

**U.S. Public Health Service  
Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)  
Meeting #166 Minutes, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Note: This meeting was held via WebEx with the call originating from Phoenix Area IHS Office of Environmental Health & Engineering in Phoenix, Arizona

1. Call to Order 1300 Eastern Standard Time

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 #166

EHOPAC Members Present	EHOPAC Members Absent
CAPT Michael Welch, <b>Chief Professional Officer</b>	CDR Scotty Hargrave (FDA)
CAPT Michael Noska (FDA) <b>Chair</b>	LCDR Lisa Delaney (CDC)
CDR Chris Kates (OS/ASPR) <b>Vice-Chair</b>	
CAPT Wayne Hall (IHS) <b>Treasurer</b>	
CDR Dave Cramer (IHS) <b>Recorder</b>	
CAPT Jean Gaunce (CDC)	
CAPT Charles Higgins (DOI)	
CAPT Brian Johnson (IHS)	
CDR James Howell	
CDR Ann Krake (DOI)	
CDR Dino Mattorano (EPA)	
CDR Danny Walters (IHS)	
LCDR Jennifer Freed (ATSDR)	
LCDR Joseph Laco (CDC)	
LCDR Shawn Lafferty (EPA)	
LCDR Derek Newcomer (NIH)	
LCDR Sarah Unthank (USCG)	
LT Christian Witkovskie (FDA)	
Liaisons Present	Liaisons Absent
CAPT Wendy Fanaselle <b>COA Board Liaison</b>	CAPT Clint Chamberlin <b>COA Board Liaison</b>
	CAPT Gary Noonan (Ret) <b>American Academy of Sanitarians Liaison</b>
	CDR Thomas Pryor <b>ARP Liaison</b>
	CDR Diahann Williams <b>OCCFM Customer Service Representative</b>
	CDR Don Williams <b>EHAC Liaison</b>
	LCDR Jamie Mutter (CDC) <b>JOAG Liaison</b>
	LCDR Jill Shuggart <b>COA/COF Category Day Liaison</b>
	LT Jessica Schwartz <b>COA/COF Category Day Liaison</b>
	Vacant <b>CAM Liaison</b>

None

## 2. CPO's Report

- CAPT Welch Welcomes New EHOPAC Members  
CAPT Welch welcomed new EHOPAC members CAPT Charles Higgins (DOI), CDR James Howell (IHS), CDR Danny Walters (IHS), and LCDR Derek Newcomer (NIH).
- Lifting of Pause Brings Series of New Activities  
The "pause" in call to active duty was lifted on February 14<sup>th</sup>. With it came Senate confirmation of 200 CADs to the Regular Corps. Going forward, request will be sent to the Senate every two weeks. Policies still have to be revised on how Reserve Corps Officers will integrate into the Regular Corps. For example there used to be a 3 year probationary period for new officers. The restructuring of the Office of the Surgeon General is ongoing.
- OCCO Prepares for COSTEP Season  
The deadline for COSTEP selections was February 16<sup>th</sup>. OCCO received 800 applications this year. A placement list of COSTEPs will be issued by March 1<sup>st</sup>. The processing of orders could take up to 90 days with delays likely. COSTEPs will be appointed to Ready Reserve, which requires Presidential approval. OCCO intends to notify students of their options (i.e. come aboard as temporary Civil Service) by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Some OPDIVS have opted out for the 2011 season.
- Reorganization of the Office of the Surgeon General Nears Completion  
The reorganization of the OSG should be completed by April 11<sup>th</sup>. RADM Lushniak and RADM Halliday were appointed to serve as Deputy Surgeon General and Chief of Staff respectively. Critical Commissioned Corps activities including OCCFM, OCCO and OFRD will now be managed by the OSG. There are opportunities for 30 and 90 day details to OCCO and OCCFM. Many Pharmacists volunteered; the EHOPAC was notified late, and most of the short term details were filled. There will be 10 workgroups to address the
  - Civilian Medical Reserve Corps
  - Science and Communications
  - Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness
  - System Integration
  - Recruitment Branch
  - Assignment and Career Management Branch
  - Assignment Team
  - Training Team
  - Personnel Management Support Team
  - Readiness, Deployment and Ready Reserve Branch
- Transformation of Billet System  
The transformation of the Therapy Officer category with 180 Officers is complete. The Nurse, Engineer, Pharmacy, Scientist and Dietician Officers are underway. The EHO Category is still delayed due to continued work on the EH Billets. CAPT Byron Bailey is the EHO Lead for Transformation. Overall, there has been a lack of response from officers and supervisors. OCCO has had to strongly encourage officers to fill out forms. OPFs may be flagged if assessment isn't done.
- Initial Reports Show New COER Providing Realistic Evaluation  
The new COER format was introduced last fall in an effort to address the phenomenon of inflated performance scores known as "COER creep." The goal is to fairly evaluate officers over all OPDIVS. While analysis is ongoing, early data indicates the new COER is having an effect. There is an expectation to see variation by rank, OPDIV and category. Concerns remain that COER scores will be applied disproportionately. CAPT Welch emphasized that promotion boards are receiving consistent guidance from the CPOs. COERS shouldn't be seen as the only performance measure. The OS and ROS, Awards and COER comments are also critical to promotion evaluation.
- The 2011 COF Category Day Planning Progressing

Thanks to LCDR Jill Shugart, LCDR Carry Oyster and LT Jessica Schwartz for all their efforts in planning Category Day. This year, there will be an emphasis on the important work EHOs do every day. CAPT Welch has requested the EHO Admirals Meeks, Grinnell and Holman lead a discussion on their vision for the future of the EH profession.

- OSG Values the Important Contribution of EHO  
CAPT Welch saluted the PAC for all of the work they've done. He said that the OSG especially values the work we are doing as a category.

### 3. PAC Chair Report

- Chairs Needed to Fill PI&S and Bi-Laws Subcommittees  
The EHOPAC needs new chairs for the Professional Image and Standards and Bi-Laws Subcommittees. The PI&S subcommittee can anticipate an increase in activity due to the revision of the appointment standards. As a reminder, all PAC members are expected to take a leadership role either subcommittee or workgroup. CAPT Noska will be talking with all chairs to discuss the goals and objectives of their committees.
- Call for Officers to Serve on New Appointment Boards  
OCCO is setting up new appointment boards and requesting boards meet at a proscribed frequency. CAPT Welch put forward a list of names for the EHO Category. Generally, appointment board officers are stationed in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Senior grade officers who want to participate in the Appointment Board process should contact CAPTs Welch or Noska.
- EHOPAC to Meet at COF  
The EHOPAC traditionally tries to hold its summer meeting in conjunction with the National Environmental Health Association Meeting. Unfortunately, this year NEHA conflicts with the Commissioned Officers Association conference in New Orleans. Since the PAC has already committed to COA for Category Day, the EHOPAC will hold its meeting at COF. The EHOPAC meeting and awards ceremony will be held during category day. The PAC meeting will have to be held early in the morning to accommodate the already full schedule of events. CAPT Noska will work to identify meeting space at New Orleans.
- Documentation of Immunizations Continues at MAB  
Medical Affairs Branch remains backlogged with immunization data. Approximately, 500 officers are still missing data. In response, many officers are resubmitting proof of immunization and it is backing up the system. OFRD has flagged promotion eligible officers and will be reaching out directly to them in an effort to minimize promotion problems due to immunization records.
- PAC Chairs Work Group Advances Action Items  
The PAC Chairs Workgroup suggested developing a model PAC Charter including increasing membership from 20 to 30 Officers and increasing terms from three years to four years. In other business, the PCWG reported that the Frocking Policy has been forwarded to the OSG for consideration. The Longevity Award is also gaining traction in the Workgroup and will likely advance to the OSG.

### 4. Liaison Reports

- Commissioned Officers Association – CAPT Fanaselle  
GI Bill Transferability Moves Closer to Reality  
The COA Board is meeting with the Surgeon General on February 28<sup>th</sup> to strengthen the working relationship between the Commissioned Corps Officers and the OSG.  
While transferability legislation has been approved, it has to be requested by Secretary Sebelius. The COF will be held June 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> in New Orleans. After the last keynote speaker, COA will be holding a workshop to consider ideas on improving the Commissioned Corps Visibility.
- EHAC Report - CDR Don Williams  
EHAC Validates Accreditation Self-Surveys  
The National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) is currently quite busy fulfilling one of their primary charges; that of validating self- studies from the environmental health programs that are seeking either initial or re-accreditation.

Each program submits a comprehensive self-study that details information such as number of full-time faculty, adjunct faculty and teaching resources. The amount of funding, whether it is stable or relies upon grants, other financial resources available and expectations of it continuing are other topics that are addressed in detail. The educational resources such as libraries, the number of journals received, the amount of information technology available and the number of external resources available is examined. How well equipped laboratory resources are and enumeration of that equipment are expected. Other sections of the self-study focus on the curriculum, who is teaching that curriculum and whether or not the curriculum meets the EHAC guidelines are more information gleaned from the self-study.

#### EHAC Prepares for Site Visits

Each program is assigned to two members of EHAC for review with the goal of developing questions to be asked by the actual campus site visitors. Once the information still needed to make an informed site visit has been developed, a team is then assigned to visit that campus by the end of March. The site visit team is always comprised of one Academic and one Practitioner member and occasionally a site visitor in training from either discipline. The primary purpose of the site visit is to validate the information presented in the self-study. During the visit the team typically meets with the Program Dean, Academic Affairs Director and occasionally the university's president who answer questions and typically pledge their devotion to the EH program, its faculty and continued funding for said program. The facilities are toured extensively, meetings are held with faculty, alumni and perhaps most importantly with current students without any faculty present. The site visit takes two full days and then a report is written and submitted to the program detailing the results of the visit. If any questions remain or need clarification the program is given the opportunity to address the questions or perceived shortcomings. After that process is complete the results are distributed to the full EHAC membership. It is their duty to become familiar with each program to be able to vote on the accreditation status at the annual EHAC meeting which is always held in conjunction with NEHA. The next report will focus on the actual presentation the program and site visitors will make to the Council before the vote is taken and various levels of accreditation decided.

#### Schools Up for Reaccreditation

For those curious, all schools this year are reaccreditations. Those are undergraduate programs at Boise State, U Mass-Lowell, Wisconsin Eau Claire, U Washington and Western Carolina. Mississippi Valley State Graduate and University of Findlay Graduate programs.

#### 5. OPDIV/Agency Reports

CDR Chuck Higgins of the Department of Interior is the Director of National Health Promotion Initiatives. In a report entitled "America's Great Outdoors", the National Park Service will highlight the Health Promotions Initiative and the role of the US Public Health Service in particular.

#### 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 (on hold during the "pause")
- Protégé/Mentor matches are being initiated and contacts made (ongoing)

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

- So far for 2011, only one Mentor/Protégé match was made. The Mentor is currently enrolled in the program and the Protégé had just finished their mentorship commitment and wanted to continue under a different Mentor.
- The M&O subcommittee is finalizing the JR COSTEP and will post it on the EHOPAC website when it is complete.
- CDR Michelle Hawkins is continuing to represent the EHOPAC on a Corps-wide Mentoring Assessment Program. Attached is the latest summary document that she was asked to put together and which will be combined with a similar document from each of the Categories to form part of a best practices White Paper on mentoring programs within the Corps
- 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:

The M&O Subcommittee is currently soliciting for 2 to 3 new members. 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.

Attachments:

Draft Mentoring Operational Plan (EHO) – email attachment

- Marketing & Recruitment

Committee Leadership

Chair: 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 and improvements on EHOPAC website
- “Securing your first assignment” brochure distribution
- JRCOSTEP 2010 follow-up letter
- Assisting applicants now that pause is lifted
- Using technology and social media to promote our category

Notable news/activities/accomplishments since last EHOPAC meeting:

- “Securing Your First Assignment” brochure for boarded applicants describing agencies has been distributed to the ehopac listserv, CAM team, and posted on our website. Please share freely with applicants.
- Drafted letter to send to 2010 JRCOSTEPs; letter is being formatted and will be sent out this month to encourage 2010 JRCOSTEPs to apply for active duty.
- 36 thank you letters sent to EHOs that completed a school recruitment visit in 2010.
- Facebook page for EHOs has 57 members now.
- Made recommendations for improvement to the student section of the [www.ehopac.org](http://www.ehopac.org) website.
- No new EHOs called to duty since December 2010.

- 2011 JRCOSTEP season: Approximately 56 JRCOSTEP applications received. IHS tentatively planning to hire 23-25 students. No other agencies are reporting plans to hire a JRCOSTEP. Agency budgets are a big issue. OCCO/DCCR is also requiring student selections by Feb 16<sup>th</sup> to allow for a 90 day approval time (presidential signature required).
- Current subcommittee priorities:
  - Assist applicants – influx of general questions coming in now that pause was lifted. Subcommittee will work on new ideas to further assist our applicants and answer questions.
  - Advertise EHO category on school websites – exploring ways to host our information on university career services websites, and environmental organization websites (e.g., web postings, career portals, widgets, etc.)
  - Share vacancy information with applicants – working on new ideas to compile vacancy information to share with EHO applicants.

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:

Need to determine if OCCO/DCCR will be paying for conference exhibit fees at NEHA and AIHA.

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

None

Category Statistics – as of 2/15/11

**New officers since December 2010: 0**

Rank	Name	Agency	CAD	Qual. Degree	Major	School	Notes

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**Current number of EHOs: 369 (↓2 since 12/13/10)**

**By agency:**

ATSDR	19	
BOP	2	
CDC	66	(↑1 since 12/13/10)
DHS	21	
DOD TMA	1	
EPA	17	
FDA	90	
HRSA	4	
IHS	102	(↓3 since 12/13/10)
INTERIOR	14	
NIH	8	(↓1 since 12/13/10)
OS	11	
PSC	9	
USDA	5	(↑1 since 12/13/10)

**By rank:**

O-2	38	(↓4 since 12/13/10)
O-3	57	(↓2 since 12/13/10)
O-4	83	(↑3 since 12/13/10)
O-5	95	(↑2 since 12/13/10)
O-6	93	(↓1 since 12/13/10)
O-7	3	

**EHO Applicant Statistics** (as of 02/15/11)

- Approximately 135 general duty applications are showing in an “open application” list. However, this most likely includes people that only complete a prescreening on the [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov) website. The real number of applicants is probably around 20 (those that have submitted a PHS-50 application).

- Career Development – CDR Ann Krake - No Report
- 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
  - Rolled-out to EHOPAC subcommittee designees in Jan 2011.
    - To developmental site for testing before launch to live .org site.

Notable news/activities/accomplishments:

- Distributed logon ids to development site.
  - Instructions for use available on site.
- Shutterfly site launched for EHOPAC pics
- Continued work on website upgrade.
- 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
  - Listserve message request
  - May need to be sent on a CD instead of email
  - Shutterfly tool to be applied for pics

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

- Subcommittee self-maintenance of subcommittee sections of website
  - Pilot complete
  - Projected rolled-out to subcommittees Jan 2011
    - Self-guided application tool available on site
- Shutterfly test site launched

Attachments

- NA

- Readiness Subcommittee– LCDR Delaney

The Readiness Subcommittee has 17 applications for membership.

- History – LT Witkovskie (report given by CAPT Gruhot)

Current Subcommittee Members:

Christian Witkovskie (Chair)	Fredrick Ramsey	Robert Gruhot
Jeffrey Conner	William Fournier	Kelli Stamper
Victoria Murray	Susan Shaffer	Patrick Hintz
Kenneth Crombie	Theresa Gallagher	Martin Stephens
Amanda Parris	Kimberly (Patterson) Smith	Abraham Maekele
Tim Duffy		

Current Initiatives:

- 1) Flag & Chief Professional Officer Biographies Team (Lead: Kelli Stamper) **IN PROGRESS – As of 1/28/11**. Theresa Gallagher and Jeffrey Conner were added to the team. RADM Meeks biography was completed, reviewed, and approved for release. However, after additional review and comment by the History subcommittee additional changes are anticipated to the biography. The revised biography will be submitted to RADM Meeks for review. The draft biographies for CAPT Welch and CAPT Crow are anticipated soon.
- 2) Data Team: (Leads: Patrick Hintz and Robert Gruhot) **IN PROGRESS** – 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** – Working to consolidate and organize photographs from the various sources with the intent to eventually post on the EHOPAC website. Considering creating monthly photo montages for the website (i.e. African American History Month, Women’s History, Fire Prevention, Food Safety, IH, etc...)
- 4) IT Team (Lead: Martin Stephens) **IN PROGRESS** – As of 1/11/11. Still waiting for access to the EHOPAC site.

Completed Initiatives:

No new completed activities.

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

School Visit:

EHOPAC needs to solidify school visit meeting by the end of March. ETSU, University of Washington, Boise State and Illinois State were all discussed. We should consider the size of the program as this is a great outreach opportunity. We should have Don Williams send out an announcement to the EHAC listserv to see if there are programs willing to host.

Treasurer’s Report

CAPT Wayne Hall advised that the PAC has a current balance of \$2,873.66. Over the period, the PAC brought in \$420 in coin sales.

8. Meeting adjourned 1434 Hrs. EST

Next meeting April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011