

**U.S. Public Health Service
Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)
Meeting #165 Minutes, December 14th, 2010**

Note: This meeting was held live at the IHS Twinbrook Building and via Conference Call

1. Call to Order 1302 Eastern Standard Time
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 #165

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

CAPT Gary Perlman	LCDR Kyle Lim
CAPT Larry Cseh	LCDR Robert Horsch
CAPT Robert Gruhot	LT Bill Fournier
CAPT Theresa McDarmont	LT Charity Webb
CDR Jim Howell	LT Eva McLanahan
CDR Mark Marshall	LT Kyle Wright
CDR Mike Quinn	LTJG Erin Harman
CDR Tim Jiggins	Mr. Steve Hand
CDR Melburn Dayton	LCDR Stephanie Griffin
LCDR Elizabeth Valenti	LT Jessica Schwarz
LTJG Kazuhiro Okumura	LTJG Justin Perkins

2. CPO's Report

- Reorganization of the Office of Surgeon General in Final Stages**
 In an effort to streamline the organizational structure, the Assistant Secretary for Health completed an assessment and reorganization of the Commissioned Corps. OFRD, OCCO and OCCFM were placed directly under the control of the SG. RADM General Boris Lushniak was appointed Deputy Surgeon General and RADM Chris Halliday was appointed Chief of Staff. The reorganization should be complete in April of 2011
- EHO Category Analyzes Billet Transformation Process**
 The effort by OCCO to standardize category-specific billets across the PHS known as transformation continues. The Therapist category transformation is complete and the Nurse and Engineering categories are underway. The EHO transformation scheduled to start in September and delayed to November has now been put off until spring. The proposed general billets appear to be vague somewhat resembling those of the HSO category. There are general EHO positions to be sure, but there are also very specific EHO billets such as industrial hygienist or injury prevention specialist. As OCCO gains experience in the transformation process, the outcome improves. The delay will likely be a good thing.
- New COER Appears to Better Reflect Officer Performance**
 The new COER rolled out this fall and is more consistent with the Civil Service PMAP. Anecdotal evidence indicates that officers are not all receiving 6's and 7's. Reviewers are also noting when raters are being overly generous with COER scores. Anecdotally, raters are still indicating that they do not want to harm the officer's chance for promotion. CAPT Welch's experience with the 50 officers in Phoenix Area IHS is that management is receiving good data from which to make programmatic decisions whereas the old COER provided next to no information.
- Ready Reserve Officers Eligible for Permanent Promotion**
 The Healthcare Reform legislation abolished the reserve corps, but process isn't in place to move reserve corps officers to regular corps officers yet. However, reserve corps officers will be eligible for

permanent promotion. If selected for permanent promotion, orders will be cut once the system is established to move them into the regular corps.

- **Calls to Active Duty Still not Available**
As the policies for appointing regular corps officers make their way through the system, the pause for Calls to Active duty remains in effect. However the CPO advises officers to continue to recruit candidates for COSTEP. Given the current state of the federal budget, a hiring freeze is likely. OCCO has a 25% vacancy rate and once the pause is lifted will likely need assistance in processing new CADs. The categories have been asked to enlist volunteers who would be able to help process personnel orders.
- **The 2011 COF Category Day Planning Progressing**
Jill Shugart and Jessica Schwartz have assembled a solid agenda for category day. The CPO asked that they emphasize regular EHO duties as opposed to emergency response. There will be a luncheon discussion on the direction of the Environmental Health profession. CAPT Welch has requested the EHO Flag Officers participate including RADM Meeks, Grinnell and Holman. CAPT John Sarisky will be asked to participate as he is currently engaged in similar discussion.
- **CPOs Work to Further Surgeon General's Initiatives**
The Chief Professional officers will be meeting in January to discuss ways in which to advance the Surgeon General's initiatives.

3. PAC Chair Report

- **Officers Asked to Verify Email in Direct Access**
Officers up for Permanent Promotions were being notified via Direct Access email. As this is a new system, officers are encouraged to check their Direct Access accounts and verify the accuracy of their email address.
- **MAB Still Behind on Immunizations**
The Medical Affairs Branch continues to struggle with the surge of immunization records. OFRD is aware of this problem and is targeting officers up for promotion to ensure their data is entered on time. MAB has developed special fax cover sheets to submit along with immunization records. The coversheet will be uploaded to the EHOPAC website. CAPT Noska and LCDR Laco will provide link to coversheet in the meantime.

4. Liaison Reports

- **Junior Officers Advisor Group – LCDR Mutter**
 - JOAG coins and Core Value coins are available for \$10 each. Coin racks will soon be available. Contact LCDR Robin Toblin (robin.l.toblin@us.army.mil) for orders. The order form will also be available on the JOAG website.
 - The 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.

- LCDR Wiggins is stepping down as the chairperson to the MWR Sub-Committee in the Inter-Services Collaboration Committee. Volunteers are being sought for this position. Those who are interested in serving as the chair to the MWR Sub-Committee should contact LCDR Brett Maycock (Brett.Maycock@dhs.gov), and copy LCDR Theresa Zach (Theresa.Zach@hhs.gov) by December 13, 2010.
 - Journeymen Series: upcoming presentations include:
 - The tentative topic for the presentation on Friday January 14 (1300 to 1400 EST) is Humanitarian Missions for the Corps.
- Commissioned Officers Association – CAPT Fanaselle
 - GI Bill Transferability Moves Closer to Reality
On December 8th, the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee passed a revised Post 9/11 GI Bill that authorizes the Secretaries of Health & Human Services and Commerce to make transferability available to PHS and NOAA officers. Authority would take effect as of August 2011. The process has been “Hotlined” meaning it will take effect unless a senator raises an objection which seems unlikely. However, the 111th Congress is drawing to a close and with the holidays, it may not come up for a vote in time. Officers are urged to contact their congressman and urge acceleration for HR 3447 Section 110 before congress adjourns. The legislation will be reintroduced in the 112th Congress in January if time runs out during this session.
 - Shocking Cigarette Pack Images May Bump SG’s WAR NING
Nine new graphic warning labels proposed by the FDA scheduled to take effect in the coming year will take the place of the Surgeon General’s Warning that has been on cigarettes since the 1960s. It is feared that this will reduce PHS visibility. It is reasonable for the public to associate the SG with the antismoking efforts of the late 20th Century. Officers are encouraged to go to the FDA website and comment on the removal of the warning.

5. OPDIV/Agency Reports

- **Discussion of New COER**
Unknown Speaker – Some officers didn’t like to have weaknesses listed on COER. PMAPs do not have this characteristic.
FDA – Civilian Reviewing Officials were confused over seeing the COER twice.
USCG – Reviewing Officials returned some COERs to Rating Officials when scores seemed inflated.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- Mentoring & Orientation

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)
- 4 new mentor/protégé matches were completed between August and November 2010.

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

So far for 2010, a total of 20 new pairs of Mentor and Protégés have been matched and letters sent to each with the appropriate contact information regarding their matches.

The M&O subcommittee has received comments regarding the JR COSTEP manual from the Marketing and Recruitment subcommittee and is conducting a final review and edit of the 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. CDR Hawkins has put together a PowerPoint presentation with the required information and format requested by the Mentoring Assessment committee. Attached to this report is the presentation which is scheduled to be given on December 14th.

Mentoring Program evaluation status as of December 13, 2010:

- 23 of the 46 program participants listed above completed a year-end feedback form (50% - 10 mentors; 13 protégés).
- Nine protégés (69%) and nine mentors (90%) indicated their program needs and expectations were met.
- Eight protégés (62%) and eight mentors (80%) were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with all measured aspects of the program.
- Eight protégés (62%) and eight mentors (80%) felt the resource manual was helpful.
- Six protégés (46%) are willing to nominate their mentor for the Thomas E. Crow Mentoring Award.
- All mentors would like to continue to participate in the program.

There was one additional matched pair in July 2009, and both individuals were mailed official letters initiating their mentorship year. Copies of the letters are on file. Because the commitment was not fulfilled, credit for participating in the 2009/2010 mentoring program cannot be granted to those individuals.

Feedback received from protégés and mentors during the evaluation will be used to update the Resource Manual and application forms. Additional comments will be incorporated into the program materials and guidelines as appropriate.

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:

- Due to the “pause” in bringing on new Officers, there are available protégés for the Mentoring Program. When the “pause” is lifted, we will probably see an increased interest in the program. In the meantime, if anyone knows of a Junior Officer interested in reenrolling in the Mentoring Program, please have them contact any member of the M&O subcommittee.
- The M&O Subcommittee will be soliciting for new members (2 to 3) in the very near future. All interested parties are asked to send the Chair a CV and letter of interest.

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

- Charter & Bylaws – CDR Kates
 - Subcommittee guidelines should be completed early in the New Year.
 - Thank you letters were sent to subcommittee members.
- Professional Image & Standards – CDR McKernan
 - Thank you letters were sent to subcommittee members.
 - New subcommittee chair is needed; please volunteer via email to CDR McKernan.
- Marketing & Recruitment – LCDR Jennifer Freed; Co-chairs: CDR Brian Cook and CDR Shawn Lafferty

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
- New M&R Subcommittee pages on EHOPAC website
- Project to provide agency information and contacts to boarded EHO applicants
- JRCOSTEP 2011 Marketing
- End-of-year thank you letters for recruitment visits

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

- “Securing Your First Assignment” brochure for boarded applicants describing agencies has been developed and will be finalized shortly. Will be sent to CAM team for use, and placed on the EHOPAC website.
- Provided updates and comments for our category’s “Best Kept Secrets” brochure being organized by OCCO/DCCR.
- Advertised the JRCOSTEP program to the EHOPAC listserv, as well as all 3 accreditation listservs.
- Drafted letter to send to 2010 JRCOSTEPs; with CPO and EHOPAC Chair for approval
- 2010 JRCOSTEP narratives added to the student section of the EHOPAC website.
- Working on thank you letters for officers completing a recruitment activity in 2010
- Latest vision of the new ARP can be found in an article in the JOAG newsletter: http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index_files/JOAG_Journal.htm. However, applications to the ARP are still not being accepted.
- The Fall JOAG Journal also features an article on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response and the contributions by several EHO junior officers. Please consider using this in your school recruitment activities.
- JOAG is beginning a project in conjunction with DCCR to contact JRCOSTEP applicants that weren’t selected for a 2010 slot. The goal is to talk with applicants and answer questions and recruit them for active duty. Several EHOs are participating and will contact EHO category applicants (JRCOSTEP).

- Six new officers since March 2010 – see attached. Inter-service transfers and previous JRCOSTEPs can be called to duty.

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:

- None

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

- None

Attachment: EHO Category & Applicant statistics

Category Statistics – as of 12/13/10

New officers since March 2010: **6**

Rank	Name	Agency	CAD	Qual. Degree	Major	School	Notes
LT	Thida Buttke	USCG	8/24/10	MPH	Occ Health	Cal State – Fresno	Prior service
LT	Coleen Geib	HRSA	8/16/10	BS	Env Health	Bowling Green	Prior service MPH – Loma Linda
LTJG	Matthew Duling	CDC/NIOSH	8/16/10	MS	Occ Health/IH	West Virginia Univ	
LTJG	Landon Wiggins	IHS	7/7/10	BS	Env Health	Western Carolina	Previous COSTEP – IHS 2003
LT	Bryan Christensen	CDC	6/29/10	PhD	Env Health	Johns Hopkins	CDC EIS Officer
LTJG	Racio Carter	USCG	6/21/10	BS	Env Health	Old Dominion	Previous COSTEP – USCG 2009

Current number of EHOs: 371 (↓4 since 10/18/10)

By agency:

ATSDR	19	(↓1 since 10/18/10)
BOP	2	
CDC	65	
DHS	21	
DOD TMA	1	
EPA	17	(↓1 since 10/18/10)
FDA	90	(↑1 since 10/18/10)
HRSA	4	
IHS	105	(↓3 since 10/18/10)
INTERIOR	14	
NIH	9	
OS	11	(↑1 since 10/18/10)
PSC	9	
USDA	4	(↓1 since 10/18/10)

By rank:

O-2	42	
O-3	59	
O-4	80	
O-5	93	(↓2 since 10/18/10)
O-6	94	(↓2 since 10/18/10)
O-7	3	

EHO Applicant Statistics (as of 10/18/10)

- 32 applicants on CAM list
- 12 are boarded

- Career Development – CDR Ann Krake
 - Temporary O2 and O3 will now be competitively promoted. Standards will be developed and the subcommittee will review by and submit comments by 12/31.
 - 16 officers were counseled
 - Subcommittee needs an IT person as well as some Junior Officer participation as most are O6 officers.

- IT Subcommittee – LCDR Joe Laco and CDR Bobby Villines
 - Current Subcommittee Members:
 - LCDR Joe Laco (Chair)
 - CDR Bobby Villines (Co-chair)
 - CDR Gary Perlman, ATSDR
 - LCDR Mark Strauss, South Central Foundation – Alaska
 - LCDR Karin Knopp, IHS
 - CDR Casey Crump, IHS
 - CAPT Mike Lewis, IHS
 - CDR Kit Grosch, IHS
 - LCDR Robert Morones, IHS
 - LCDR Randy Benefield, HIS
 - CDR Linda West, CDC

 - Current initiatives:
 - Website content Pilot Program
 - Self-Teaching instruction tool
 - Current IT subcommittee member (CDR Linda West) to test ease-of use
 - Second group EHOs to test for managing COF category-day document management/sharing.
 - Roll-out to designated EHOPAC subcommittee liaison in 2010.
 - COMPLETE
 - Subcommittee liaisons from each EHOPAC subcommittee

 - Notable news/activities/accomplishments:
 - Continued work on website upgrade.
 - Security issues with web-host, iPower.
 - Suggest migration to new host, Rothen
 - Risk-assessment reviewed for actual threats to .org website.
 - Risk very low
 - In 2nd year of current 3-year contract with iPower and AAS.
 - Chose to remain with iPower with continual monitoring for duration of contract (Nov 2012) with iPower.

- Content Management pilot program complete
- Long Term Goals:
 - New .org website up and running with subcommittee input to manage their own content.
 - Continued development of IT subcommittee work groups to manage all activities more efficiently.
 - Continued security monitoring and maintenance of ehopac.org website
 - Maintain .gov website as required.
- Items for EHOPAC Input/Discussion:
 - Replenish pictures for the website.
 - Request for the History Subcommittee
 - Listserv message request
 - May need to be sent on a CD instead of email
 - Actions previously directed by EHOPAC (Status and projected completion):
 - Subcommittee self-maintenance of subcommittee sections of website
 - Pilot complete
 - Projected roll-out to subcommittees Dec 2010
 - Self-guided application tool
 - Attachments
NA
- Readiness Subcommittee– LCDR Delaney
 - Subcommittee needs 1 to 2 new members. In January, LCDR Delaney will send out a request for volunteers via EHOPAC LISTSERV.
 - Thanks you letters sent out to subcommittee members.
 - The quarter is coming to an end and the subcommittee hasn't received a list of folks who aren't basic ready. As of the last report, the EHO Category was at approximately 75% ready. CAPT Dan Beck will prioritize officers up for promotion.
- Awards & Recognition – CDR Scotty Hargrave
 - The responder of the year voting was close; however, there was a clear winner. CAPT Welch will be making the announcement in the coming weeks.
- Membership Nominations - CDR Dino Mattorano
 - Paperwork from the October election was sent to CAPT Noska. CAPT Noska is in the process of obtaining agency concurrence. Nominations will go to the Surgeon General via CAPT Welch.
- History – LT Witkovskie (report given by CAPT Gruhot)

Current Subcommittee Members:

Christian Witkovskie (Chair)

Jeffrey Conner

Victoria Murray

Kenneth	Crombie	Amanda	Parris
Tim	Duffy	Kimberly	Patterson
William	Fournier	Fredrick	Ramsey
Robert	Gruhot	Susan	Shaffer
Patrick	Hintz	Kelli	Stamper
Abraham	Maekele	Martin	Stephens

LCDR Matthew McNew, LCDR Christie Zerbe, and LTJG Jessica Burley resigned from the committee due to work and personal reasons that prevented them from actively participating in subcommittee activities.

Current Initiatives:

1) Flag & Chief Professional Officer Biographies Team (Lead: Kelli Stamper) **IN PROGRESS** – Work team has been challenged to complete this project by several issues: several work team members withdrew (Matthew McNew and Christie Zerbe) from the project before they had completed their assigned interviews and biographies; the transfer of team members to new positions; the travel and availability of the Flag and CPOs; and deployments and OFRD trainings. Our work team remains at 2 members, LDCR Duffy and myself. However, per instructions from LT Witkovskie, I have been recruiting additional team members and *anticipate having commitments from at least 2 officers shortly*. We have completed 3 interviews (Tom Crow, Mike Welch, and Kevin Meeks) and have drafted those bios. At this point the *drafts have gone to the CPO/Flag Officer's for review* with the *next step* being submission to the History Subcommittee for review and comment. Our next work team call is tentatively scheduled for January 21st.

2) Data Team: (Leads: Patrick Hintz and Robert Gruhot) **IN PROGRESS** – Co-lead the team and continue to develop and update the work plan. Graphs have been created showing category strength over time and put up on the website (Rob Gruhot). Continue to summarize EHOPAC meeting minutes from the past decades, year by year (Victoria Murray, Susan Shaffer).

3) Historical Photo Gallery (Lead: Patrick Hintz) **IN PROGRESS** – Photographs from the various data DVDs need to be consolidated and organized into logical categories for use by others needing photos for other projects including posting on the website (Patrick Hintz, Amanda Parris, Kimberly Smith).

4) IT Team (Lead: Martin Stephens) **IN PROGRESS** – Previous lead (Jessica Burley) resigned from the subcommittee. I have been provided a login and password to access the EHOPAC site. I attempted to access the site, but that did not work. I will work with Bobby Villines to resolve this problem as soon as possible.

Completed Initiatives:

~~Work with Awards committee to gather and post awards history. (Lead: Robert Gruhot)~~
~~COMPLETED 10/2010~~

Notable News/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:
None

Items for EHOPAC Input/Discussion: N/A

Actions previously directed by EHOPAC: N/A

Attachments: None

7. New Business

EHOPAC should get WebEx and conference line to ensure adequate capacity. CAPT Noska reported that the WebEx system is approximately \$50 per month. CDR Perlman was going to research

8. Meeting adjourned 1434 Hrs. EST