

## OPAG Minutes 04/06/2016

Mission: Represent and advocate for the professional discipline of optometry and its Commissioned officers, civil servants, contract and tribal optometrists serving within the Public Health Service and affiliated services.

### Attending

#### OPAG voting members

- **CDR Erin Giles- (Chair)**
- **CDR Robert Chelberg**
- **CDR Cameron Scott (Vice-Chair)**
- **LT Laura DeWitt - (Secretary)**
- **CDR Kathleen Wooten**
- **LCDR Craig Renard**

(Absent, LCDR Kelly Dalton, CDR Robert Kesead)

### Liasons

**CDR Barbara Cohn**

**CAPT Dawn Clary**

**CAPT David Bellware**

**CDR Sarah Stienbarger**

### Guests

**Monica Faley, OD Chinle, AZ**

**Ryan Manning, OD Phoenix, AZ**

**Nima Desai, OD Sells, AZ**

**Jill Thompson, OD Ft Thompson, SC**

### Liaison Reports

**-AMSUS:** CDR Greg Smith/CDR Barbara Cohn:

No report

**-Chief Clinical Consultant:** CAPT Dawn Clary:

No report today, look for the new edition of EyeCare Notes for new report

**-AFOS:** CDR Greg Smith:

No report

**-FDA:** CAPT Kim Lewandowski-Walker:

No report

**-PHS Recruitment/Applicant Placement:** CAPT David Bellware, CDR Sarah Stienbarger

There were several applicants from when optometry opened up over a year ago, one was denied based on minor one time medical issue after enduring over a year of the application process.

There is one open application, one successful applicant, Jill Thompson, OD, who will be attending OBC next month

**-HSPAC Career Development:** CDR Sarah Stienbarger

Reminder, mentorship is an official benchmark and is strongly encouraged. If you are not yet a mentor/mentee you can sign up on the HSPAC website.

**-APHA Vision Care:** need new liaison still

**-JOAG:** LCDR Kelly Dalton is leaving the Corps in May. We will need to fill her OPAG position. CDR Giles will send an email out requesting nominations.

**-HSPAC:** CDR Erin Giles

At the all hands meeting last week the new CPO was officially introduced and the HSO website changes were highlighted

### **New Business/ Agenda**

#### ***\*Updates on Fullerton Meeting***

-moving along, speakers are set, registration numbers are low as of today

No cost for registration, lodging information will be resent

#### ***\*Voting on student award***

IHS student award ... deadline for submission is May 1<sup>st</sup> (now have one or two nominees)

Cameron will email completed award nominations to OPAG voting members once the deadline has passed, and OPAG will vote by email

#### **\*Updates on Symposium**

OPAG/category day breakout session 7 am 5/18/16

Career mentoring opportunity: as a HSPAC Mentor, you may be eligible to participate as a possible career counselor for the "HSPAC Career Counseling Sessions" during the 2016 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City, OK. These sessions are being offered at the Symposium as part of a collaborative effort between the Career Development and Mentoring Subcommittees of the HSPAC. Participants will be expected to offer individual career counseling sessions to officers and each session is 30 minutes. Contact LCDR Ayana Anderson at [ing9@cdc.gov](mailto:ing9@cdc.gov) if interested.

#### **\*Discussion regarding Commissioning optometrists at Resident level**

CDR Stienbarger had been working with Mike Davis (optometry residency director) on this.

Pharmacy has a successful commissioning program for pharmacy residents. The challenge for optometry is the lack of lucrative incentive pay; an optometrist would have to stay in the Corps 9-10 years to reap any financial incentive. At this point it may be better to work towards getting better specialty pay first.

#### **\*How T&E (training and experience cap) is affecting Corps optometrists pay and Optometry profession "open continuous" on USPHS.gov**

CDR Giles will send out a survey to determine how this is affecting hiring. There will be open continuous for optometry, which indicates that leadership recognizes the unmet need for more optometrists. Now would be the time to leverage this to achieve more attractive compensation to assist with recruitment

#### **\*Two Deployment opportunities, RAM events Durant, OK and Greece**

- Volunteer for the RAM in Durant, OK on May 14-15th see below. RedDOG and RAM Oklahoma have teamed up to host an event in Durant, OK, on May 14-15, 2016. This is the weekend immediately before the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Oklahoma City. It will be a great way for COA members to help underserved populations in southeastern Oklahoma while getting some much-needed deployment training.

Officers interested in volunteering should:

1. Commit to participation for both full clinical days
2. Be basic qualified
3. Own a sufficient number of ODUs
4. Complete the survey by Thursday, 31 March 2016

Click [here](#) for more details and a link to the [survey](#).

#### **\*Women's Commissioned Corps Support Group Forming**

See additional information below

### **\*promotion information/discussion**

Ryan Manning

Successfully promoted this past year

- Put an emphasis on education qualifications...the first year it didn't translate to board, because there was no optometrist on the promotion board
  - Got an MPH through online course through Salus University, used GI Bill
  - Diplomat status/ public health emphasis (used to be 2-3 year process, may be now streamlined to 1 year)
- Certification in Public Health or board certification (NBEO or ABO) are other options

Brian Culligan (emailed suggestions)

- board certification
- emphasis on writing up awards for accomplishments
- AFOS involvement
- O-6 billet with high level of responsibility for many years
- stick to rules of CV/ Cover Page
- Civil Service supervisor gave mediocre COERS, but was still promoted

Sarah Stienbarger

Billet...we can't all get into O-6 billet, it is possible to overcome a lower billet, but it is not easy. Everything else should be in order, and it may take a few years.

Erin Giles

Positives

- change of duty station, and higher/supervisory role
- career fair
- COA/ local branch involvement
- previous deployment

Recommendations

- higher recognition through individual awards
- seek fellowships and board certification
- more varied assignment

There is a 31 page packet put out by HSO analyzing promotion trends

Promotion for optometry was above the norm for O-4, O-5 and O-6 promotions

Previously ...abysmal promotion rate

Dawn Clary noted that this shows positive momentum, and we should seek to continue this.

Dave Belleware

For awards...track monetary amounts and measurable progression

You don't know who is going to be on the promotion boards so hit the board over the head with what you are trying to say (assume non-OD HSO's have no idea the significance of FAAO, etc)

Don't have to have MPH, diplomat, other certifications like contracting officer level 2 are valuable.

Responsibility...discusses the impact and dollar amounts. (eg 3M dollar budget) can get it from an operation summary at most service units.

Deployments, it is often tough for optometrists to get deployments, if opportunity arises, push for deployments and Field Medical Readiness Badge.

COERS: if you have a supervisor that is giving you low ratings, discuss with them that this COER is a tool for promotion, not just an evaluation. If you are promotable, you should be getting 7's, 5's are a message to the board that you are "not-promotable"...supervisors may not be aware of this.

7's need comments to back up score. COER scores need to match narrative, CV and awards

UPCOMING OPAG meetings

**June 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Oct 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Dec 7<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 AM Alaska

9:00 AM Pacific

10:00 AM Mountain

11:00 AM Central

12:00 PM Eastern

**Again...**

**New call in number for the rest of the year**

**1(888)950-7567 pw 46439**

Meeting was adjourned, and followed by YAMMER Skype presentation by Dr. Cohn.

See below for more details on readiness and the new Women's Leadership Support Group (not discussed during meeting)

The Women's Leadership Support Group is pleased to announce that we are in the process of formulating new support groups.

The Mission Statement of the Women's Leadership Support group is:

Self-motivated community of Commissioned Corps women providing a unique forum to support fellow women in a quest to lead well-balanced lives while gaining inspiration in their own lives and upholding the PHS core values of leadership, service, integrity, and excellence.

Our primary objective is to bring Commissioned Corps women (all categories) together in various locations in a supportive environment to foster sharing of ideas and experiences to support overall development and wellbeing.

If you are interested in participating in one of the support groups, please contact:

[forum4femaleofficers@gmail.com](mailto:forum4femaleofficers@gmail.com) with the following information (to aid us in coordinating groups)

Rank:

Name:

Location:

Family Situation (e.g., married with children; single parent; caretaker for a sick/elderly/special needs family member; etc.):

Times of day that work for you for support meetings:

VR,

The Women's Leadership Support Group

**Next Basic Readiness Check: 01 April 2016**

**OFFLINE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE** ([Click here for current status](#))

Greetings Fellow HSOs,

We are just **2 weeks away** from the next Basic Readiness check – 01 April 2016. Remember, maintaining a basic level of readiness is mandatory at all times and a condition of service. As Officers, it is **OUR RESPONSIBILITY** to ensure that we maintain a basic level of Readiness during each quarterly check. We highly advise that you to check your projected Basic Readiness Status and ensure that you will meet all seven (7) Basic Readiness requirements prior to 01 April 2016.

**[eOPF Fax lines and the Next Basic Readiness Check](#)**

According to RedDOG, eOPF fax lines will continue to be off-line until all internal documents are placed in officers' eOPFs. Please **DO NOT** fax in ANY documents to your eOPF until you notified that the lines are back up. You can check the status of the eOPF fax lines:

[http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/eOPF\\_fax\\_announcement\\_m.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/eOPF_fax_announcement_m.aspx)

If you are concerned about the inability to fax documents in relation to the 01 April readiness check, please keep in mind that although faxing in your BLS card is a required administrative step, it is **CRITICAL** that you update your BLS date in [Direct Access](#), that is, Basic Readiness is calculated based on information in DA not your eOPF. The hard copy of your BLS in eOPF is primarily for audit purposes. You should make sure that your BLS is current in DA before 4/1/16, and fax your BLS to eOPF whenever fax lines are back up.

To determine whether you currently meet and/or to check your projected Readiness Status:

**Step 1.** Log into [Direct Access](#)

**Step 2.** Under the “**Self-Service**” area (top right – NOT bottom left), click on “**Readiness Status**”.

**Step 3.** **NEW:** You will now see a line listing of your last four years Readiness Status results.

**Step 4.** Click on the line with the **Start Date** listed as 04/01/2016. This will take you to your current projected status page.

A) **Current Status** should read “*Basic Eligibility*”. This is the projected status for the 01 April 2016 basic readiness check. **Note:** There is no longer information shown in the “Projected Status” tab like before, but the tab is still there.

B) If your **Current Status** reads “*Not Basic-Ready*”, reasons for not meeting basic-level of readiness will be listed directly below in “Reasons for Current Status”.

**Step 6.** All questions, comments, inquiries and concerns about Response Readiness-related matters should be directed to the RedDOG office at [RedDOG@hhs.gov](mailto:RedDOG@hhs.gov).

You should be aware of all requirements evaluated by RedDOG to determine Basic Readiness status. It is vital that you know when each basic ready requirement expires to ensure compliance (i.e., APFT, BLS, Annual flu vaccination, PPD, 5 Year Medical Evaluation, etc.). RedDOG does not routinely send notification if you are about to fall, or have fallen, out of compliance. Therefore, it is up to you to ensure that you are frequently checking your **Current** and **Projected** status.

**Step-by-step instructions** for completing all readiness criteria are available in Readiness, Down-to-Basics ([http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic\\_Readiness\\_Checklist.pdf](http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf)) in Essentials section of Readiness on the CCMIS website. Additionally, please visit our HS PAC Readiness Website for more

information on each Basic Readiness Requirement: <http://www.usphs-hso.org/?q=pac/sub/readiness/reqts>.

Thank you for making your readiness a priority!

CDR Carlos Bell

Chair, HS PAC Readiness Subcommittee

LCDR Julie Erb-Alvarez

Readiness Newsletter Workgroup, Lead

*Please send questions and/or feedback to [usphs.hso.readiness@gmail.com](mailto:usphs.hso.readiness@gmail.com).*