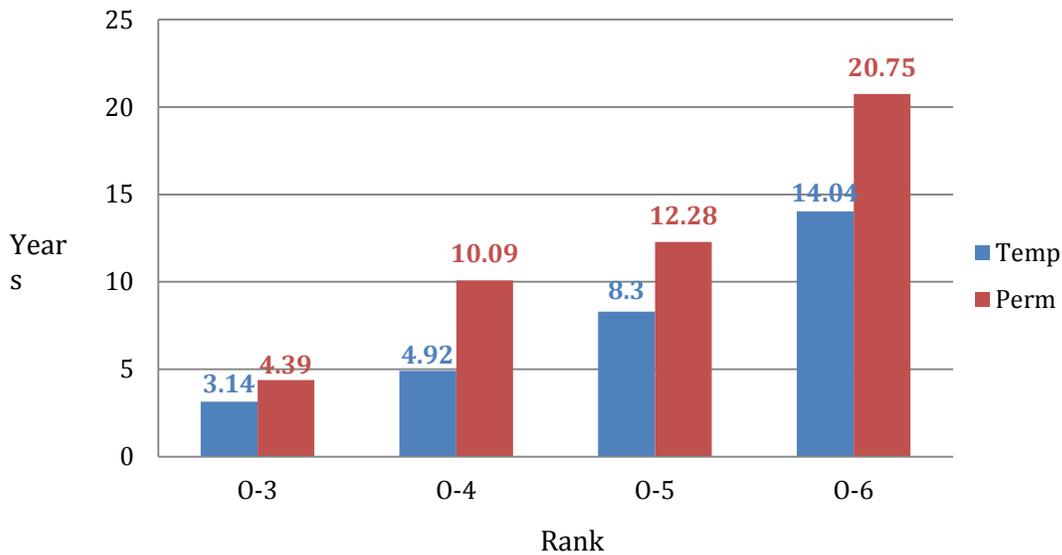
## Results

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### *Number of Years in USPHS Commissioned Corps*

**Figure A** shows the mean number of years in the Commissioned Corps by rank, which increases in near-linear fashion for both Temporary and Permanent promotions.

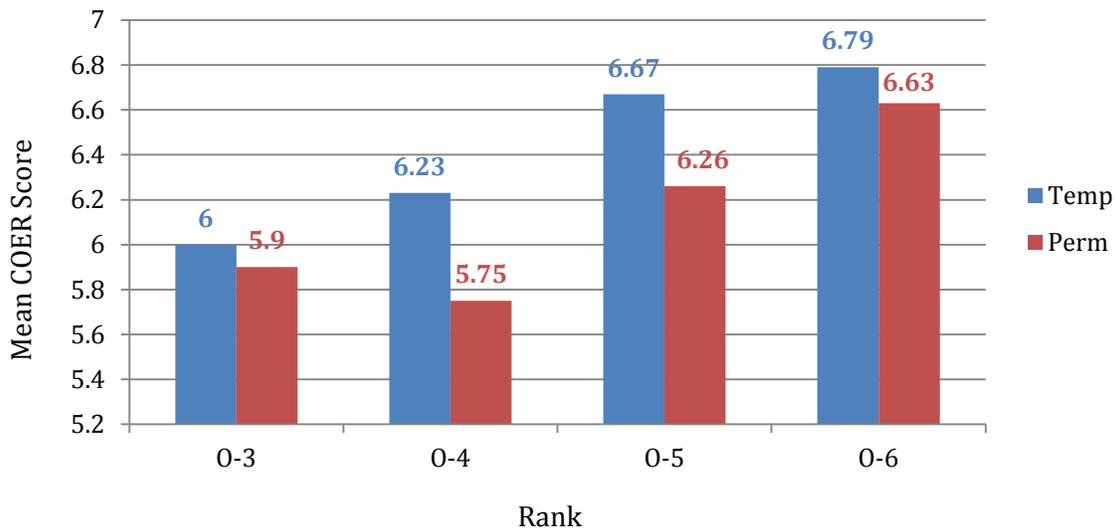
**Figure A: Number of Years in USPHS Commissioned Corps, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



### *Overall COER Scores*

**Figure B** shows the overall COER Scores for successful Temporary and Permanent promotion officers. Readers will note the drop in COER score between Permanent 0-3 and Permanent 0-4 promotees, which is likely the result of skewed data of some sort. For this reason, it is important to note the mode COER score for all ranks, which was found to be a 7. Similarly, the median COER scores for all Temporary and Permanent promotions were found to be 7 and 6, respectively.

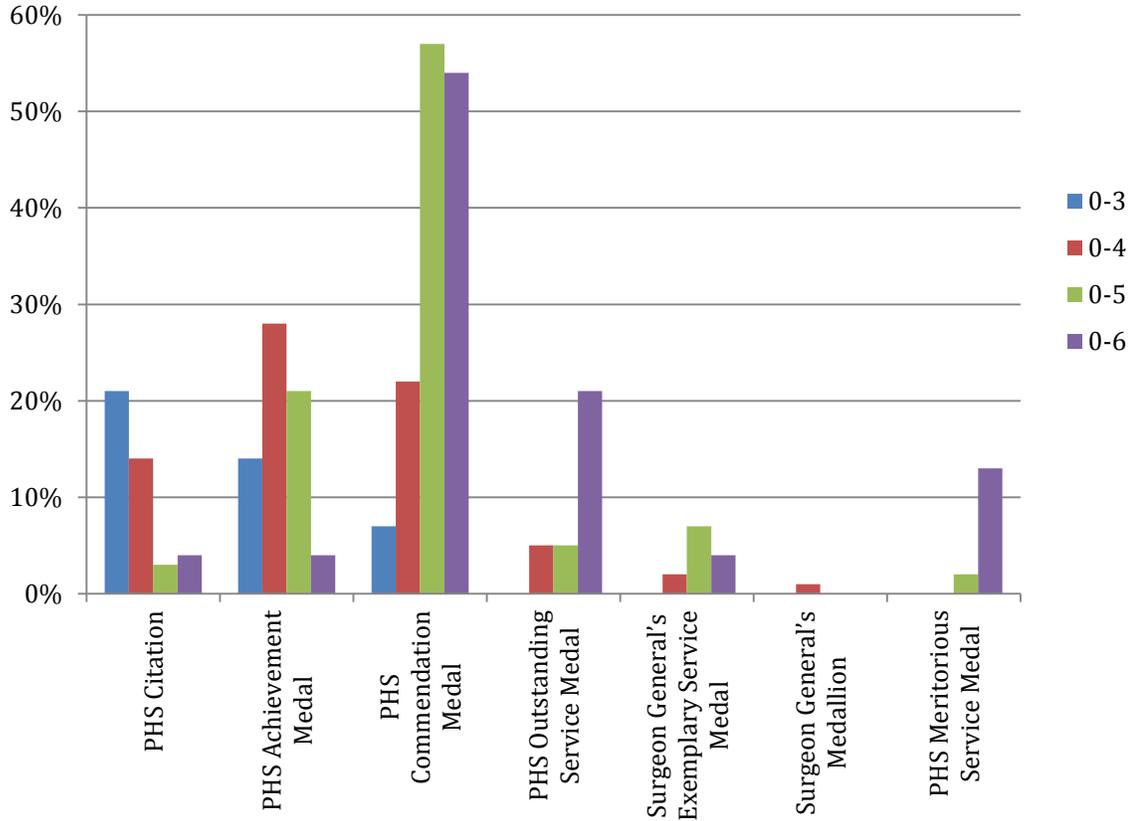
**Figure B: Overall COER Scores, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



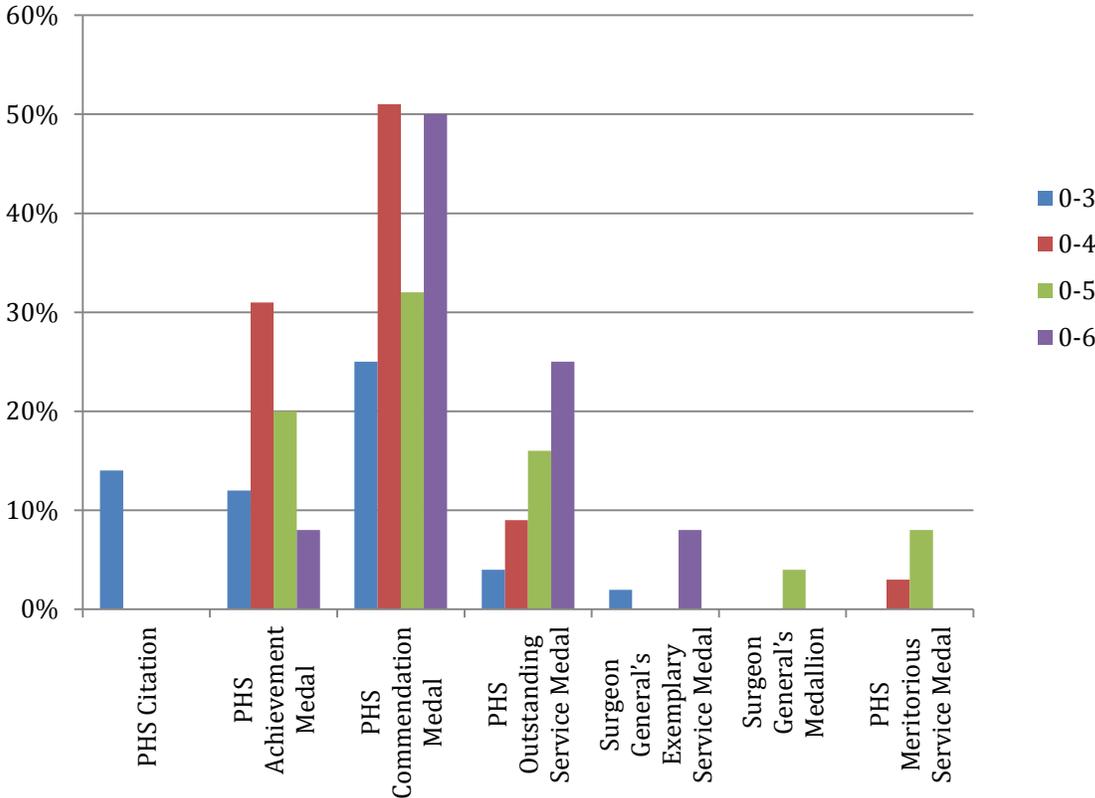
***Individual PHS Awards***

**Figures C-1 and C-2 and Tables 2 and 3** show the highest individual PHS award received at the time of promotion. Of note, 28% of officers promoted to Temporary O-4 had a PHS Achievement Medal as their highest award, while 57% of those selected for Temporary O-5 and 54% of those selected for Temporary O-6 reported a PHS Commendation Medal as their highest award. Of those promoted to Temporary O-5, 73% reported having a PHS Commendation Medal or higher. Similarly, 92% of those promoted to O-6 reported having a PHS Commendation Medal or higher. All of these award distributions are consistent with guidance published in the HSO Category Benchmarks.

**Figure C-1: Highest PHS Individual Award Received, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Figure C-2: Highest PHS Individual Award Received, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Table 2: Highest PHS Individual Award Received, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, O-3 and O-4, PY 2013 and 2014**

		Temporary	Permanent
<b>O-3</b>	<b>No Awards/ No Answer</b>	57%	43%
	<b>PHS Citation</b>	21%	14%
	<b>Achievement Medal</b>	14%	12%
	<b>Commendation Medal</b>	7%	25%
	<b>Outstanding Service Medal</b>	0%	4%
	<b>Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal</b>	0%	1.96%
<b>O-4</b>	<b>No Awards/ No Answer</b>	27%	6%
	<b>PHS Citation</b>	14%	0%
	<b>Achievement Medal</b>	28%	31%
	<b>Commendation Medal</b>	22%	51%
	<b>Outstanding Service Medal</b>	5%	9%
	<b>Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal</b>	2%	0%
	<b>Surgeon General's Medallion</b>	1%	0%
	<b>Meritorious Service Medal</b>	0%	3%

**Table 3: Highest PHS Individual Award Received, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, O-5 and O-6, PY 2013 and 2014**

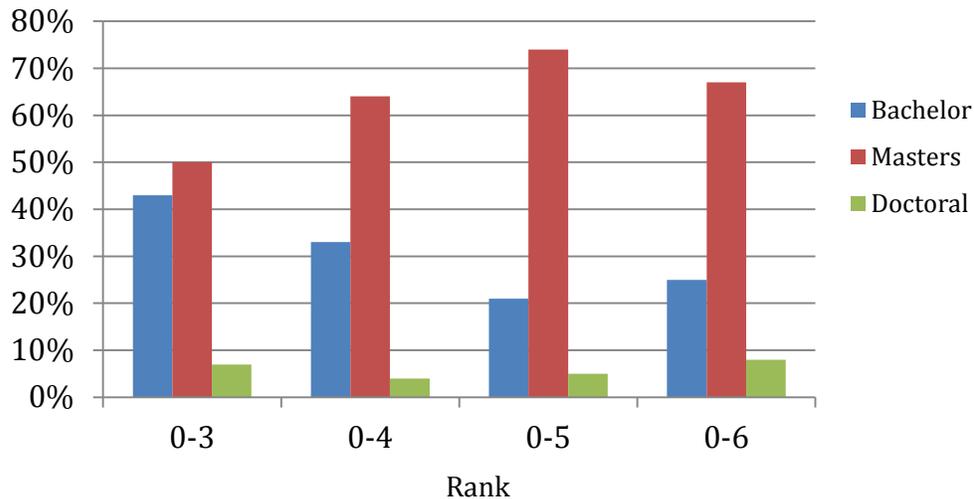
<b>O-5</b>	<b>No Awards/ No Answer</b>	3%	20%
	<b>PHS Citation</b>	3%	0%
	<b>Achievement Medal</b>	21%	20%
	<b>Commendation Medal</b>	57%	32%
	<b>Outstanding Service Medal</b>	5%	16%
	<b>Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal</b>	7%	0%
	<b>Surgeon General's Medallion</b>	0%	4%
	<b>Meritorious Service Medal</b>	2%	8%
<b>O-6</b>	<b>No Awards/ No Answer</b>	0%	8%
	<b>PHS Citation</b>	4%	0%
	<b>Achievement Medal</b>	4%	8%
	<b>Commendation Medal</b>	54%	50%
	<b>Outstanding Service Medal</b>	21%	25%
	<b>Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal</b>	4%	8%
	<b>Meritorious Service Medal</b>	13%	0%

### ***Commissioning Degrees and Additional Degrees***

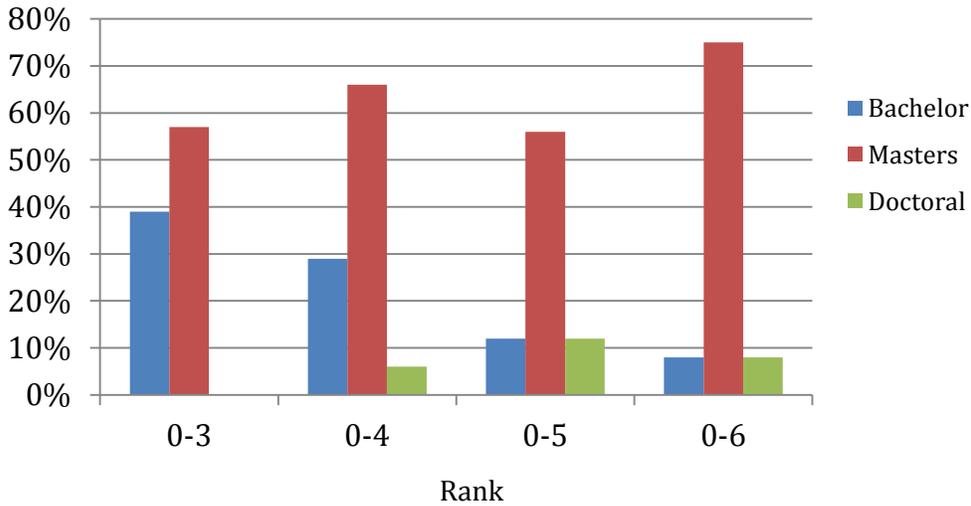
The commissioning degrees of those HSOs included in this survey are listed in **Figures D-1 and D-2**. As one might expect with a category as varied as the HSO category, it is difficult to notice any trend from rank-to-rank, however, it does appear that HSOs are most likely to have a Masters degree as their commissioning degree, regardless of their current rank. Note that not all columns in Figure D-2 will add up to 100%, due to the fact that some respondents did not provide an answer to the associated question.

With regards to any additional degrees that HSOs earn, trends are also difficult to determine, but some information may be gleaned from the data found in **Figures E-1 and E-2**. In particular, HSOs are more likely to have completed a Masters or Doctorate degree as their career progresses. While no officers selected for Temporary O-2 had completed additional degrees, 28% of Temporary O-3s had completed either an additional Masters or Doctorate degree, with increases found when moving to the higher ranks of Temporary O-4 (36%) and Temporary O-5 (53%) respondents. The associated percentage decreased for Temporary O-6 (42%), but it should be noted that 17% of those selected for promotion to Temporary O-6 had completed a Doctorate, which was the highest percentage of any rank examined.

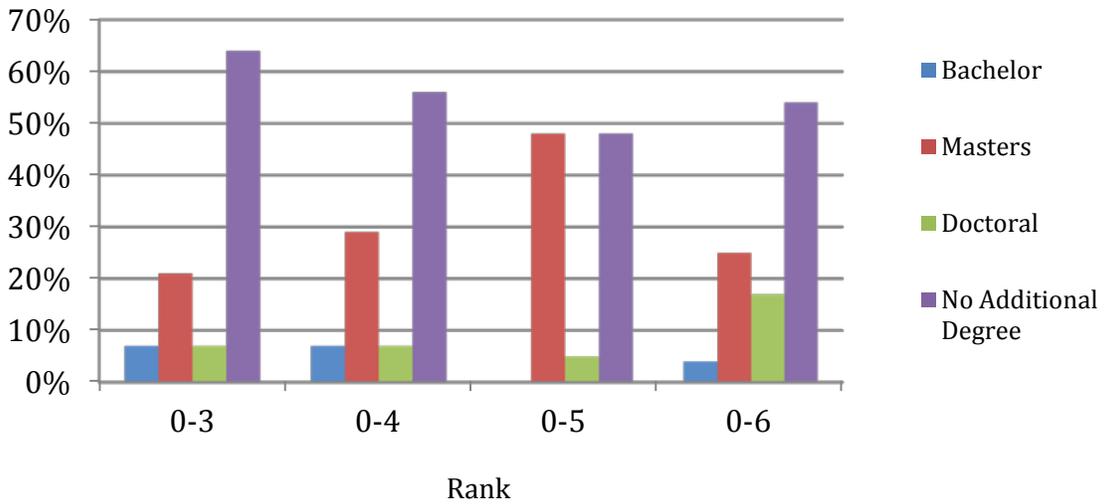
**Figure D-1: Commissioning Degrees of HSOs, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



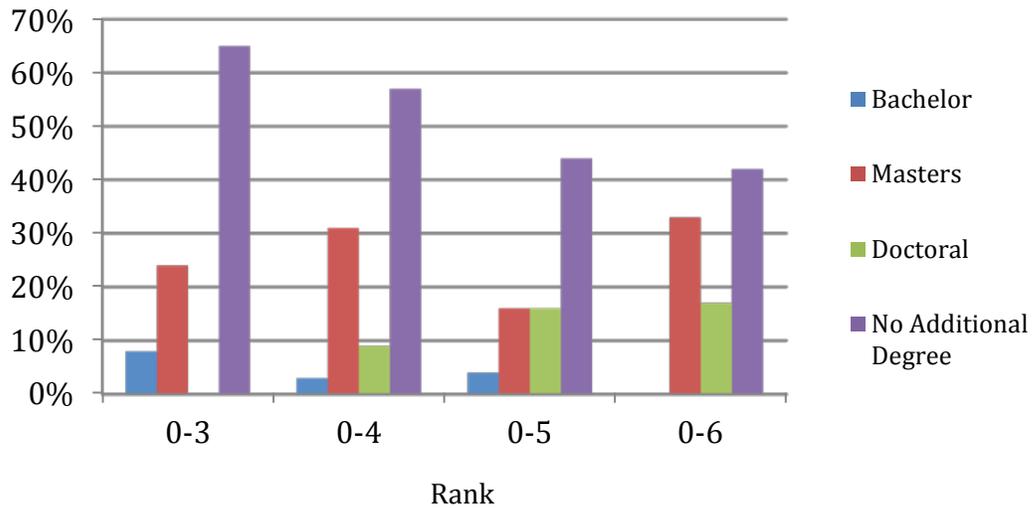
**Figure D-2: Commissioning Degrees of HSOs, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Figure E-1: Highest Additional Degree Obtained by HSOs, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



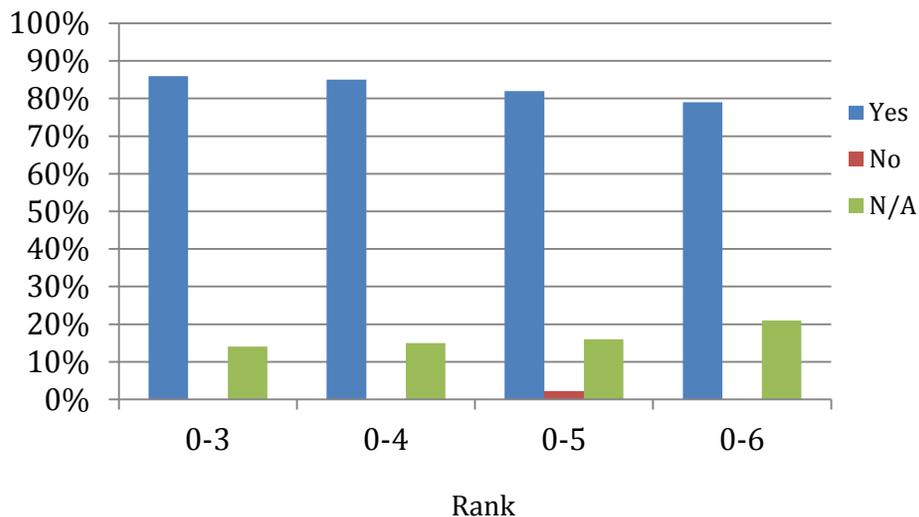
**Figure E-2: Highest Additional Degree Obtained by HSOs, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



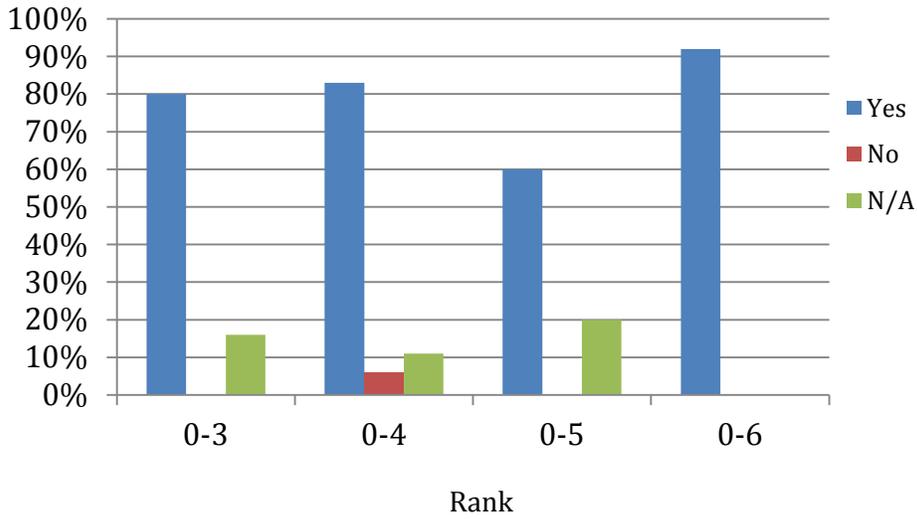
***Continuing Education and Public Health training/certifications***

Officers for this survey were queried on their compliance with Continuing Education requirements for their degree/certifications (**Figure F**), as well as whether or not they had completed additional Public Health training or certifications (**Figure G**). As one might expect, compliance with Continuing Education requirements was rather high (83% for all Temporary promotes and 78% for all Permanent promotees) with little variability between ranks. The data for those completing additional Public Health training or certifications was lower overall than the Continuing Education responses, but still showed a relatively high degree of compliance with the associated HSO Benchmark.

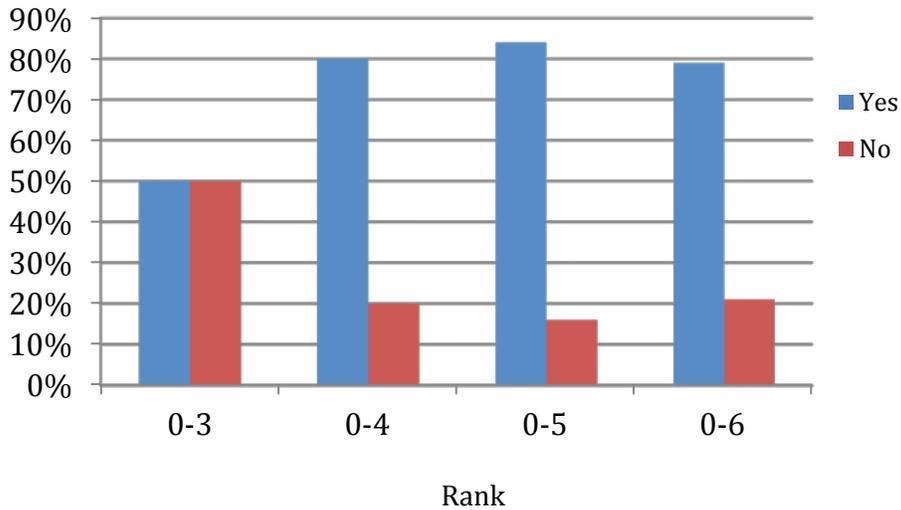
**Figure F-1: Percent of Officers meeting Continuing Education requirements, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



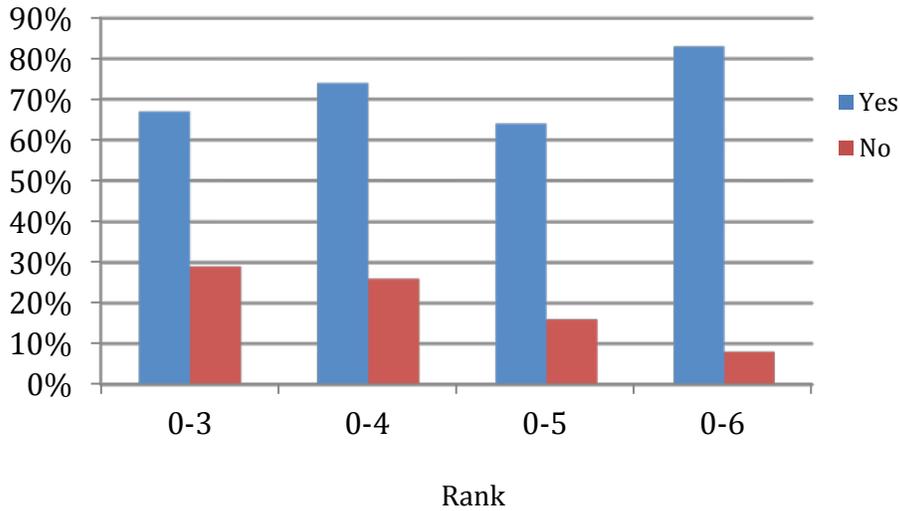
**Figure F-2: Percent of Officers meeting Continuing Education requirements, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Figure G-1: Percent of Officers accumulating additional Public Health training or certifications, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



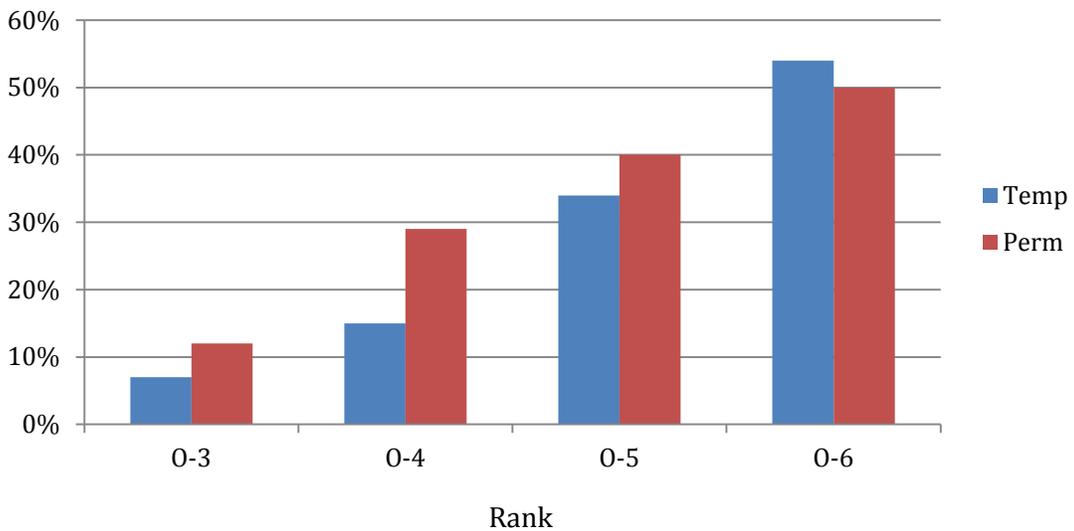
**Figure G-2: Percent of Officers accumulating additional Public Health training or certifications, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



***Prevalence of HSOs that are Supervisors***

Analysis of data from survey respondents indicates that 24% and 26% of all HSOs responding to this survey are supervisors in their current billet (Temporary and Permanent, respectively). Examining individual ranks within **Figure H**, one sees that higher-ranking officers are more likely to be supervisors than their lower-ranking peers, as one would expect throughout normal career progression.

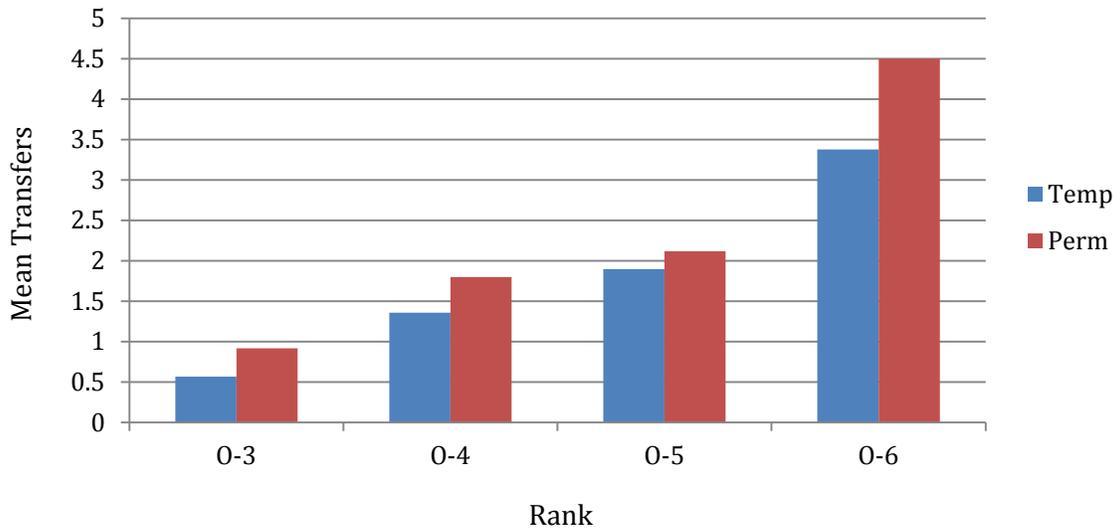
**Figure H: Percentage of Officers Who are Supervisors, PY 2013 and 2014**



### ***Billet Transfers***

As one might expect, the number of billet transfers for HSOs increases as the officer's career progresses. **Figure I** shows a nearly identical mean for billet transfers among survey respondents (Temporary = 1.72, Permanent = 1.71), while the number of billet transfers predictably increases in step-wise fashion from rank-to-rank.

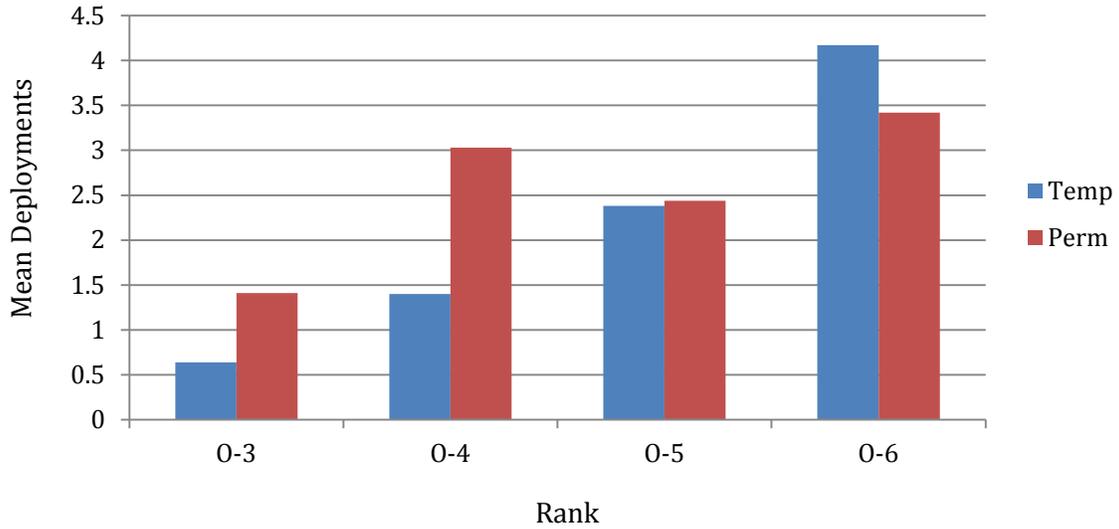
**Figure I: Officer Billet Transfers, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Deployments**

Similar to the data on supervisors and billet transfers, survey data for HSO deployments (**Figure J**) indicates that the mean deployments for HSOs increases as an officer’s career progresses. This trend is likely a result of standard career progression (the longer the officer is on active duty, the more opportunities for deployment they will have), but also a result of increased utility for deployment missions (the senior officer may be seen as more valuable to a deployment team than a junior officer, and thus is selected for deployment more often).

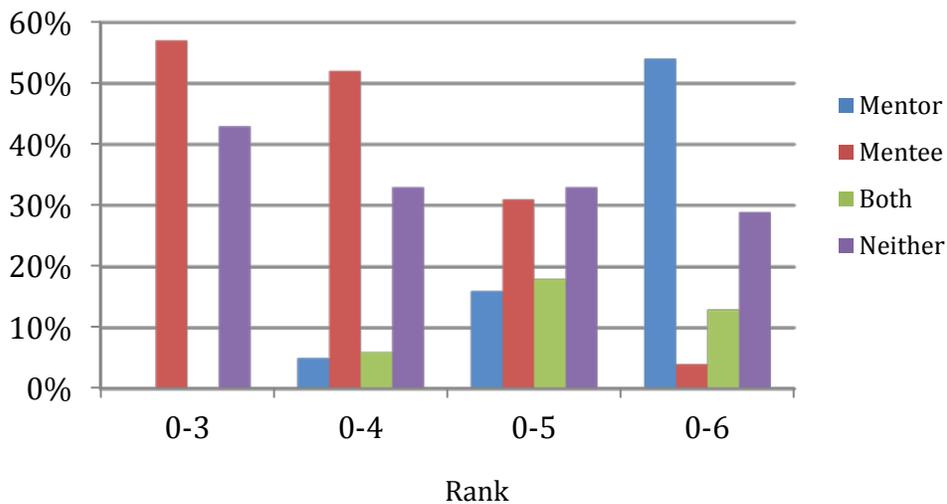
**Figure J: Officer Deployments, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



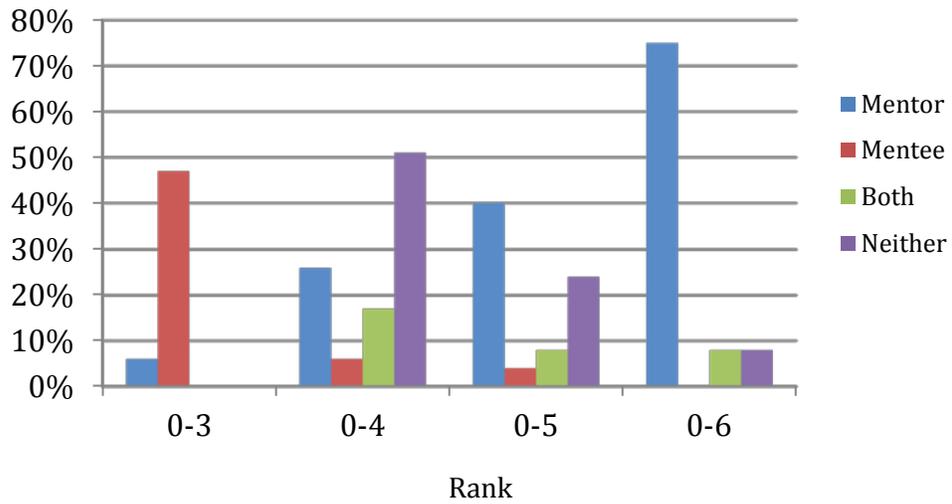
**Participation in the HSO Mentor/Mentee Process**

Survey data was also collected to establish the prevalence of participation in the HSO mentoring process (Figures K-1 and K-2). Overall participation would appear to be relatively high (64% of Temporary promotees and 58% of Permanent), although that leaves approximately one-third of HSOs in this survey as non-participants in the mentoring process, a number that remains very consistent across ranks, particularly in the Temporary promotion category. Moving from rank-to-rank, one can see that the lower ranking officer is more likely to participate as a Mentee, rather than a Mentor, with the Mentor rate rising with increased rank. As those selected for Permanent O-6 were found to have a mean of 20-plus years in the Commissioned Corps, it is logical and expected to find that the highest percentage of mentors comes from the Permanent O-6 data point on Figure K-1, 2.

**Figure K-1: Percent of Officers Participating in HSO Mentor/Mentee Process, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



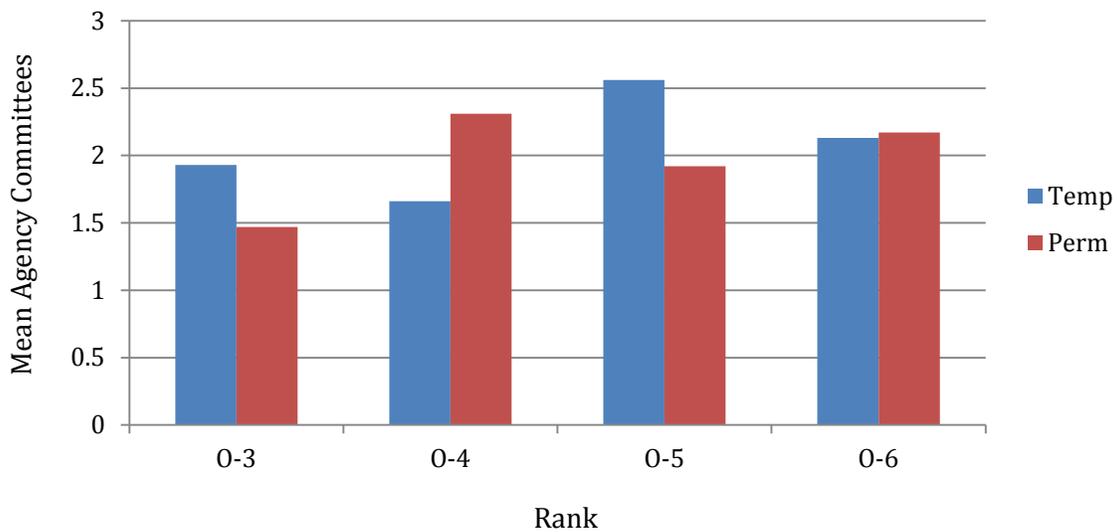
**Figure K-2: Percent of Officers Participating in HSO Mentor/Mentee Process, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



### **Agency Committee Participation**

The statistics for agency committee involvement and participation (**Figure L**) indicate that HSOs across all ranks are having an active role and an impact on USPHS and agency missions through their committee work. As evidenced in the data table, there is little variability between ranks, with the exception of a mean increase between the Temporary O-4 and O-5 promotion selectees. While it is tempting for some to draw conclusions from those two data points, it should also be noted that committee participation actually *decreased* between the Permanent O-4 and Permanent O-5 promotion selectees, which is the opposite of what occurred in the Temporary category. Because of this, these data points should be viewed as justification of the HSO Benchmarks, not a standalone waypoint towards promotion.

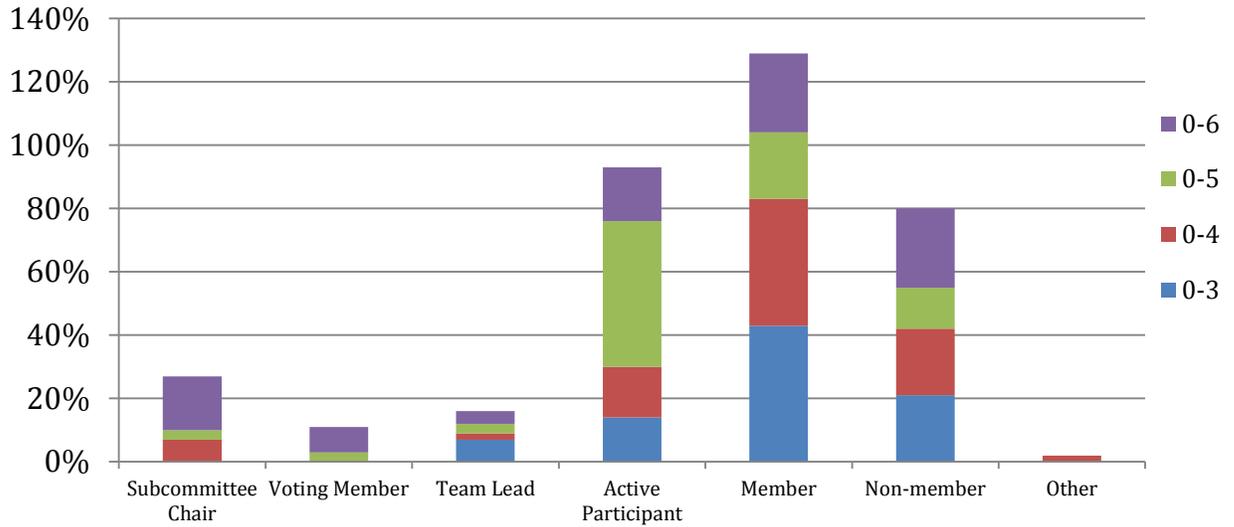
**Figure L: Agency Committee Participation, Temporary and Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



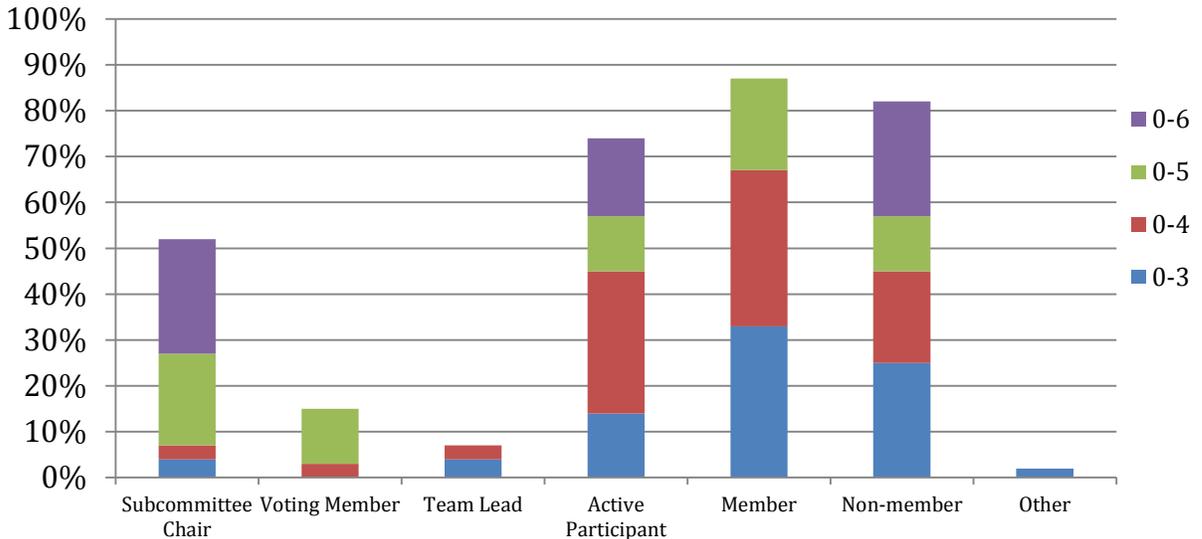
**Participation in PHS Activities**

Just as with the agency committee data from Figure K, data from survey results shows that HSOs are also heavily involved in PHS activities, such as HSPAC, PAG, Deployment Teams, Advisory Groups and the Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS, Inc. (COA). While **Figures M-Q** breakdown data by rank and participation level for each of the queried activities, it has been noted that officers selected for promotion appear to be very active in these organizations, with leadership roles typically increasing as rank increases.

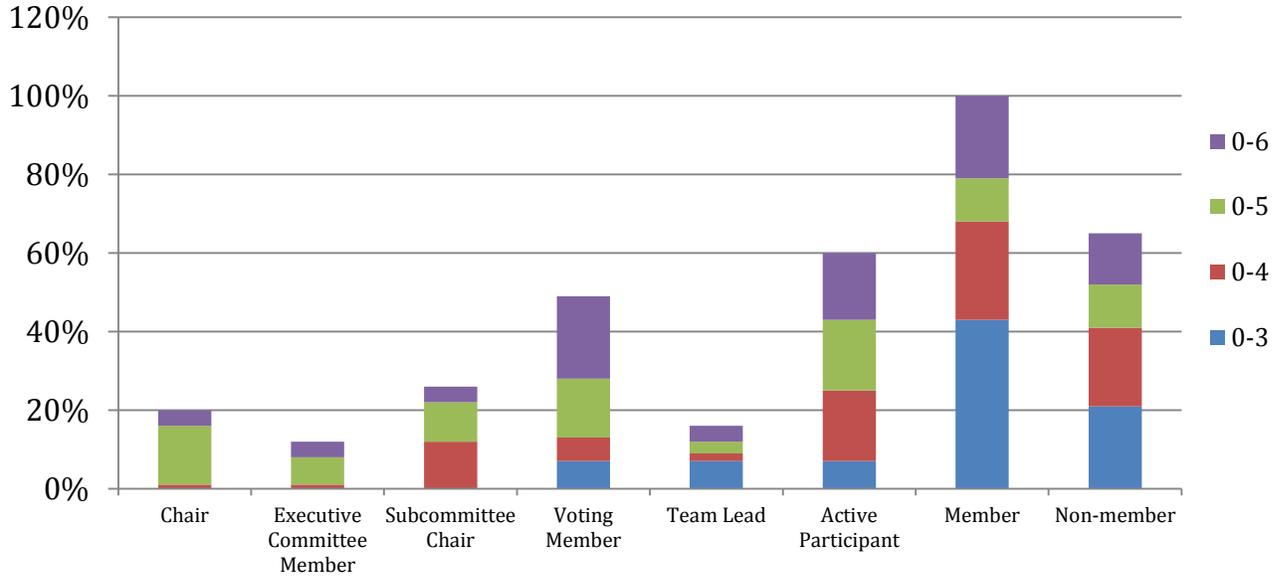
**Figure M-1: Percent of Officers Participating in HSPAC Activities, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



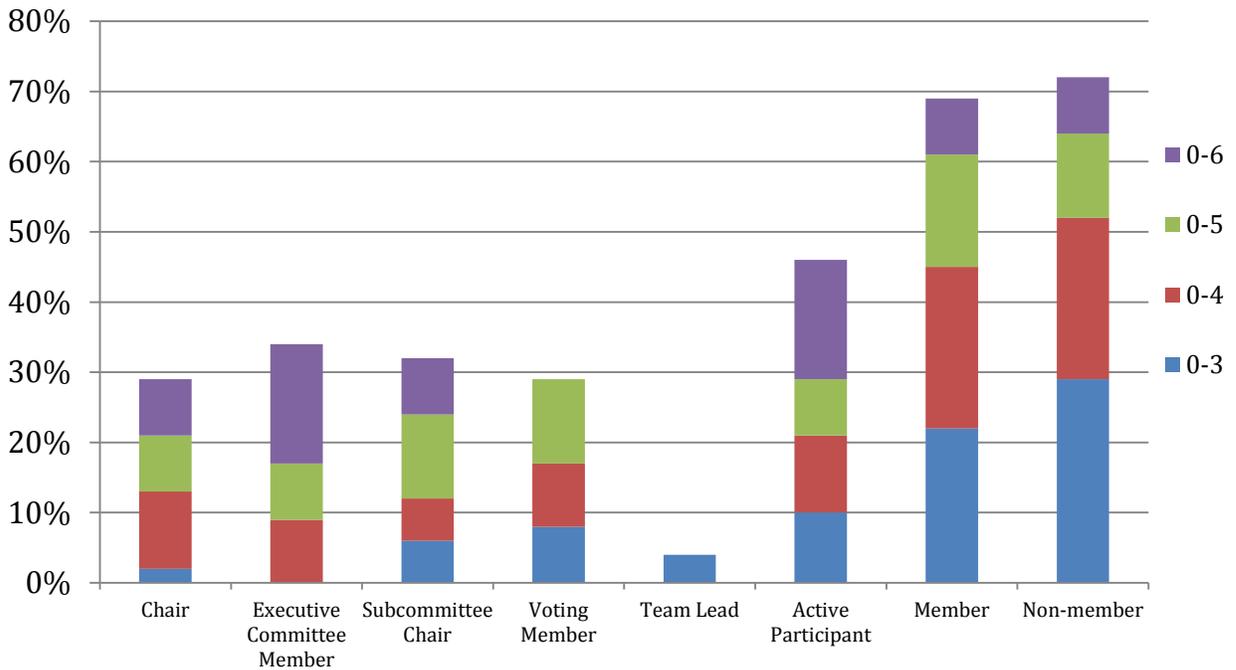
**Figure M-2: Percent of Officers Participating in HSPAC Activities, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



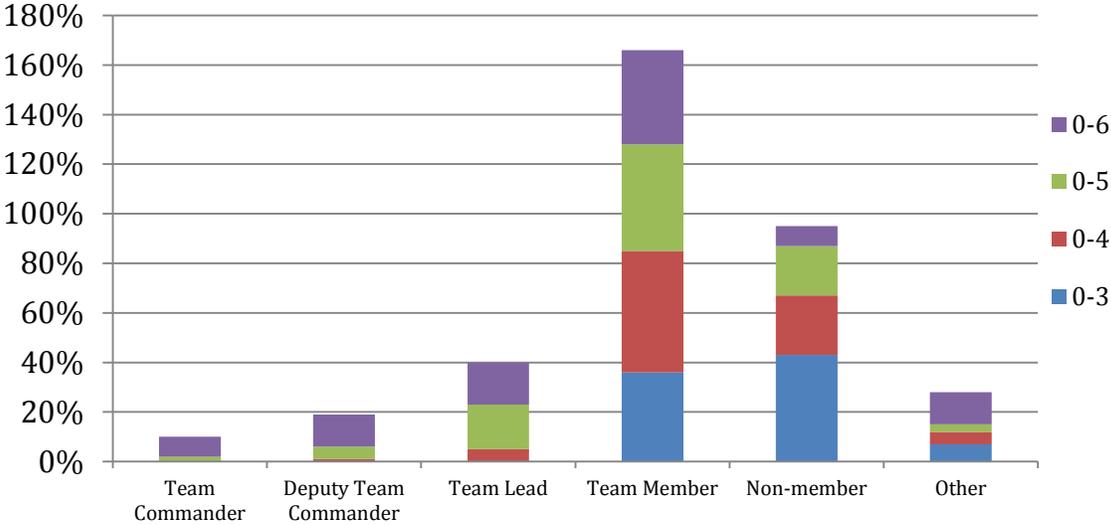
**Figure N-1: Percent of Officers Participating in PAG Activities (PAPAG, BASPAG, etc.), Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



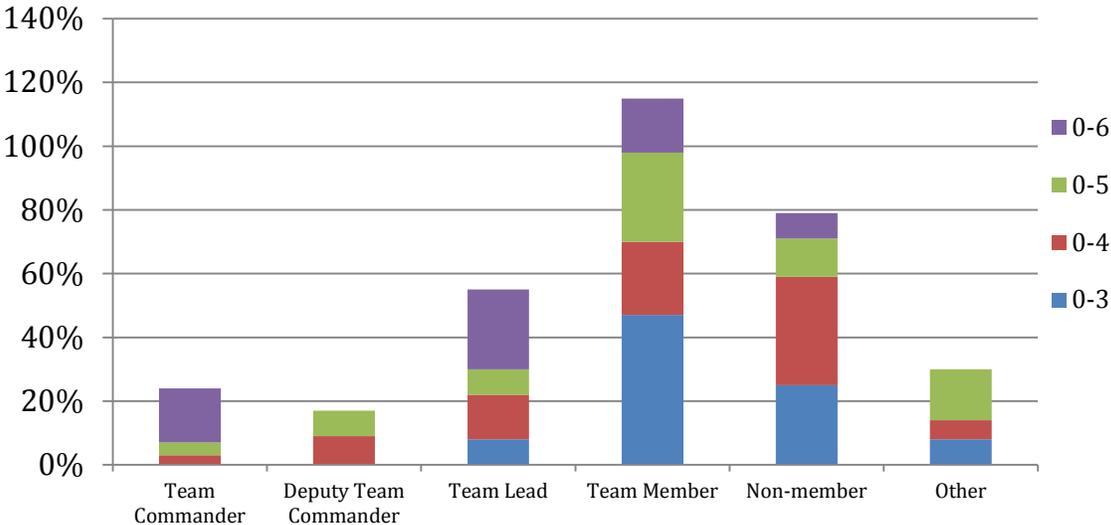
**Figure N-2: Percent of Officers Participating in PAG Activities (PAPAG, BASPAG, etc.), Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



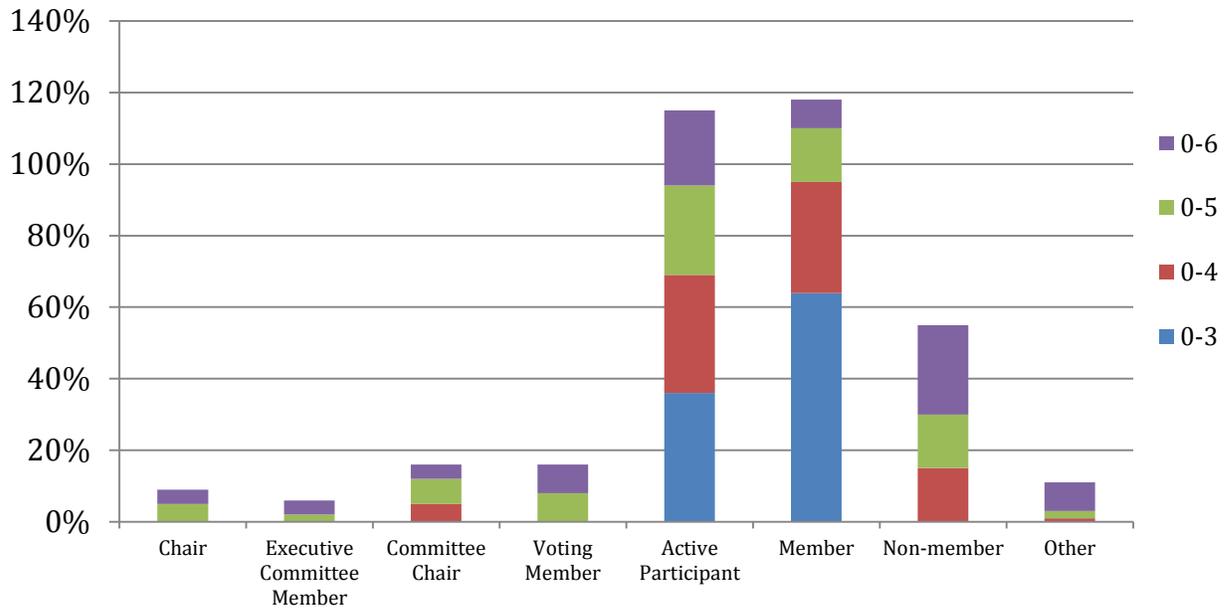
**Figure O-1: Percent of Officers on Deployment Teams, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



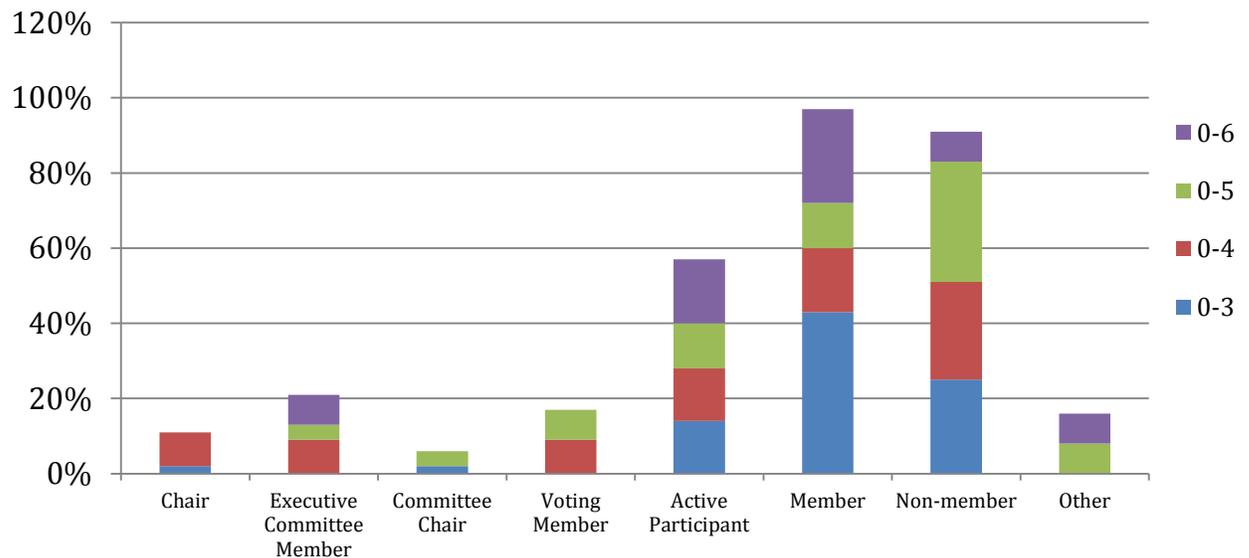
**Figure O-2: Percent of Officers on Deployment Teams, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



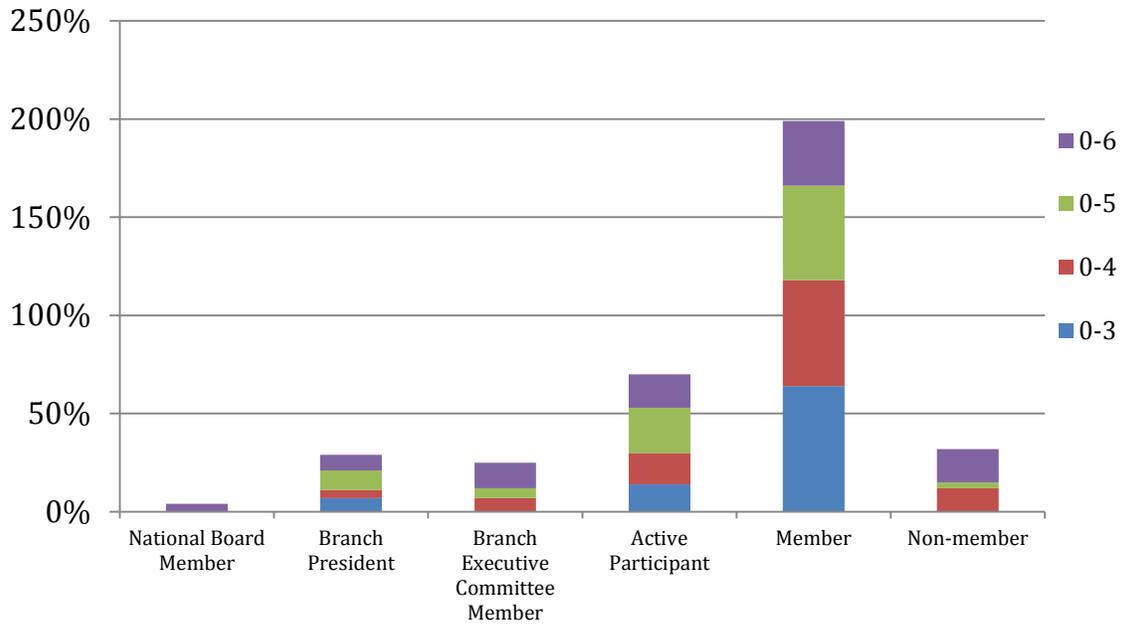
**Figure P-1: Percent of Officers Participating in Advisory Group Activities (JOAG, BCOAG, etc), Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



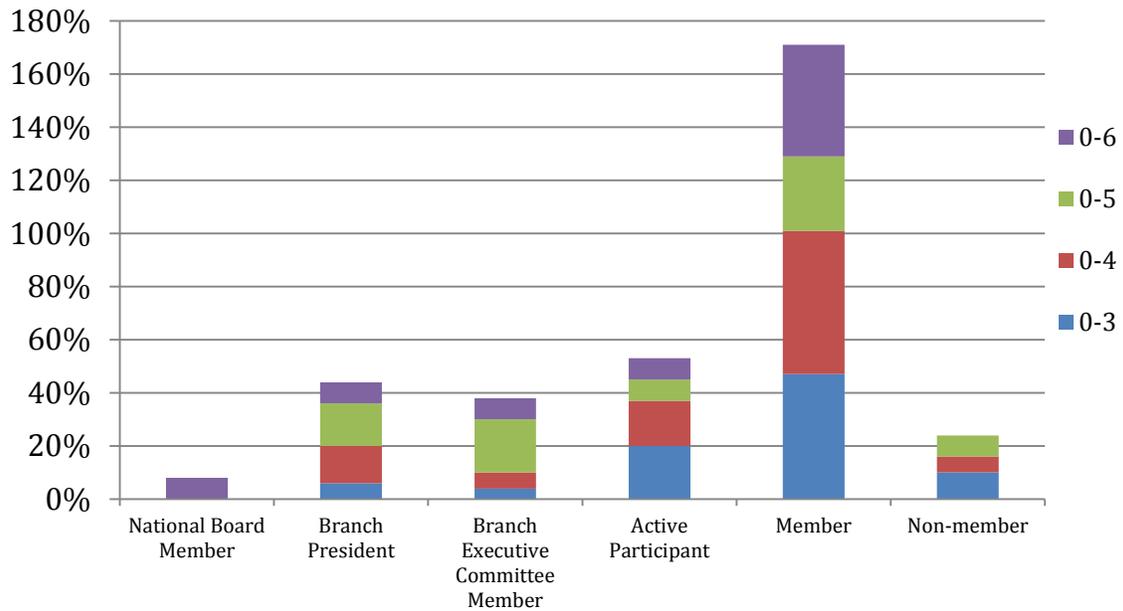
**Figure P-2: Percent of Officers Participating in Advisory Group Activities (JOAG, BCOAG, etc), Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Figure Q-1: Percent of Officers Participating in COA Activities, Temporary Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



**Figure Q-2: Percent of Officers Participating in COA Activities, Permanent Promotion, PY 2013 and 2014**



## Results Summary

This results summary gives an overview of information compiled from the PY 2013 and PY 2014 Promotion Information Survey. As previously noted, no conclusions are drawn regarding officer promotion, as not all HSO officers up for promotion in PY 2013 and PY 2014 were surveyed, and not all those HSOs surveyed provided answers. With that said, there are some common themes that would seem to be evident for those HSOs who did complete the survey.

Specifically, survey data shows that officers selected for O-4, O-5 and O-6 tended to have 10, 12 and 20 years (respectively) in the Commissioned Corps prior to promotion to that rank. While individual award distributions varied, those successfully promoted to lower ranks were likely to have a PHS Achievement Medal as their highest award, while PHS Commendation Medals became more prevalent as officers move from O-4 through O-6. Outstanding Service Medals were reported to be the highest individual award for approximately one-fifth of those promoted to O-6.

Average COER scores for all promoted officers, irrespective of ranks, was found to be 6, with those promoted to O-6 having an average closer to 7. The majority of officers across all ranks reported that they had accumulated additional public health training and/or certifications, and most officers reported having a Masters degree or higher, with the exception of those promoted to O-2 (Bachelors degree).

Survey respondent data showed that 40-50% of officers are supervisors, regardless of rank, and that the number of billet transfers and deployments increase with rank/time-in-service. Lastly, those officers selected for promotion who completed the survey indicated that they are very active in their professional organizations, including HSPAC, with leadership roles typically increasing with rank.

## Future Steps

This study represents initial efforts by the HSPAC to examine promotion trends for HSOs. As previously mentioned, study limitations exist in designing and accessing information to analyze a full picture of how and why officers are promoted over time. To this end, future analytic studies should consider: 1) re-examining survey questions for correspondence to HSO benchmarks as either direct links or proxies for each benchmark; 2) crosswalk this analysis with the trend analysis study conducted by the Career Development Subcommittee; 3) advocate for access to e-mail addresses of officers who were eligible for promotion but were not promoted; 4) conduct this promotion survey and analysis on an annual basis and build on the results; 5) coordinate analysis with other category PAC's to provide a Corps-wide view of promotion profiles; and 6) use information gathered from this analysis to build career development training and mentoring needs.

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## Appendix A: Promotion Information Survey for PY 2013 and 2014 Promoted Officers

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### Promotion Information Survey for Health Services Officers

#### ***Officer Information:***

- Number of years in the Corps (#)
- Current Permanent Grade (dropdown menu of all grades O-1 through O-6)
- Current Temporary Grade (dropdown menu of all grades O-1 through O-8)
- Current Billet Grade (dropdown menu of all grades O-1 through O-8)
- Promotion cycle when you were considered for promotion (dropdown menu: 2013, 2014)
- Were you promoted during that cycle? (Yes/no)
- If yes, grade(s) to which grade(s)? (2 dropdown menus of P and T grades)

#### ***1. Performance Rating and Reviewing Official's Statement (Performance)***

1. What was your overall COER Score during your promotion year? (#)
2. What is your highest level individual PHS honor award received? (Dropdown menu)
3. How many *individual* PHS honor awards have you received? (#)
4. How many *unit* PHS honor awards have you received? (#)
5. I am a supervisor of at least one employee in my current position. (Yes, No)

#### ***2. Education, Training, and Professional Development Related to the Needs of the PHS***

1. What is the level of your Commissioning Degree? (Dropdown menu: Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate)
2. What is the highest level of additional degrees earned since commissioning? (Dropdown menu: Not applicable, Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate)
3. I meet/exceed the minimum Continuing Education standards or requirements for my discipline. (Yes, No, N/A)
4. I have accumulated additional Public Health training or certifications beyond my commissioning degree (Yes, No)

**3. Career Progression and Potential**

1. How many transfers have you had during your PHS career? Only include geographic and agency transfers for which Transfer Personnel Orders were issued – these do not include billet changes. (#)
2. How many agency-level committees did you participate with or lead during the previous year? (#)
3. What is the total # of PHS *service* awards (e.g., Special Assignment Award, Isolated Hardship Award, etc.) you have received since commissioning? (#)

**4. Professional Contributions & Services to the PHS Commissioned Corps (Officership)**

PHS Activity	Highest position held (select the single highest position for each)
1. Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC)	(Dropdown menu: Chair, executive committee member, committee chair, voting member, team lead, active participant, other, non-member)
2. Professional Advisory Groups (PAPAG, BASPAG, etc.)	(Dropdown menu: Chair, executive committee, committee chair, voting member, team lead, active participant, other, non-member)
3. Deployment Team (APHT, RDF, etc.)	(Dropdown menu: Team Commander, Deputy Commander, team lead, team member, non-member)
4. Advisory Group (JOAG, BCOAG, etc.)	(Dropdown menu: Chair, executive committee, committee chair, voting member, team lead, active participant, other, non-member)
5. Commissioned Officers Association (COA)	(Dropdown menu: National board member, branch president, branch executive committee member, active participant, other, non-member)

6. How many times have you been deployed as a PHS Officer? Do not include non-Corps/agency deployments. (#; (if never deployed, enter “0”))
7. I am an active participant in the official HS-PAC officer mentoring program, either as a mentor, mentee or both. (Dropdown menu: Mentor, mentee, both mentor and mentee, neither)

## Appendix B: Distribution of Survey Respondents, PY 2013 and 2014

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	Temporary	Permanent
<b>0-2</b>	<i>n</i> = 3; 2%	<i>n</i> = 11; 8%
<b>0-3</b>	<i>n</i> = 14; 7%	<i>n</i> = 51; 37%
<b>0-4</b>	<i>n</i> = 85; 45%	<i>n</i> = 35; 26%
<b>0-5</b>	<i>n</i> = 61; 32%	<i>n</i> = 25; 18%
<b>0-6</b>	<i>n</i> = 24; 13%	<i>n</i> = 12; 9%

\*\* Note that percentages do not add up to 100%, due to number rounding