



# Scientist Professional Advisory Committee Meeting Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Mar 6, 2007

**1100 – 1300**

USA Toll Free Number: 866-705-4165

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PASSCODE: 1220522

Leader: Martin Sanders

## I. Call to Order and Welcome

**CDR Martin Sanders**

- Send an email to [tracy.macgill@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:tracy.macgill@fda.hhs.gov) to register your attendance.
- Would like to open the meeting by congratulating RADM Mishoe on her recent flag grade promotion.

### Participants

<b>PAC Members</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>X, if Present</b>
CAPT Bill Burkhardt III	FDA	Microbiology	
CDR Christine J. Benally	IHS	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
CDR Jon R. Daugherty	FDA	Microbiology	<b>X</b>
CDR Mehran Massoudi	CDC	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
CDR David McIntyre	IHS	Clinical Psychology	
CDR Daphne B. Moffett	ATSDR	Env. Health/Tox	<b>X</b>
CDR John Mosely Hayes	IHS	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
CDR Martin Sanders	CDC	Microbiology	<b>X</b>
CDR Mark Seaton	FDA	Pharmacology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Rachel Avchen	CDC	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Marco Bennett	FDA	Medicinal Chemistry	<b>X</b>
LCDR Diana Bensyl	CDC	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Wei Guo	FDA	Pharmacology/Biochemistry	<b>X</b>
LCDR Rona LeBlanc	FDA	Microbiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Tracy MacGill	FDA	Microbiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Mark Methner	CDC/NIOSH	Env. Science/Indus. Hygiene	<b>X</b>
LCDR Matthew Newland	HRSA	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR Sara Newman	OS/OPHEP	Epidemiology	<b>X</b>
LCDR D. Ross Spears	CDC	Chemistry	<b>X</b>
Dr. Dalton Paxman	OS/OPHS	Environmental Health/Tox	
<b>CPO- RADM Helena Mishoe</b>	<b>NIH</b>	<b>Microbiology</b>	<b>X</b>

## Non-voting Scientist Participants

Participant	Agency
CAPT Pamela Ching	CDC
CAPT Omar Hottenstein	DOD
CAPT DeLoris Hunter	NIH
CAPT Kevin M. McGuinness	NHCS
CDR Nelson Adekoya	CDC
CDR David Laird	FDA
CDR Theresa Lawrence	OS
CDR Donna Schuyler	BOP
CDR Kathleen McDuffie	CDC
CDR Michael Murry	BOP
CDR Timothy Nelle	FDA
CDR Cynthia Striley	NIOSH
CDR Doug Thoroughman	CDC
LCDR Danice Eaton	CDC
LCDR Dominic Frasca	HHS
LCDR Althea Grant	CDC
LCDR James Osterhout	FDA
LCDR Margaret Riggs	CDC
LCDR Sukminder Sandhu	FDA
LCDR David Skanchy	FDA
LCDR Ross Spears	CDC
LCDR John Stansberry	NIH
LCDR Lauren Zapata	CDC
LCDR Andrew Voetsch	CDC
LT Paul Seo	CDC

## II. Report from the CPO

**RADM Mishoe**

### a) General

- Thank you to everyone for their recognition of the recent promotion to Rear Admiral. This promotion should bring visibility and new opportunities for the Sci-PAC.
- There will be a promotion ceremony in mid- to late May, which will be webcast. An email request for volunteers to assist with the ceremony will be sent.

### b) Field Medical Readiness Badge (FMRB)

- The process for earning the FMRB has changed. In the past officers were required to submit documentation to show that they had met the requirements.
- CAPT Rustein is working to streamline and increase visibility for OFRD processes.
- Now that OFRD has access to a database to assess whether an officer has met the requirements for the FMRB, it is no longer necessary to submit any materials to be considered for the badge. Those who are determined to meet the criteria will be awarded the FMRB.
- There was a question as to whether deployments that were conducted “out of uniform” satisfy the deployment requirement for the FMRB. This issue is under discussion at OFRD.

### c) Flag Officer Retreat

- The retreat was a good opportunity to meet other flag officers and to see the nationwide impact of the PHS.
- This was the first flag officer retreat in a number of years and attendance was very good. The intent is to hold future meetings twice a year.
- The meeting was organized by RADM Wyatt and hosted by NIH. The hosting Agency will rotate.
- The flag officers expressed an interest in being active in promoting Corps visibility and in obtaining information about the Transformation.
- Retreat Action Items
  - Force Time Management Position Paper: Lead by RADM Wyatt in response to concerns expressed by junior officers who feel overextended in meeting Corps and Agency demands. This paper is an effort to document the time commitment for Corps activities and stimulate further discussion of this issue. The document will be circulated for comment.
  - President's Advancing the Cause of Social Justice in the Western Hemisphere Program: CAPT Rustein introduced this program which is aimed at helping democracies in the Western Hemisphere through economic, education, housing and healthcare initiatives. The healthcare initiatives will be implemented through a series of joint operations between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Corps.
    - In the first of these health diplomacy missions the USNS Comfort will be sent to countries in Latin America and through the Caribbean to provide medical and dental care to an estimated 85,000 patients. PHS Dental officers will be onboard the comfort to assist in these efforts.
    - Additionally, the DoD and the Commissioned Corps will partner to staff military medical teams that will provide care through 62 Medical Readiness Training Exercises in 14 countries in the Western Hemisphere. As a result, clinical categories will be the initial focus with later opportunities for non-clinicians.
    - The Agencies will be funding officers to participate in these activities for 2007 with a proposal submitted to fund officers in future years.
    - For officers who have international experience or interest, please email RADM Mishoe (mishoeh@nhlbi.nih.gov) so that she can generate a database of available officers when additional folks are needed for this activity. Note that this may not happen for 6 months to a year.
  - COER Redesign: The Lewin Group is looking at redesigning the COER. This is "in process" and the CPO-SG-PAC advised the Lewin Group that they should consult with the PACs during the process. The CPOs have also asked for a meeting to discuss the redesign.

### **III. Report from the PAC Chair**

**CDR Martin Sanders**

#### a) New Agenda:

- The new agenda format highlights the work of the Functional Advisory Committees and Transformation Working Groups. This is necessitated by the amount and significance of the work of these groups.
- If you are a subcommittee chair and have urgent business you must request to be placed on the agenda as subcommittee reports will be on an “as needed” basis.

#### b) Category Day

**LCDR Marco Bennett**

- The Scientist Category Day Agenda is finalized. A total of 17 scientists will be participating.
- For those officers who are planning to attend and have not made a hotel registration, please do so soon. Room availability is becoming limited. Information about reserving a room can be found at <http://www.phscofevents.org/location.cfm>. Additional registration and program information is at <http://www.coausphsconference.org/>.
- Officers interested in reducing costs for the 2007 Public Health Professional Conference in Cincinnati by sharing a hotel room, please email Lcdr John Gusto at [john.gusto@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:john.gusto@fda.hhs.gov) and Lcdr Philantha Bowen at [Philantha.Bowen@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Philantha.Bowen@fda.hhs.gov). LCDRs Gusto and Bowen have offered to coordinate a room locator service for officers if there is sufficient interest. Email should include name, rank, category, gender, smoking preference, planned arrival / departure dates, other needs, and contact information. Also, please include if you are willing to host / donate half of your room to an unfunded officer.
- Future Category Day/Conference updates will be coming via the ListServ.

#### c) Awards Committee

**LCDR Matthew Newland**

- The deadline for submitting nomination packages for the Scientist of the Year Awards is March 15<sup>th</sup>. The three part nomination package (candidate information, award justification, and current CV) should be emailed as an attachment to both Lcdr Lauren Zapata ([dvq8@cdc.gov](mailto:dvq8@cdc.gov)) and Lcdr Matthew Newland ([mnewland@hrsa.gov](mailto:mnewland@hrsa.gov)). This information was also sent out over the ListServ.

#### d) Scientist Handbook

**CDR Martin Sanders**

- A draft of the revised Scientist Handbook is circulating. To date no comments have been received. It is important to get this finalized and comments are needed to do this.
- CDR Hayes noted that the Scientist Handbook is an important resource for new officers and as such it would be helpful if the current version could be reviewed/revised to allow for posting to the website within a few weeks.

#### **IV. Treasure's Report**

**CDR Jon Daugherty**

- Current balance of \$1177.51
- Need Scientist officers to buy the coin to help offset the cost.

#### **V. Functional Advisory Committee Reports**

##### a) Research FAC

**CAPT Drue Barrett**

- CAPT Barrett was unable to attend and will provide an update at the next meeting.

##### b) Mental Health FAC

**CAPT Kevin McGuiness**

- Overview of FACs:
  - The FACs are defining what the functional groups will be and what criteria will be used to determine to which functional group a billet will be assigned. The functional groups (in conjunction with the PACs) are intended to be a vehicle for career tracks and organization for officers in the future.
  - The Mental Health FAC is working to identify career tracks and roles within the PHS for mental health providers. Mental Health is a clinical functional group.
  - Each FAC/functional group will have its own definition aimed at capturing all of the officers (both current and future) who should be included in this group. For the Mental Health FAC this includes PHS officers in billets reflecting mental health training and functions.
  - This definition will be used in applicable billet descriptions to both define the job and to assist in categorization by staff personnel.
  - Optimally, this will work as a two fold process that not only allows OFRD to categorize the available expertise, but also to assist those in the field with positions that need to be filled to identify appropriate providers.
  - OFRD is working to develop a drop down menu to better define billets.
  - The functional groups will help to keep the Corps leadership informed regarding nationwide public health needs while assisting officers in developing their careers.
  - Since the functional groups will be linked to billets, it is possible that an officer could move between functional groups throughout the course of their career depending on the billets that they occupy (e.g. clinical vs. research).
  - Promotion boards will still be category specific and with the PACs continuing to

develop the benchmarks.

- To develop a system that integrates billets and functional groups, it will be important for the FAC chairs to work with the PACs and their chairs. Ultimately, the FAC and the PAC needs to advocate for a system that serves both the FAC/PAC and the officer.
  - With respect to the concern that the FACs may eventually replace the PACs, it is important to remember that the FACs are cross-disciplinary whereas the PACs are more homogeneous.
  - This is a chance to develop a system which conceptualizes a force structure to everyone's best benefit. However, this is a challenging task given the complexity of information that needs to be captured in the new billet descriptions.
- The FAC has drafted a document that has been circulated to the PACs.
  - RADM Mishoe noted that this approach should allow for the identification of appropriate individuals to fill mission requirements.

c) Applied Public Health FAC

**CDR Kathleen McDuffie**

- The Applied Public Health group is very large and diverse as many current positions fall under this group.
- The Applied Public Health FAC is also working on a definition to be used as criteria to define the billets that fall into the group by OPM.
- In the next phase, the FAC criteria will be integrated with the PAC to ensure that everyone who should be included in this group is captured.
- A communication strategy to communicate the purpose of the FACs to officers is being developed.
- The first meeting of the Applied Public Health FAC is this week.

**VI. Transformation Reports**

a) Recruitment

**CDR Martin Sanders**

- The WPDGs are looking at the Transformation Implementation Plan for 2006 (found at the OCCO website under Tab 5).

- The Implementation Plan is set and the WPDGs cannot make changes.
- The Associate Recruiter Program was discussed and will not likely change much.
  - Particular challenges for officers in the field were discussed, as was the possibility of developing a “hold” status for ARs who aren’t able to complete two official activities in a year.
- The establishment of Centers of Excellence (in conjunction with universities) was discussed.
- The electronic Call to Active Duty (CAD) system will be updated and should reduce the time it takes to bring an officer onto AD. The goal is to reduce the time from months to 8-12 wks.
- The CAD will be the first piece of the Implementation Plan to roll out.
- A recruitment campaign focused on clinicians will also be launched this spring.
- RADM Mishoe added that a call center will be established (target April) targeting 4 categories (physicians, dentists, nurses, and pharmacists). Volunteers (from these categories) will be needed to act as contacts and Agency support will be required.
- There will be an 800 number that those interested in joining the Corps call. They would then have options for clinical category, general information, or other categories. The clinical category calls will be routed to a central office and the other calls will hear a recording that directs them to the website.

b) Discipline and Retention

**CDR Daphne Moffett**

- Review of current policies has been suspended and the group has been directed by RADM Canton to develop a Retention Board White Paper. A draft has been generated.
- Issues surrounding retention boards are complicated by the overlap with other boards (e.g. involuntary separation) and the work of other committees (billets, readiness).
- The original idea was that the retention boards would be used for force management rather than discipline.
  - The thinking now is that an overarching approaches to force management because force management is related to policies that are currently under development.
  - For example, the Billets WG is discussing the possibility of “tours of duty” or time limits for each billet. If an officer is staying in a particular billet for too long, they could be penalized at promotion time, but this would be outside the purview of the retention board.

- A force management policy board may be a more appropriate mechanism to meet Agency and Corps needs.
- In examining the administrative review process, the variety of circumstances (ht/wt, promotion board) by which an officer would be referred to a retention board needs to be considered.
- There is an interest in convening the first retention boards this spring. The possibility of using a standing group of officers to serve on the boards has been raised.
- CDR Thoroughman added that how quickly the boards can meet will be determined by which officers and what information the boards will be asked to review.

c) Billets Officer Profile and Collection System

**CAPT Pamela Ching**

- It has been proposed that each billet will have an associated tour of duty. When the expiration of the tour is approaching (e.g. 9 months out), the officer would be notified that they need to move to another billet.
  - It was noted that it may be difficult for officers to comply with time limits and find positions in a timely manner given the current GS hiring system.
  - While officers will still need to find their own positions through the current system, there will be staff at OCCO to assist them with the process.
  - Since the jobs are controlled by the Agencies, they would have the ability to designate an open (unlimited) tour for certain billets. There may also be an option to serve an additional tour in a limited billet.
  - Concerns were expressed that this could lead to job instability and possibly make the Corps less attractive to officers. Additionally, officers who stay in a billet for an extended period (because it is open or they renew) could be penalized.
  - The intent would be to allow for better force management through rotation.
- The group suggested that the system not be implemented until a system is in place to assist officers to find jobs
- Billet points system
  - In an effort to categorize and catalog the multitude of jobs performed by Corps officers, the characteristics of the officer (degrees and certifications) in each current billet is being examined.

- Ultimately, this information will be used towards developing a point value for each billet.
- The group started with an old pamphlet that was used by the Agencies to write billets.
- Other factors that will be considered when assigning numerical billet scores will be readiness and deployability
- Billet point values will then be translated into rank.
- Billet review
  - The group is reviewing the most relevant series for each category. In the Scientist category, most disciplines are represented in the 601-series billets (epidemiology, general health science).
  - However, it is important that all applicable billets be captured as to not limit future opportunities. It will be important for the system to contain flexibility.
  - The group has also been focusing on the KSA element of each billet.

d) Readiness

**CDR Mark Seaton**

- There is nothing to report because the group has not met since the last PAC call.

e) Training and Career Development

**LCDR Sara Newman**

- A mission statement was developed and it contains the following components:
  - To provide a standardized core of basic information essential to officers embarking on careers in the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (Corps). Through the PHS OBC, officers will be introduced to fundamental concepts in the development of competencies in officership, leadership, readiness and public health.
  - To build esprit de corps, inspire Corps officers, and establish a bond to the Service.
  - To initiate development of future public health leaders for the Nation.
- The group is also developing guidelines for a series of officer training courses.
  - Officer Basic Course at Call to Duty
  - Intermediate Officer Training Course at 5 – 7 years
  - Advanced Officer Course at 10 – 12 years
  - Executive Officer Course at 17 years and over

- CDR McDuffie noted that many officers are serving in executive level positions within their agencies prior to 17 years. The suggestion was made that an officer have the option to take later courses earlier.
- CDR Sanders asked for clarification of whether the 17 years was T & E or actual time in service.
- CDR Daugherty suggested that the group look at DoD officer training where there are Basic, Advanced, and Command and Duty Staff courses that correspond to time in service and rank. Additionally, DoD has a different categorization (Non-due course) for officers who are commissioned at a higher rank because they have an advanced degree.
- An additional clarification was requested as to whether these courses were specific to the Corps or general leadership courses.
- A series of guidelines for this training program were drafted.
  - A two week Public Health Service Basic Officer Course (PHS OBC) is required of all new officers at the start of their careers.
  - The employing OPDIV/STAFFDIV will support the officer's attendance at the OBC for their salaries, benefits, travel costs, and per diem.
  - Instructional cost (instructors and materials) will be paid through a centrally funded and coordinated effort.
  - PHS OBC will provide a standardized core of basic information essential to officers embarking on careers in the Corps as determined by WPDG initially, and then by the Corps Steering Committee.
  - Mission statements, goals, core competencies, learning objectives and evaluation strategies for the PHS OBC and training continuum will be developed and evaluated a regular basis to fit the changing needs of the Corps, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the OPDIV/STAFFDIVS and the officer.
  - Training throughout officers' careers must be a shared responsibility of the Agencies (for their mission) and for the Corps (for "Officership" matters).
- If there are concerns, comments, or questions about the mission statement or activities of the group, please contact LCDR Newman ([Sara\\_Newman@nps.gov](mailto:Sara_Newman@nps.gov)).

f) Three H (Isolated Hardship, Hazardous duty, Hard to fill)

**CDR Doug Thoroughman**

- The recommendations of the group are due March 20<sup>th</sup>.

- The document will be distributed via the ListServ for comments. Please submit comment this week.

## **VI. Subcommittee Reports**

**CDR Sanders**

### **a. JOAG Report**

**LCDR Rona LeBlanc**

- There will be a number of Junior Officer activities at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Cincinnati.
  - On Sunday (June 3rd) there will be a JOAG Meeting and Meet & Greet.
  - There will be a CPO/PAC Chair Meet and Greet on Monday (June 4<sup>th</sup>)
  - An off-site junior officer social activity will be held on Tuesday (June 5<sup>th</sup>)
  - The JOAG merchandise booth will be open on Wednesday and Thursday (June 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>)
  - A Uniform inspection area will be open from Monday to Wednesday where officers can stop by for uniform tips.
- JOAG has representative serving on the WPDGSs and FACs.
- The next JOAG meeting will be April 13<sup>th</sup> from 1300-1500 EST. The call-in number is 1-888-322-1791, passcode 83301.

## **VI. Other Business**

None

## **VII. Closing Remarks**

- If you are a subcommittee chair and would like to give a subcommittee report at the next meeting, please let CDR Sanders know in advance. Thanks again to everyone for participating in the call today.

### **April SciPAC call**

April 3, 2007, 1100-1300 (EST)

USA Toll Free Number: 866-705-4165

USA Toll Number: +1-517-244-7622

PASSCODE: 1220522

Leader: CDR Martin Sanders