



Scientist Professional Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 5, 2011
1100–1300 (EDT)

Toll-Free Number: 1-877-691-9937
Pass code: 4549026

Chief Scientist Officer and 2010/11 SciPAC Voting Members

Rank	Name	Role	Present
CAPT	Williams-Fleetwood, Sharon	Chief Scientist Officer	Yes
CDR	Newland, Matthew	Chair	Excused
CDR	Abe, Karon	Vice Chair; Rules & Membership Chair	Yes
LCDR	Boehmer, Tegan	Executive Secretary	Yes
CAPT	Nelle, Timothy	COF Liaison	Excused
CDR	Aponte, Boris	Mentoring Chair	Yes
CDR	Avchen, Rachel	Category Day Co-Chair	Excused
CDR	Bensyl, Diana	Immediate Past Chair	Excused
CDR	Eaton, Danice	Website Chair	Yes
LCDR	Facey, Judy	Billets and Direct Access Liaison	Yes
CDR	Guo, Wei		Excused
LCDR	Hu, Sally	Career Development Chair	Yes
LCDR	Kenney, James	Awards Chair	Yes
LCDR	Murphy, Matthew	Category Day Chair	Yes
CAPT	Murry, Michael	Recruitment, Retention & Readiness Chair	Yes
CDR	Novak, Ryan	Policy Review Chair	Yes
CDR	Robbins, Nisha	Visibility Chair	Yes
LCDR	Seo, Paul	Recruitment, Retention & Readiness Co-Chair	Yes
LCDR	Sram, Jacqueline		Yes
CDR	Zhang, Yi	Science Chair	Yes
Other SciPAC Roles held by Nonvoting Members			
CAPT	Moffett, Daphne	SciPAC Historian	No
CDR	Newman, Sara	COA Liaison	Yes
LCDR	Schobitz, Richard	PSYPAG Liaison	Yes
LCDR	Toblin, Robin	JOAG Liaison	Yes

Participation by Nonvoting Scientist Officers

Rank	Participant	Agency	Present
CAPT	Adekoya, Nelson	CDC	Yes
CAPT	Benally, Christine J.	HHS	Yes
CAPT	Daugherty, Jon	FDA	Yes
CAPT	McLaughlin, Michael A.	FDA	Yes
CDR	Draski, Laura	OS	Yes
CDR	Methner, Mark	CDC	Yes
CDR	Park, Amy	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Bennett, Marco	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Bodart , Jennifer	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Breiding, Matthew	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Calanan, Renee	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Carroll, Diana D.	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Clayton, Mark	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Clingman, Chekesha S.	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Cui, Minglei	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Davidson, Bryan	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Davis, Shane	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Dee, Deborah	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Frazer, Nicole L.	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Geissler, Aimee	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Hess, David	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Lowther, Sara	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Njai, Rashid	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Purfield, Anne	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Rodgers, Loren	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Smith, Michael	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Spikes, Pilgrim	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Stansberry, John	NIH	Yes
LCDR	Steffen, Scott	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Streeter, Emily	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Vagi, Sara	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Xu, Fei	FDA	Yes
LT	Demissie, Zewditu	CDC	Yes
LT	Freeland, Amy L.	CDC	Yes
LT	Green, Seth	DoD	Yes
LT	Hollis, NaTasha	CDC	Yes
LT	Ivey, Asha Z.	CDC	Yes
LT	Myers, Todd	DoD	Yes

LT	Pamboukian, Ruiqing	FDA	Yes
LT	Parks Brown, Sharyn	CDC	Yes
LT	Rivera, Luz	FDA	Yes
LT	Sharp, Tyler M.	CDC	Yes
LT	Sydnor, Charlene	NIH	Yes
LT	Tartof, Sara Y.	CDC	Yes

1) Call to Order and Welcome: CDR Karon Abe

- Email LCDR Tegan Boehmer (tboehmer@cdc.gov) for roll call on the day of the call.
- Mute your phones when not speaking (press *6 if you do not have a mute button)
- Do not place the conference call line on hold.

2) Report from the CPO: CAPT Sharon Williams-Fleetwood

- Happy “National Public Health Week”!
- Billets: We are now three months into the Scientist standard billets launch. We have contacted most of our officers to facilitate the initiation and completion of this process for the category. However, we still have a few officers that have not started the process. The projected time for each category to complete the process is three months. We will continue to ramp up our efforts to facilitate progress. During the process, we had a number of Scientists that indicated the multidisciplinary billet is the correct fit for their job. The latest projection is that the multidisciplinary billets will be launched around May or June, 2011. As mentioned on previous SciPAC calls, we have a team of Scientist Rapid Responders to assist our officers and they are LCDR Judy Facey, CAPT Pam Ching, CAPT Kevin McGuinness, and CDR Matthew Newland.
- OCCO support: On a previous SciPAC call I mentioned that the CPOs have been in discussion with OCCO to determine how the categories could assist OCCO in processing applications. OCCO has had volunteers providing assistance (3 hrs/week). The latest request to the CPOs is to identify 12 more short-term volunteers from the DC area. I have forwarded the names of the Scientists that are interested in volunteering their assistance.
- Accountability Structure Work Groups: The reports from the workgroups were submitted and are being reviewed for next steps.
- USPHS Symposium: Although we don’t have any final decisions at this time, the directions being favored are that officers will be asked to cover their airfare and that the agencies will cover the hotel and registration. The thought is that officers often have other alternatives for covering airfare and transportation costs.
- New Call to Active Duty (CAD) Process: Agencies are sending forward 1662 forms for applicants who have been professionally boarded. OCCO is preparing the lists and sending them through OSG/ASH to the President for Senate approval. Once the list is approved by the Senate and received back in OCCO, the applicant will be placed on personnel orders. Several nomination lists have been sent to the Department since the pause was lifted February 3, 2011.
- Regular Corp Appointment Process: There are approximately 4,000 Reserve Corps Officers that were deemed Regular Corps on March 23, 2010. OCCO has requested guidance for implementation from the ASH. Until additional information is received, OCCO is treating all of the impacted officers as Regular Corps.

- Questions:
 - CDR Newman asked about whether Commissioned Corps officers would be exempt from a federal government furlough, as they have been in the past. CAPT Williams-Fleetwood replied that there appears to be mixed messages coming from different agencies. Officers should check with their respective agencies and look for additional email communication from the OSG.
 - CAPT Bennally inquired about the latest information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability. CAPT Williams-Fleetwood replied that HHS still needs to write a letter to DoD stating that transferability for USPHS officers would improve national security. After the memo is written and received, HHS would still need to make decisions about how to implement transferability within USPHS.

3) **Report from the Chair and Vice Chair: CDR Karon Abe**

- The Office of Commissioned Corps Force Management (OCCFM) will now be in the OSG.
- Medical Waivers: Each officer is responsible for reporting any health care updates to Medical Affairs Branch (MAB). Medical waivers are provided to protect officers who have health issues from being penalized from promotion. These health care updates should be processed by MAB within 48 hours, but the information can only be communicated to MAB via FAX, the US Postal System, or by hand.
- Senior Officers Advisory Group Proposal (SOAG): Anecdotal information suggested that senior officers may be experiencing difficulties with career advancements and have considered separating from the Corps. In order to strengthen the retention aspects of the USPHS, it was important to capture the needs of all officers. The Health Services category began discussing the concept of the Senior Officer Advisory Group (SOAG) last year. A survey was developed to understand how officers' needs are addressed and to assess efforts to retain high caliber officers. Some of the areas of need that were identified from the survey included: mentorship, uniform etiquette, career development, readiness, and need for a listserv as a means of internal communication between senior officers. The Health Services PAC is working to get a draft report to the other PACs by July 2011.
- Utility Uniforms: A new policy is in development regarding utility uniforms. Currently, the woodland camouflage BDU is the deployment uniform, but there will be a change to the BDU due to the cost of the uniform.
- Model Charter: The Model Charter was reviewed by the CPO Board. The Board supported increasing the number of voting members from 20 to 30 and for increasing the duration of voting membership from 3 to 4 years. These are recommendations and PACs are not required to implement these changes. However, the Board did not accept a recommendation to allow a nonvoting member to chair a "main" subcommittee.
- Frocking Policy: When officers are selected for promotion to their next temporary grade but have not yet promoted, it is unclear if such officers have the right to wear the insignia and uniform and assume the title of the next higher grade using the words "Select" or "Rank (Sel.). Plans are underway to develop a frocking policy with established guidance and procedures on the rules governing the frocking of Commissioned Corps officers.

4) **Subcommittee Reports**

a. **Awards:** LCDR James Kenney; Co-chair, LCDR Minglei Cui

- We received several high quality nomination packets for the Senior and Junior Scientist Officer of the Year Awards. The judging process is underway and we look forward to presenting these awards during the Scientist Category Day at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in New Orleans this June.

b. **Career Development:** LCDR Sally Hu; Co-chair, LT Charlene Sydnor

- We will have a one-hour Q&A training session today immediately following the SciPAC call. We are very lucky to have Mr. Thomas Berry return to follow-up on the retirement training he did following the February 2011 SciPAC call. CDR Park will read questions that we have received through email for Mr. Berry to answer one by one. Then, we will open up the discussion to all officers on the call. In addition, you can review the USPHS retirement slides posted on our website if you like. Notes from the Q&A retirement session will be included in the SciPAC meeting minutes for officers who cannot participate. Please feel free to contact CDR Park (amy.park1@us.army.mil) or LCDR Hu (hus@mail.nih.gov) if you have any further questions or suggestions on SciPAC training projects in the future.
- There are no Officer Basic Courses scheduled for March or April so we do not have any activities related to OBC graduation ceremony to report.
- The Handbook Team has been updating the Basic Readiness, Training, and Officer Basic Course sections of the SciPAC handbook. LT Zewde Demissie is coordinating this effort and is finalizing the edits to the Basic Readiness section. We hope to have the revised version posted onto the SciPAC website very soon. We will continue to update the Training and Officer Basic Course sections. We still need a volunteer to help update the Officership section of the handbook. If anyone is interested in helping out with this effort, please contact LT Sydnor (sydnorc@mail.nih.gov) or LCDR Hu (hus@mail.nih.gov).

c. **Category Day:** LCDR Matt Murphy; Co-chair, CDR Rachel Avchen

- The USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium will be held June, 20–23 in New Orleans, LA.
- You can now reserve your room at the Sheraton New Orleans for the 2011 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Visit www.phscofevents.org to book your room at the federal per diem rate of \$131 (plus applicable taxes). The rate is valid from June 14 to June 29. There should be no hotel cancellation fee if you are unable to attend the meeting, but please read the fine print because in the past that has been known to change.
- The Scientist and Medical Categories will host a shared social event the evening following category day on Tuesday, June 21, 2011. The event will be held on a steamboat starting at 6:00pm and will include a cruise along the Mississippi River from 7:00–9:00pm as well as live music. Tickets cost \$37.35 for the cruise only or \$61.00 for the cruise and a Cajun dinner. You can reserve your tickets at www.neworleanssteamboat.com/2011/usphs/reserve.htm. You are able to sign-up for the social event up until Tuesday, June 21, 2011 and you are able to cancel your ticket up to 48 hours prior to the event date.

d. **Mentoring:** CDR Boris Aponte; Co-chair, CDR Mark Methner

- LCDRs Sancho, Garnett, Goodrich-Doctor, and Sram have joined the Mentoring subcommittee. Existing members include CDRs Bensyl, Methner, and Aponte.
- We just started the development of a needs assessment survey in order to restructure the program. The survey will be distributed via the SciPAC listserv within the next few weeks.
- A presentation of results and preliminary changes is scheduled to take place during Category Day at the USPHS Symposium in June.

e. **Policy Review:** CDR Ryan Novak; Co-chair, LCDR Fuyuen Yip

- We received no requests for policy document review during March 2011.

f. **Recruitment, Retention & Readiness:** CAPT Michael Murry; Co-chair, LCDR Paul Seo

- As of the beginning of April 2011, there are a total of 303 Scientist officers on board
 - 42 Officers listed as “exempt”
 - 20 Officers listed as “not qualified” as follows: O6=13, O5=6, O4=1
 - Not including exempt officers, our category is 92.3% qualified
- Quarterly readiness report from OFRD (closed 3/31) indicated that the Scientist category is 87.2% ready. The difference in percentages may be attributed to handling of CAD. New CADs working toward becoming basic ready should make sure they are listed as “exempt” with OFRD.
- Regarding the Facebook Response Network, each PAC is to establish a system for responding to category specific Facebook inquiries. We are developing a plan to provide a response within 24 hours that has been reviewed and approved. From time to time we will likely be called upon to respond to a question about a scientific discipline or an agency not represented on the Recruiting, Readiness, and Retention subcommittee. In those cases we may need to contact other members of SciPAC for guidance. The response time is very short, so if we call you with a Facebook question, please respond as quickly as possible.
- There is unfinished business regarding extending transferability of Post 9/11 Veterans Education Improvements Act benefits for USPHS officers. In the latest edition of Frontline, COA Executive Director Jerry Farrell urges HHS to take the needed action to secure these benefits for our officers. This is an important aid in recruiting and retention. We want to do whatever we can to support making this benefit available to our officers.

g. **Rules and Membership:** CDR Karon Abe

- The templates for the subcommittee standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be sent out to the subcommittee chairs this month with a return deadline of July 1, 2011. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email CDR Abe (kabe@cdc.gov).
- Nomination packages for new SciPAC members will be sent out in May 2011.
- There are two upcoming Rules and Membership subcommittee meetings:
 - April 19 — Discuss how many membership slots will be open for the 2011–2012 year. Our charter states that no more than 1/3 of the voting membership should turn-over from year to year. We are currently not in compliance. We will discuss the possibility of extending current voting members tenure by one year.
 - June 10 — Nomination of new members
- Comments: LCDR Toblin suggested that the Rules and Membership subcommittee consider offering 2-year terms to this year’s members, which will get more people in line with those

who will be moving into their second year. It would also allow more people to have the opportunity to serve as a voting member.

h. Science: LCDR Yi Zhang

- We had a meeting to discuss the first draft of the Public Health Reports article on March 28, 2011. Five officers attended the meeting. I am currently working on revising the article based on the advice and comments obtained from the meeting. Per the discussion, we have to collect more data on USPHS Scientist allocation.
- As one of our outreach programs to serve the local community, I coordinated a program with Grace Episcopal Day School to assist with their Science Fair on March 3, 2011. Five of our Scientist officers served as the Science Judges and reviewed over 60 posters and presentations given by 5th through 8th grade students. The projects embraced a wide range of fields, including microbiology, architecture engineering, behavioral and social sciences, cellular and molecular biology, biochemistry, chemistry, physics, animal sciences, earth and planetary sciences, energy and transportation, environmental science, and plant sciences. We are thrilled and impressed by all participants' creativity, curiosity, and capability in exploring the science around them. Volunteers officers who participated in this event will receive an appreciation memo from CAPT Williams-Fleetwood. A short communication regarding this event has been submitted to the SciPAC Newsletter.

i. Visibility: CDR Nisha Robbins; Co-Chairs, LCDR Matthew Breiding, LCDR Fei Xu

- Thanks to LCDR Fei Xu, LCDR Minglei Cui, and LT Scott Phillips for judging a Science Fair in Montgomery County, MD on March 19, 2011.
- LCDR Matt Breiding will be serving as the Scientist member for the planning committee of the 2011 AMSUS conference. The conference itself will occur in November 2011.
- Thanks to LCDR John Stansberry and LCDR Sally Hu for their great COA Frontline article entitled, "Officers Increased USPHS Visibility at the 18th Annual NBC4 Health and Fitness Expo." It appears in the March 2011 issue.
- CDR Ayala and LT Silvio will be sending out reminders to finalize articles for the upcoming Scientist Newsletter. The next issue should appear in May. If you would like to submit photos of your family for the newsletter or have other articles of interest, please email CDR Ayala (cia1@cdc.gov).

j. Website: CDR Danice Eaton, Co-chair, CAPT Cynthia Striley

- CAPT Cindy Striley and CDR Danice Eaton met with CAPT Eric Shih and CDR Diahann Williams with OCCFM about the initiative to transition PAC websites to the hhs.gov server using a standard template. CAPT Shih stated they currently are working to identify a content management system (CMS) that would be adequate for creating and maintaining all PAC websites. Their goal is to create a template that PACs could use so that all sites have a similar look and feel. All the sites would be hosted on the hhs.gov server (at the expense of OCCFM) and each of the PACs would be responsible for keeping their site up-to-date using the identified CMS. This initiative complements work that CAPT Striley already has been engaged in to identify a CMS that would work well for the SciPAC website so that we can transition away from Microsoft FrontPage, which not everyone has access to and has to be installed on local machines. The CMS will be available via the Internet and therefore

accessible to anyone and, ideally, will not require any specialized programming skills. OCCFM will be creating a workgroup to help guide and oversee this process, and we plan to participate on this workgroup. There is currently no timeline for this initiative.

5) **Liaison Reports**

a. **Billet Transformation:** LCDR Judy Facey

- Report not received.

b. **COF:** CAPT Timothy Nelle

- As of March 30, 2011, our balance is \$2,761.42.
- We have an inventory of 119 coins and 51 T-shirts.

c. **COA:** CDR Sara Newman

- Several legislative issues are on the agenda of the COA including:
 - As a means of recruiting more officers into the Commissioned Corps, COA is focused on urging DHHS to include Public Health Sciences Track Implementation funding in its budget requests while at the same time working with the Senate to have Track funding included in HHS Appropriations legislation.
 - COA is staying actively involved to ensure that transferability of benefits provided in the new Post-9/11 GI Bill (Law 111-377) are realized for USPHS officers.
 - COA is urging DHHS to seek funding for the Ready Reserve Corps in the FY12 budget.
 - COA is working with senior leaders of the Commissioned Corps to sign an memorandum of understanding with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to open clinical billets to Commissioned Corps officers in VA hospitals.
- Questions: CDR Abe asked whether the language regarding transferability of GI Bill benefits will be finalized by August 2011. CDR Newman said she would find out more at next Wednesday's meeting. As far as she knows, they are still tinkering with the language and is not sure how it affects USPHS officers.

d. **JOAG:** LCDR Robin Toblin

- The next JOAG general meeting is Friday, April 8 from 1300–1500. Call-in#: (218) 936-4700; Passcode: 791 - 9605.
- The winter issue of the JOAG Journal, the quarterly publication from JOAG, was recently distributed and can be found on the JOAG website:
http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index_files/JOAG_Journal.htm
- Regional Meet and Greet events are being held; to find out if one in your area will be held, contact LCDR Toblin (robin.l.toblin@us.army.mil).
- Several candidates applied to be the SciPAC liaison voting member for JOAG. Good showing!
- JOAG is selling three t-shirts at the COF Symposium for \$15; these can be pre-ordered or can be ordered and shipped to you if you will not be able to attend the conference. To pre-order, email LCDR Toblin. All shirts will have the JOAG logo on the front pocket area and the following slogans will be on the back:
 - U.S. Public Health Service: Building the Foundation for a Healthier Nation
 - Uniform pants that actually fit: \$41
 - Ribbon for doing what you were hired to do: \$1

Protecting, promoting and advancing the health and safety of our Nation: Priceless

- U.S Public Health Service: Explaining Ourselves Since 1789. We're Not the Navy

e. **PSYPAG: LCDR Rick Schobitz**

- PsyPAG will hold our next general meeting on April 6, 2011 at 1200 Eastern. Call in number is 1-877-691-9937; pass code is 4549026. The meeting will feature CAPT Jon Perez, National Behavioral Consultant for IHS. He will be speaking about his time a leader of Mental Health Team #2.
- A call for nomination for Psychologist of the Year has gone out. If you missed the email on the listserv with instructions, please email LCDR Schobitz (Richard.schobitz@us.army.mil) and I will forward them to you.

6) Other Business, Questions, Comments

- None

7) Closing Remarks: CDR Karon Abe

- The call will now be turned over to LCDR Sally Hu to begin the Career Development session.

8) Retirement Q&A Session: Mr. Thomas Berry, Compensation Branch, Office of Commissioned Corps Support Services

- Notes from this session will be distributed separately via the SciPAC listserv by the Career Development subcommittee.

NOTE: Next meeting Tuesday, May 3, 2011 @ 1100–1300 EDT