



Health Services Officer Category
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Strength Through Diversity



Basic Applied Science Professional Advisory Group BASPAG

January 21st, 2009
Time: 11:00 - 12:00 pm EDT, 8:00 am PDT

Teleconference call number: 888-595-6108

Passcode: 9423244

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

VOTING MEMBERS						
Attendance	Rank	Last Name	First Name	OPDIV		
Present	CDR	Danner	Ali	CDC		
Present	CDR	Jones	Dana	CDC		
Excused	CDR	Toy	Phillip	USDA		
Excused	LCDR	Brown	Laurie	OS		
Excused	LCDR	Chanlongbutra	Amy	NPS		
Excused	LCDR	Constantine	Amy	FDA		
Present	LCDR	Mainor-Harper	Juanika	CDC		
Excused	LCDR	Melvin	Cathy D.	FDA		
Excused	LCDR	Sullivan	Destry M.	FDA		
Excused	LCDR	Valentin-Bon	Iris E.	USDA		
Present	LCDR	Vu	Chau Minh	USDA		
Present	LT	Claverie-Williams	Elizabeth	FDA		
Present	LT	Garza	Anthony	FDA		
Excused	LT	Smith	Damon	OS		
NON-VOTING MEMBERS and GUESTS						
Present	CAPT	Johns	Malcolm	DHS		
Present	CDR	Culbreath	Dimitrus	HHS		
Present	CDR	Merriweather	Sheila	OS		
Present	LCDR	Lee-Bishop	Lynda	HRSA		
Present	LCDR	Rice	Morrisa	HRSA		
Present	LCDR	Tracy	LaRee	FDA		
Present	LT	Murray	Erika	DHS		
Present	LT	Porter	Steven	FDA		
Present	LT	Smith	Shani	FDA		



Health Services Officer Category
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Strength Through Diversity



- I. **Call to Order and Introductions** - CDR Ali Danner, BASPAG Chair, greeted the group and called the meeting to order at 11:05 am hours EDT. Roll call was taken by LCDR Chau M. Vu. There were 6 voting members present. 7 voting members are needed for quorum. CDR Sheila Merriweather suggested that the BASPAG let the new membership know that if they are not going to be present that they can send someone as a stand-in and also they can send an email so that they can be excused. LCDR Vu stated that she will be sending out an email to all of the voting members to reiterate these points as well as to obtain contact information to update the roster.

CDR Danner formally welcomed all the new voting members: CDR Dana Jones, LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper, LCDR Destry Sullivan, LCDR Iris Valentin-Bon, LT Anthony Garza, and LT Damon Smith. CDR Danner also recognized all of the BASPAG voting members who had completed their tenures and who had come off the PAG in the previous month: CAPT Nancy Bill, CDR Sheila Merriweather, CDR Linda Thai, LT Michelle Bleth-Weber, and LCDR Iris Valentin-Bon. CDR Danner also requested that former Subcommittee Chairs acknowledge their presence and their availability to others who may step forward as Chair of Subcommittees for 2009.

- II. **Approval of Minutes** - CDR Danner requested any recommendations, corrections or input for the December 17, 2008 minutes. CDR Danner stated that he only had a few light recommendations and that he will email those to LCDR Vu. CDR Danner asked for a motion that the December Draft minutes be accepted with the projected edits. CDR Dana Jones made the motion. LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper seconded.

- III. **Chair Report and Old Business:**

CDR Ali Danner stated that he is extremely honored to have the opportunity to serve as BASPAG Chair for 2009. He had been with BASPAG for over 3 years, first as a participant and then as a voting member. He had enjoyed working with individuals such as CDR Phillip Toy, CDR Sheila Merriweather, CDR Linda Thai, LCDR Chau Vu, and others, who had helped guide the BASPAG off the ground and welcomed him so that he can volunteer. CDR Danner encouraged all of the voting members, the new voting members, as well as all of the BASPAG participants on the conference call to participate on subcommittees such as Awards, Professional Development, Mentoring, and Membership Subcommittees. He also encouraged the voting members to volunteer as Chair of Subcommittees. The BASPAG bylaws states that a Chair of a subcommittee has to be a voting member. CDR Danner stated that the BASPAG had accomplished a lot of great things under CDR Merriweather and CDR Thai's previous tenures. One of the things that the BASPAG does



Health Services Officer Category OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE *Strength Through Diversity*



includes reviewing documents for the HS-PAC Chair as well as the Chief Professional Officer, Rear Admiral Milner. The BASPAG also provides professional development input, which sometimes comes as mini seminars during the conference calls. For example, in recent months the BASPAG reviewed COER recommendations and the changes to the COER. The BASPAG provided promotion tips as well as tips on assimilation. For those who are at CDC, CDR Danner stated that he will be giving an Assimilation update and overview for the Atlanta area officers tomorrow. He also stated that the BASPAG has a website, which is through the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) website, formerly known as the DCP website. The BASPAG website has additional information including information on various committees, information about the C.V., professional development, promotional preparation, and other valuable information. If anyone has any recommendations on making the website more user friendly, please notify LCDR Vu or CDR Danner, and the BASPAG will try to make it as user friendly as possible.

a. **BASPAG Coin** - CDR Sheila Merriweather gave an update on the BASPAG coin. During the last conference call, CDR Merriweather had mentioned that by mid-January that she should have the coins in hand. By January 2nd, she did not receive any notification and so she contacted the coin company to find out where they were on the production of the coins. She was told that they were having difficulties with their email system and that they did not have an email giving them directions to move forward on the coin. CDR Merriweather stated that she had sent an email in December. The coin company stated that they had received several similar calls regarding emails that they should have received. On January 2nd, 2009, CDR Merriweather sent another email requesting that the coin company move forward in producing the coins. It will take 6 weeks from January 2nd, 2009. She is also waiting for samples of the coin. The coin company should be sending her 2 samples of the coin so that she can look at them and tell them to move forward and produce 100 additional coins. As soon as she receives something in the mail, she will send out an email to CDR Danner and LCDR Vu so that the information can be disseminated. LCDR Vu asked about the previous BASPAG meeting's discussion on the reimbursement of donation money to those officers who requested to be reimbursed. CDR Merriweather suggested that this discussion be tabled until the final bills have been paid for the coin. CDR Merriweather also expressed her concerns regarding the reimbursement process. She had called and emailed the COF regarding the reimbursement of \$200 that she had paid out of pocket for the coins. CDR Linda Thai had sent an email approximately 2-3 weeks ago requesting that COF reimbursed CDR Merriweather this money, and CDR Merriweather was told by COF that it would take a couple more weeks. CDR



Health Services Officer Category OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE *Strength Through Diversity*



Merriweather is concerned that when the BASPAG orders the final check to pay for the coins that it would take COF another month to cut the check which would put us even further back. CDR Merriweather stated that she will continue to work on this issue with COF, and that perhaps BASPAG would have to order the check ahead of time since we would know what the balance would be, which is close to \$600. LCDR Vu also mentioned that the managing of the BASPAG coin and getting it to production has been quite a task, and that if CDR Merriweather needs any help to let BASPAG know. Also, that if the BASPAG Coin Project requires continued and ongoing management of the coins that perhaps a Subcommittee may be needed in the future.

CDR Merriweather gave an overview on the BASPAG coin. The coin is \$10 each. The mailing cost is between \$2.00 and \$2.50. This information will in the announcements unveiling the BASPAG coin and will be published in the Bulletin and the Frontline. CDR Merriweather has the contacts for both publications. CDR Dimitrus Culbreath inquired about the \$50 donations which some officers have donated towards the production of the coins. CDR Merriweather stated that some officers have opted to donate the funds without reimbursement and some have opted to be reimbursed at a later date. CDR Danner stated that he would like to donate without reimbursement.

IV. Standing Committee Reports

- a. **Membership subcommittee:** LT Claverie-Williams stated that in November of 2008, the Voting Membership Subcommittee was tasked by the prior BASPAG Voting Membership to review the nominations for 6 voting positions that were to become vacant as of January 1, 2009. She also stated that the Voting Membership Subcommittee reviewed many applications that were submitted, and that it was a very hard task because everybody was so qualified. The Voting Membership Subcommittee reviewed all of the applications, and the 6 top vote-getters were forwarded to the 2008 BASPAG Chair, Linda Thai, for the Executive Committee, including CDR Ali Danner and others to review the 6 nominations. The nomination packages were also forwarded to Admiral Milner and to the HSO BASPAG Chair as well. Once these nominations were reviewed and the Executive Committee got back with her, the Voting Membership Subcommittee then contacted the 6 individuals who were chosen via letters towards the end of December and at the beginning of January. The Subcommittee unfortunately had to send out the regret letters to the others and that was done this week. LT Elizabeth Claverie-Williams thanked everybody who had helped as it



Health Services Officer Category
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Strength Through Diversity



was a long and tedious process because everyone was so qualified. She also asked if there were any new members who would like to join the Membership Subcommittee to feel free to contact her. LCDR Vu also added that she had sent out the Welcoming Letters to the new voting members this week.

- b. **Mentoring subcommittee:** CDR Danner stated that the Mentoring Subcommittee was previously chaired by CAPT Nancy Bill. CDR Danner stated that this is an opportunity for the voting members to volunteer to chair that Subcommittee. CDR Danner asked if anyone would like to volunteer for this committee. LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper volunteered to chair this subcommittee.
- c. **Awards subcommittee:** CDR Sheila Merriweather was the Chair for the Awards Subcommittee. CDR Merriweather stated that the work done on the subcommittee was very minimal last year as the BASPAG received very few award packages. She stated that she is more than willing to continue to serve as the Chair of the Awards Subcommittee. However, she would like to allow another voting member the opportunity to volunteer and take over that subcommittee. Last year was the first year that BASPAG presented an award, and the BASPAG will continue to do so this year and moving forward. LCDR Vu suggested that she will send an email to all the voting members notifying them of the Chair positions for the subcommittees.

V. New Business:

- a. **USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Breakout Sessions:** CDR Sheila Merriweather stated that the BASPAG have 5 presenters with 5 unique presentations at the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. CDR Merriweather stated that she will need a couple of officers to help her on that day to make sure that the presenters have everything they need. CDR Merriweather thanked all of those who volunteered to present. CDR Danner thanked CDR Merriweather for all the work she had done to coordinate the Breakout Sessions for the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. CDR Juanika Mainor-Harper asked how people can contact her to volunteer to help. CDR Merriweather stated that she can be emailed at Sheila.Merriweather@hhs.gov
- b. **Chair-Elect:** CDR Danner stated that one of the issues the BASPAG needed to address is the Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect for 2009. CDR Danner opened the floor for either self-nominations or nominations for Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect for 2009. CDR Danner nominated LCDR Chau Vu for



Health Services Officer Category OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE *Strength Through Diversity*



Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect. CDR Merriweather stated that the BASPAG came together in 2004 and encouraged new voting members to step out and volunteer to assist in any way. CDR Dana Jones stated that we don't have quorum at this time. CDR Merriweather suggested that the BASPAG table the discussion for the next meeting and to send out an email regarding the nominations. CDR Danner asked if there were any additional voting members calling in during the meeting. No additional voting members were identified. CDR Danner moved to table the nominations for the Vice Chair/Chair-Elect and that an email will be sent out to the voting members informing them of the opportunity to nominate or self-nominate. He stated that if we have a quorum for the February meeting then at that time we will select and vote for our Vice-Chair. CDR Merriweather also suggested that the BASPAG table the approval of the December minutes until the next meeting as well. CDR Danner also moved to table the minutes until the February meeting.

VI. Open Floor:

- a. **Goals:** CDR Danner stated that some of the goals that the BASPAG has are to continue the excellence of the previous years in providing timely feedback to the Chief Professional Officer. The BASPAG also wants to continue moving forward providing professional development, miniature seminars, and strengthening and stabilizing committees that we have worked to get off the ground such as Professional Development and Mentoring Subcommittees. During the February meeting, we will do more solicitation for Subcommittee Chairs. If there is anyone at this time who have an interest in subcommittees such as the Professional Development Subcommittee or Mentoring Subcommittee, we will accept that. Please strongly consider volunteering as it is crucial to keep the BASPAG strong, and it also enhances your career. At the end of the year, we look at issuing letters of appreciation especially for those who are up for promotion.
- b. **Letters of Appreciation:** LCDR Vu stated that during the last meeting, the BASPAG had discussed issuing letters of appreciation to the voting members who are up for promotion. She stated that she had sent out a few letters of appreciation for those officers who had mentioned that they were up for promotion. LCDR Vu stated that she was waiting for a list from the Chair of the Membership Subcommittee. CDR Danner asked if the letters of appreciation were managed by the Membership Subcommittee, the Awards Subcommittee, or by the Executive Committee members in the past. CDR Merriweather stated that in the past that the Secretary has done this, but it does not mean that it should not be managed by a Subcommittee. CDR Danner asked if



Health Services Officer Category OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Strength Through Diversity



anyone would recommend that this responsibility be placed under the Awards Subcommittee or the Membership Subcommittee. LCDR Vu stated that at this time if the BASPAG has not decided where to put this responsibility, that she is willing to continue to carry it out until this is decided. She also stated that at a later time if the BASPAG decides to move it under a Subcommittee then perhaps it would best fit under the Awards Subcommittee. CDR Merriweather and CDR Danner agreed that it would best fit under the Awards Subcommittee. CDR Merriweather asked for help with the Awards Subcommittee. CDR Danner asked volunteers to contact CDR Merriweather.

- c. CAPT Malcolm Johns mentioned that LT Erika Murray has an announcement. LT Murray announced that she had delivered a healthy baby girl on January 6, 2009. Congratulations were in order.
- d. CAPT Johns stated that Rear Admiral Sam Shekar has been exploring expanding the footprint of the Corps into the local public health department and also into the public health labs. CAPT Johns stated that he became aware of this activity due to his insertion of LT Murray into the Dallas County Public Health Lab. He stated that the Association of Public Health Lab had sent a letter to President-Elect Obama stating that it was a desirable thing to insert P.H.S. officers into the local public health labs. CAPT Johns sees this as an area that the BASPAG may want to engage in.
- e. CDR Dana Jones stated that he noticed that for the summer deployments on the military ships that there are a lot of roles for veterinarians and M.D.s but not much for HSOs. He asked if there is anything that we can do to increase our visibility or ways for HSOs to deploy on those ships. CDR Danner stated that this is a good area for us to explore more, specifically in the Professional Development Subcommittee where a Chair for this Subcommittee can assess HSO roles in these deployments. Also, if there is anyone who works within OFRD, such as LT Damon Smith, who may be a direct resource on OFRD activities. CAPT Johns also suggested that the BASPAG should evaluate past missions and check it against the skill sets within the HSO community. He stated that we are basically the equivalent of the medical service corps in the Army and the Navy, ie. the dumping ground of all the allied health professionals who are not physicians, nurses, dentists or pharmacists. The BASPAG can perhaps go forward to OFRD with recommendations. There are always opportunities for senior officers on all of these deployments. However, there are not a lot of opportunities for the junior officers. CDR Danner thanked CDR Jones and CAPT Johns for their input.



Health Services Officer Category OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Strength Through Diversity



- f. LCDR Vu asked CDR Danner about the deadline for assimilation application. CDR Danner stated that the deadline for assimilation is February 1, 2009. However, the 2009 Assimilation Boards are suspended until further notice. On the CCMIS main web page, there is a link to the Acting Surgeon General's letter, which emphasizes the reason as being due to the ceiling of 2800 officers having been met. There have been efforts to expand the ceiling for several years and on and off over the past decade. The hope is to expand by 400 officers. Three years ago there were about 300 slots, with the last group having less than 90 slots, and now there is close to zero. However, with retirements and etc., the slots will begin to open. If you have at least 2 years in the Commissioned Corps, it is recommended that you submit your application, if you have not been reviewed or had 3 consecutive years. After 2 years of current active duty in the P.H.S., you will be reviewed after 3 years in the P.H.S., if that is met by March of that year. The earlier you submit, the greater likelihood that you will receive assimilation. The slots are very tight so you want to do a very good job on your 1-2 page Officer Statement. You also want to make sure that you have a Supervisor Support Letter regardless of what your P-grade is.

VII. Adjournment - This meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am EDT

Next meeting will be held on February 18th, 2009.
Third Wednesday of every month 11:00 -12:00 EDT, 8:00 are PDT.
Teleconference call number: 888-595-6108
Passcode: 9423244
Minutes taken by LCDR Chau M. Vu. Revised by LCDR Chau M. Vu.





Health Services Officer Category
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Strength Through Diversity

