

**U.S. Public Health Service
Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)
Meeting #164 Minutes, October 20th, 2010
University of Georgia at Athens**

Note: This meeting was held live at the University of Georgia at Athens and via Conference Call

1. Call to Order (CAPT Noska) 0900 EST
Acting EHOPAC Chair CAPT Mike Noska called the meeting to order. Roll call was held for members in attendance. Names of guests participating via phone and WebEx were recorded. Those participating via phone only were asked to send their names to CAPT Noska.
EHOPAC Members and their Agency Affiliation Participating in Meeting #164

EHOPAC Members Present	EHOPAC Members Absent
CAPT Michael Welch, Chief Professional Officer	CAPT William Greim (OS/ASPR)
CAPT Michael Noska (FDA) Vice-Chair	LT Christian Witkovskie (FDA)
CDR Dave Cramer (IHS) Recorder	
CAPT Wayne Hall (IHS) Treasurer	
LCDR Lisa Delaney (CDC)	
LCDR Jennifer Freed (ATSDR)	
CAPT Jean Gaunce (CDC)	
CDR Scotty Hargrave (FDA)	
CDR Brian Johnson (IHS)	
CDR Chris Kates (OS/ASPR)	
CDR Ann Krake (DOI)	
LCDR Joseph Laco (CDC)	
LCDR Shawn Lafferty (EPA)	
CDR John McKernan (EPA)	
CDR Dino Mattorano (EPA)	
LCDR Sarah Unthank (USCG)	
Liaisons Present	Liaisons Absent
LCDR Jamie Mutter (CDC) JOAG Liaison	LCDR Carolyn J. Oyster COA/COF Category Day Liaison
CDR Diahann Williams OCCFM Customer Service Representative	LCDR Aimee Treffiletti COA/COF Category Day Liaison
CDR Don Williams EHAC Liaison	CDR Thomas Pryor ARP Liaison
CAPT Wendy Fanaselle COA Board Liaison	LCDR Tammy White CAM Liaison
	CAPT Clint Chamberlin COA Board Liaison
	CAPT Gary Noonan (Ret) American Academy of Sanitarians Liaison
EHOPAC Guests Present	

2. Acting Chair Welcome/Remarks (CAPT Noska)

- CAPT Noska Recognizes CAPT Dellapenna for Distinguished Service

CAPT Noska opened the EHOPAC Meeting by acknowledging the contributions of CAPT Alan Dellapenna to the PAC. CAPT Dellapenna has taken a position managing the State of North Carolina Injury Prevention Program. He will be missed.

3. Chief Professional Officer Report (CAPT Welch)

- CAPT Dellapenna: CAPT Welch began by also acknowledging CAPT Dellapenna's contributions to the PAC, USPHS and the Indian Health Service.

- Readiness is Currently Below Average

The EHOPAC has historically averaged 95-97% basic readiness. However we are currently at 75%. This could be due to the implementation of the Direct Access system.

- Billet System Transformation Delayed Until November

Transformation of the EHO billets was scheduled to roll out in September but has been delayed likely to sometime in November. Then Nurse Officer Category with over 1,000 officers has started.

- COSTEP Marketing at Univ. of Georgia Looks Promising

The EHOPAC appears to have had a successful COSTEP marketing appeal to the students at the University of Georgia. With the university's internship requirement, the slow economy and the fact that the COSTEP program is a great opportunity, PAC members made numerous contacts with prospective applicants.

CAPT Welch is hopeful for a better summer. Last summer, 34 were selected but only 26 ended up serving due to the "pause." CAPT Welch is optimistic that the pause will be resolved by next spring and has encouraged students to apply. The majority of COSTEPs intern with the IHS. CAPT Welch is working to increase the opportunities for students PHS-wide to including additional COSTEPs with the FDA, CDC et al.

- Commissioned Corps Adjusts to Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

The suspension of calls to active duty or "the Pause" is still in effect. Several policies developed by OCCO have been reviewed by DHHS leadership and are now in the approval phase.

There are still outstanding issues on Reserve/Regular Corps conversion. Several retired Reserve Corps officers were not pleased with the letter they received releasing them from the Reserve Corps. Assimilation packets went out, but they were probably unnecessary as all officers are now Regular Corps. Officers no longer need to have Regular Corps benchmarks on CVs.

The Healthcare Professions Training has not been funded yet; while EHOs were not mentioned specifically, the PAC has interpreted Public Health Professionals to include EHOs.

- ASH and Deputy Secretary Express Support for the Corps
While the administration continues to study the Commissioned Corps, the ASH and the Deputy Secretary have expressed support for the Corps and its mission.
- SG Benjamin Articulate Health Priorities for the Nation and the Corps
Surgeon General Regina Benjamin's priorities reflect the priorities of the administration including improved wellness and obesity prevention. The CPOs and Flag Officers are assisting the Surgeon General with greater visibility and are meeting more frequently with her. SG Benjamin has expressed her value of the field staff as great resources. She has met with retired officers and the COA. She sees the EHO category as first line public health responders. CAPT Welch would like to engage more EHO Senior Leadership such RADM Meeks.
- CPO Meets with EHOs Across the USPHS
CAPT Welch has had the opportunity to travel the country and discuss the needs and concerns of EHOs in a variety work assignments. Among the numerous trips, CAPT Welch met with EHOs at NIOSH in Cincinnati and addressed the Alaska Environmental Health Association in Anchorage. He's met with Flag Officers at the FDA's facility in Whiteoak. During speaking engagements, CAPT Welch tries to meet with EHOs in small groups to provide career guidance and listen to the concerns of junior officers.
- EPP Deadline Coming Soon
There is a current call for Exceptional Proficiency Promotion nominations, but the window is quickly closing. This year's T-Grade promotions were fair and in some cases generous. Permanent grade promotions haven't been released yet.
- COER Appears to Better Reflect Officer Performance
The new COER is designed to more accurately reflect officer performance and address a trend towards inflated scores. While the COER appears to be a better instrument, guidance has been limited.
- EHO's are Exceptional Across the Board
As a category, we are doing outstanding work. Surgeon General Benjamin sees us as first line public health responders. So please stay focused on your work and be patiently persistent.

4. PAC Chair Report (CAPT Noska)

- CPOs Call for Review of Promotion Benchmarks
On behalf of the Board of the Chief Professional Officers, Engineering CPO RADM Rodenbeck asked the PAC Chairs Committee to review their promotion benchmarks. CAPT Brian Johnson and CDR Ann Krake of the Career Development Subcommittee have yet to receive an official request; however the subcommittee members have already reviewed the benchmarks and have submitted their proposed changes to Captain Welch and Captain Noska.
- PAC Chairs Consider Removal of Readiness Benchmark
The PAC Chairs have been asked to consider removal of the readiness benchmark from the promotion precepts. It is currently worth 5% towards promotion; however, it may be redundant

considering that officers who are not basic ready are not considered for promotion. Recommendation from the PAC Chairs will go to the CPO Board.

- PAC Chairs Consider Frocking Proposal

Pining on new rank prior to the personnel order effective date is a tradition know as frocking. It is an enlisted tradition in all services and officer tradition in the Air Force. The EHOPAC has been asked to provide comments on a proposed frocking policy by October 28th.

- JOAG Proposes Longevity Award

The Junior Officer Advisory Group has requested the PAC Chairs Group endorse the adoption of a longevity award to the Office of the Surgeon General. The longevity award would include a ribbon at 5 years of service and a bronze star every five years subsequent. The USAF recognizes longevity with a similar award. CAPT Noska requested review of the JOAG proposal by October 27th.

- Commissioned Officers Association Calls for Seminar Ideas

This year's COA meeting will be in New Orleans. The COA Board called the PAC Chairs and requested ideas for a preconference seminar.

- COER Season is Here

CPO Guidance is available at the CCMIS website. OCCO recommends not using bullet feature from word processing software as it will not transfer well to the COER web page.

5. OCCFM Update (CDR Williams)

- CDR Williams summarized how OCCO is managing the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act. Since the Reserve Corps was phased out, all officers will be commissioned as Regular Corps. There are currently 9 policies under review; some are with the Office of General Council and others are with the Assistant Secretary for Health. It is unknown as of yet when the pause will be lifted. An order will go into officer's OPF designating them as Regular Corps.

6. Liaison Reports

- **Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC)**

Submitted by CDR Don Williams, EHAC Liaison to EHOPAC

Thirty-eight EHAC accredited programs participated in the 2009-2010 survey, the most recent comprehensive survey. This report contains highlights from that survey as well as updates from the June 2010 meeting in Albuquerque in conjunction with the National Environmental Health Association Annual Education Conference.

Thirty-two schools sustain an undergraduate environmental health program while five schools boast both graduate and undergraduate accredited programs and two schools solely offer graduate level education for a total of 39 accredited academic programs in the U. S.

In 2009, EHAC gained two undergraduate programs: North Carolina Central University and Alabama A&M University. In 2010 Dickinson State University in Dickinson ND and Baylor University in Waco, TX were added for a total of 34 Undergraduate and 7 Graduate Programs. These additions are important for their geographic representation, filling a void particularly in the upper Midwest region of the country with the addition of Dickinson State.

Undergraduate: There are new applications for accreditation from California State University – Chico, Goodwin College (East Hartford, CT) and the University of Northern Iowa. Programs up for re-accreditation in 2011 are: Boise State Uni, Eastern Kentucky Uni, Uni. of Georgia, Uni. of Washington, Uni. of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, and Western Carolina Uni. Cal State Uni – Fresno, ECU and UG were granted a 1-year extension.

Graduate: Mississippi Valley State University and University of Findlay are up for re-accreditation in 2011. The MPH – EH program at ECU may also be proposed for accreditation.

The Association of Accredited Environmental Health Programs has created [Careersenvhealth.com](http://careersenvhealth.com) – a career page for jobs for EH students

- **JOAG Liaison Report**

Submitted by LCDR Jamie Mutter, JOAG Liaison to the EHOPAC

- The JOAG Awards Committee will have a need for many volunteers throughout the upcoming operational year. We need volunteers for our various subcommittees and initiatives as well as volunteers to serve as de-identifiers and reviewers for the three JOAG awards. Anyone interested in volunteering, should contact LCDR Kozlosky at kozloskym@cc.nih.gov and LT Benjamin Chadwick at Benjamin.chadwick@ihs.gov.
- A proposal for a Longevity of Service Award has been forwarded to the PAC Chairs Group for review with a request for their concurrence.
- The JOAG Inter-Services Collaboration Committee is going to continue the Adopt-a-Battalion initiative this upcoming year. LCDR Jena McClellan will be heading this initiative. The committee will need leads to collect items to send to battalions overseas. If you are interested, please contact LCDR Brett Maycock, brett.maycock@dhs.gov or LCDR Jena McClellan, Jennifer.McLellan@med.navy.mil.
- Journeymen Series: upcoming presentations include:
 - The next Journeyman Series call will be held on Friday, November 12, 2010. CAPT Holly Williams and CDR Margaret Riggs will discuss their experience on the Haiti Deployment
 - Friday, January 14 (1300 to 1400 EST), Topic: Humanitarian Missions for the Corps
 - The next JOAG General Member Meeting will be held on Friday, December 10, 2010; 1300 - 1500 EST.
- For more information on how you can get involved in JOAG and for meeting time information, visit the JOAG Website at <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/JOAG>
- Miss a meeting? JOAG digitally records each meeting, including the Journeyman Series. For an mp3 copy of the recording, email LT Hiren Patel, hiren.patel@fda.hhs.gov.

7. OPDIV/Agency Reports

- CDC – LCDR Joe Laco reported that OFRD is having trouble identifying all officers deployed to the BP oil spill cleanup effort since many were not OFRD deployed. Please contact LT Damon Smith at OFRD if you were deployed to the BP spill cleanup but not through OFRD.

8. Subcommittee Reports

- **Mentoring and Orientation (CAPT Gaunce)**

Current Subcommittee Members: CAPT Jean Gaunce, Chair, CDR Kit Grosch, CDR Michelle Hawkins, CDR Dale Bates, CDR Theresa Gallagher

Current initiatives (and projected completion date if applicable):

- Mentoring program evaluation (ongoing)
- Matching mentors to protégés (ongoing)
- Updating Mentor/Protégé spreadsheet (ongoing)
- Outreach to new CADs (ongoing)
- Protégé/Mentor matches are being initiated and contacts made (ongoing)

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

The M & O subcommittee also provided the COSTEP Mentor Guideline to the Marketing and Recruitment subcommittee for their review and comments as it pertains to the JRCOSTEP program. Comments have been received and the M&O committee will be working to further review and make changes to this document. Once complete, it will be posted to the EHOPAC website.

CDR Michelle Hawkins is currently representing the EHOPAC on a Corps-wide Mentoring Assessment Program. Representatives from each category will be meeting to discuss their mentoring programs. The purpose of this team is to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement. The M&O subcommittee will support CDR Hawkins with researching and collating needed information for a presentation before the team.

Long-term Goals:

- Continue to develop and enhance the mentor/protégé database to enable subcommittee members to provide more effective and timely services.
- Focus on marketing of the mentor/protégé program through regional assignments, brochure, email notices, etc.
- Continue to evaluate the subcommittee's processes and procedures to determine where improvements are needed.

Items for EHOPAC Input/Discussion: None

Actions previously directed by EHOPAC (Status and projected completion): None.

Attachments: None.

- **Charter and Bylaws (CDR Kates)**

No Updates.

- **Professional Image and Standards (CDR McKernan)**

- Subcommittee Membership:
Chair, CDR John McKernan
CDR Timothy Jiggins
CDR Tina Lankford
CDR Robert McCleery
CDR Rick Rutherford
- Notable news/activities/accomplishments since the last EHOPAC meeting:
- Subcommittee page on EHOPAC website was updated. The page is an excellent information resource for recruitment activities.
- CAM team 'cheat-sheet' for use in evaluating candidate qualifications for EHO appointment was provided to Blue CAM team contact for comment/use
- Action Items for Subcommittee:
Continue conversation regarding revisions to the EHO appointment standards
- Action Items for EHOPAC:
No action items for the PAC

- **Marketing and Recruitment/Associate Recruitment
(LCDR Freed – Chair, CDR Cook/LCDR Lafferty – Co-chairs)**

Current initiatives (and projected completion date if applicable):

- Adopt-a-school program – program for EHOs interested in recruiting for the category. New program to offer as alternative to ARP (LCDR Michael Quinn and LT Joe Laco)
- New M&R Subcommittee pages on EHOPAC website
- New M&R workgroup structure – 6 workgroups: Applicant Assistance and Placement; School Recruitment; Agency, Workforce, and Organization Recruitment; Marketing and Materials; JRCOSTEP; IT and Communications.
- Project to provide agency information and contacts to boarded EHO applicants (CDR Dave Cramer).
- Need someone to oversee development of a new marketing booklet for EHO category with assistance from M&R subcommittee.
- Review of *Best Kept Secrets*

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

- School Recruitment Workgroup/Adopt-A-School (LCDR Mike Quinn)
 - No update.
- Applicant Assistance and Placement Workgroup (CDR David Cramer)
 - *Securing your First Assignment* flier in draft form, awaiting EHOPAC's approval.
- Marketing and Materials Workgroup (CAPT Robert Knowles)
 - Letterhead finalized and could be posted to web site.
 - Brochure finalized and could be posted to web site.
 - Business card is posted to the web site. CDR Brian Cook is talking with Sureline Print & Design, who will be able to tailor and print the cards for a reasonable rate.
 - Poster is still in development.
- Agency, Workforce, and Organization Recruitment Workgroup (LCDR Shawn Lafferty)
 - No Update
- JRCOSTEP Workgroup (LCDR Jill Shugart)
 - Will draft a letter to go to JRCOSTEPs who were selected and served this past year. Will include a copy of the Applicant Assistance and Placement Workgroup's (CDR Cramer) *Securing your First Assignment* brochure. Will also include the point of contact from the Adopt-A-School program (LCDR Quinn) for their school. The letters will go out by Thanksgiving.
 - The names of the non-selects will be given to the JOAG Recruitment and Retention Committee and the leads of the DCCR Career and Assignment Manager (CAM) teams.
 - A consensus was reached to not emphasize the SRCOSTEP program since very few EHOs get this and they typically are awarded to clinical billets.
 - Will review the student section of the EHOPAC website and provide comments by November.
 - 2010 update: 25 EHO JRCOSTEPs placed of the original 35 selected.
 - IHS – 20, CDC – 1, ATSDR – 2, NIH – 1, CG – 1
 - List of current JRCOSTEPs to be posted on the EHOPAC website.
 - 35 EHO JRCOSTEPs were originally selected; however several were not placed this year due to problem with CADs
 - IHS – 27, CDC – 2, ATSDR – 2, NIH – 2, CG – 1, NPS – 1
 - New offices that planned to hire JRCOSTEPs: CDC Office of Health and Safety, CDC/NCEH Chemical Weapons Elimination Branch, NIH/OD Office of Research Facilities, NIH/OD Office of Research Services
 - Yearly trend of EHO JRCOSTEPs
 - 2010 25 Placed (IHS – 20, CDC – 1, ATSDR – 2, NIH – 1, CG – 1)
 - 35 Originally selected (IHS – 27, CDC – 2, ATSDR – 2, USCG – 1, NPS – 1)
 - 2009 37 (30 IHS, 2 CDC, 3 ATSDR, 1 CG, 1 NPS)
 - 2008 28 (24 IHS, 1 CDC, 1 ATSDR, 2 CG)
 - 2007 26 (23 IHS, 1 CDC, 2 ATSDR)
 - 2006 23 (19 IHS, 1 CDC, 1 CG, 1 NPS); also 6 HSO COSTEPs in
 - IHS

- IT and Communications Workgroup (LTJG Lauren Shade)
 - EHOPAC Facebook Page: as of 15 October, the page has 45 members and 17 photos of EHOs in action. The target audience for the page is college students. The workgroup hopes to coordinate with the Adopt-A-School program.
 - Created a g-mail account for Facebook page users to contact the page managers. The workgroup members have access to the account.
 - Blogging site developed with WordPress software (<http://wordpress.org/>), is underway. Challenge would be maintaining it.
- Best Kept Secrets brochure
 - Comments collected from subcommittee and LCDR Freed is currently updating it.

Long Term Goals:

- Support EHO recruitment efforts by developing and maintaining new and innovative recruitment tools and recruitment methods.
- Develop and maintain contacts with applicable academic programs and accreditation bodies for both undergraduate and graduate levels programs.
- Market JRCOSTEP opportunities to students, schools, and agencies and increase the number of JRCOSTEP placements.
- Develop methods/tools to convince non-IHS OPDIVs to consider hiring JRCOSTEPs.
- Increase the Category strength to 400.
- Continue contacting and supporting well-qualified applicants with the application and job search process.
- Increase involvement and recruitment of appropriate graduate school students.

Items for EHOPAC Input/Discussion:

- Usually do a lot of marketing over the next two months with the upcoming COSTEP season. With the freeze on CADs, does it make sense to market as in previous years?

Actions previously directed by EHOPAC (Status and projected completion):

- None

Attachments and Handouts

- EHO Category & Applicant statistics
- M&R subcommittee members
- Products
 - *Securing your First Assignment (draft)*
 - *Best Kept Secrets (draft)*
 - *EHOPAC Facebook screenshot*
 - *EHO Brochure (final)*
 - *EHO Letterhead (final)*
 - *EHO Poster (draft)*
 - *EHOPAC Business Card (final)*

Category Statistics – as of 10/18/10

Current number of EHOs: 375 (↑1 since 8/10/10)

By agency:

ATSDR	20	(↓1 since 8/10/10)
BOP	2	(↑1 since 8/10/10)
CDC	65	(↓1 since 8/10/10)
DHS	21	(↓1 since 8/10/10)
DOD TMA	1	
EPA	18	
FDA	89	
HRSA	4	(↑1 since 8/10/10)
IHS	108	(↓1 since 8/10/10)
INTERIOR	14	(↑1 since 8/10/10)
NIH	9	
OS	10	
PSC	9	(↑1 since 8/10/10)
USDA	5	(↑1 since 8/10/10)

By rank:

O-2	42	(↓6 since 8/10/10)
O-3	59	(↑6 since 8/10/10)
O-4	80	(↑1 since 8/10/10)
O-5	95	
O-6	96	
O-7	3	

EHO Applicant Statistics (as of 8/3/10)

- 25 applicants on CAM list
- 15 are boarded, viable applicants
- 7 new applicants since January 1, 2010,
- No new applications accepted since March, 2010

M&R Membership, October 2010 (30 members)

Last name	First name	Rank	Workgroup	Liaison duties	Agency
Boley	Michael	LCDR	AAP		USCG
Boylstein	Randy	LCDR	SR		NIOSH
Burbage	Katie	LTJG	M&M		IHS
			M&R co-chair,		
Cook	Brian	CDR	M&M		NPS
Cramer	David	CDR	AAP lead	CPO office	IHS
Degenhard	Kristen	LTJG	AAP		FDA
Fent	Kenny	LT	JRCOSTEP	NIOSH liaison	NIOSH
Ferguson	Kathleen	LTJG	ITC		FDA
Firley	David	LT	SR		FDA
Freed	Jennifer	LCDR	M&R Chair	ATSDR liaison	ATSDR
Going	William	CDR	JRCOSTEP		ATSDR
				EHO	
Hall	Wayne	CAPT	M&M	coins/treasurer	IHS
Hill	April	LTJG	JRCOSTEP		FDA
Hunt	Travis	CDR	M&M		FDA
Knowles	Robert	CDR	M&M lead - temp		ATSDR
			M&R co-chair,		
Lafferty	Shawn	LCDR	AOWR Lead	EPA liaison	EPA
Leonard	Monica	LT	AAP		CDC/NCEH
Lewelling	Brian	CDR	AOWR		IHS
Laco	Joe	LCDR	SR	CDC Liaison	CDC
Masters	John	LT	ITC		EPA
McCracken	Susan	CAPT	JRCOSTEP	IHS Liaison	IHS
Okumura	Kazuhiro	LTJG	SR	NIH liaison	NIH
Perkins	Justin	LTJG	SR		PSC/FOH
Quinn	Michael	LCDR	SR Lead	NPS liaison	NPS
Rhambarose	Harrichand	CDR	SR	CG liaison	USCG
Schwarz	Jessica	LT	M&M		IHS
Shade	Lauren	LTJG	ITC lead		FDA
Shugart	Jill	LCDR	JRCOSTEP lead	ASPR liaison	ASPR
Tuite	Carla	LT	ITC	FDA liaison	FDA
Wright	Kyle	LT	AAP		NPS

- **Career Development (CAPT Johnson/CDR Krake)**

The Subcommittee is active counseling officers in the bottom promotion quartile.

Subcommittee is helping with the 2012 Promotion Benchmarks, and it is planning to have them to CAPTs Welch and Noska and OCCO by month's end.

The Subcommittee is looking for an IT liaison.

- **Information Technology (LCDR Laco)**

Website - Subcommittees should be able to update materials on the EHOPAC Website. They are currently working on a PDF instruction guide on how to do this.

Website Host – we are currently using iPower, but the PAC should consider an alternate host as it is not meeting our needs. IT Subcommittee recommends Rochen as a good alternative; it meets security standards. The PAC voted unanimously to move to the new host.

- **Readiness (LCDR Delaney)**

Readiness Guide: The Officers' Readiness Guide is in the process of being revised. It should help officers meet the Basic Readiness standards.

- Awards and Recognition (CDR Hargrave)

Responder of the Year: Responder of the year nomination requests will go out shortly.

- Membership Nominations (LCDR Unthank/CDR Mattorano)

Elections: Agency representation is based on the percent of EHOs in each agency. IHS went from 6 to 5 PAC Members. The current vacancies include: 1 at large; 1 Department of Interior; 2 IHS. Elections for new members will be held in a closed session following this meeting.

- **History (LT Witkovskie)**

Website: The History Subcommittee posted a report of EHO category strength from 1943 to the present. In the near future, there will be a gallery of photos and biographies from past CPOs and Flag Officers.

9. New Business/Open Discussion

New Orleans Based Junior Officer: The EHOPAC is seeking a New Orleans based EHO to help facilitate preparation for Category Day at the 2011 COF conference. There is only one officer in Baton Rouge identified at this point.

10. Adjourn Open Session