



# HS PAC Chair Chat



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What does our future hold? That is the theme for this month. Concerning transformation, August has been a quiet but intriguing month. The PAC Chairs and SG PAC meetings were cancelled while we were informed that the Assistant Secretary for Health, Admiral John Agwunobi, announced his resignation. This period of calm and surprising news follows the announced retirements of RADM Kenneth Moritsugu and RADM Richard Wyatt, and our "spirit of transformation" RADM Bob Knouss's untimely death in July. All this occurred while we wait for the Senate's confirmation vote on nominee Dr. James Holsinger as the next Surgeon General. These past and present events certainly suggest the

Commissioned Corps is facing a leadership crisis. With the loss of our leadership, the Corps is perhaps in its finest moment. In a speech to the House of Commons, Prime Minister Winston Churchill (facing his finest moment), discussed the disastrous turn of events in Europe when Britain stood alone against the German military. He said "Of this I am quite sure, that if we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future." I'm confident we are entering a bright future for the Corps because these leaders created a strong foundation allowing our next generation of leaders to charter new territory and advance our nation's public health. Our future is here – let's make it bright.



Part of our future is determined by the professional organizations we join and support. The next several PAC Chair Chats will summarize various

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professional organizations (COA, ROA, AMSUS, SAME, etc.) that positively impact our future. The [Commissioned Officers Association](#) (COA) is the first that comes to mind since it and its affiliated Foundation are primary organizers of the [USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium](#) (Tucson, AZ June 2008) and lobby congress on behalf of the Corps. For example, Executive Director, CAPT Jerry Farrell (Navy Ret), shares the latest info: (1) the COA Board of Directors voted to endorse the approved uniform changes. Recognizing that some of the changes are controversial (elimination of "salt and pepper"), the Board felt that the package as a whole made good sense for the Corps. The Board was especially pleased that daily uniform wear will be mandated throughout the Corps and hope that is the first provision implemented – the sooner the better, (2) there is no apparent urgency on the part of the Senate to schedule a vote on the nomination of Dr. James Holsinger as Surgeon General; and no clear indication as to whether such a vote would go in his favor. Opposition to his nomination by APHA is a significant factor for the Senate to consider, as is his endorsement by the AMA. The potential for confirmation of Dr. Holsinger's nomination is a key factor on the Department's naming of an acting Surgeon General to take RADM Ken Moritsugu's place when he retires at the end of September, and (3) an announcement is expected soon for an acting Deputy Surgeon General. The announcement may also include an acting Assistant Secretary for Health. Also vacant is the Special Assistant for Transformation.

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## Uniform Changes Coming

1. CAPT William Wyeth (HSO) is a co-Chair of the Uniform Implementation Workgroup proposing uniform implementation timelines over the next 30 days. HSOs are represented by many other officers on the workgroup.
2. The committee met with RADM Moritsugu, who charged the group with developing timelines, identifying communication guidelines and identification of potential challenges for each uniform item approved by the ASH.
3. They **can not** change any of the recommendations approved by the ASH.
4. Question on beards. Religious beliefs were considered during the approval process. Navy did not approve religious beliefs and PHS used the same rationale. Waiver can be granted for approved medical condition.
5. Sneak peek to proposed timelines for some items:
  - a. Daily Wear – starts January 2008
  - b. Adopting Navy Working Uniform – March 2009 to Oct 2010
  - c. Alignment with Navy Uniform regs – Jan 2008 to Oct 2010