



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



Basic Applied Science Professional Advisory Group
BASPAG

March 18th, 2009

Time: 11:00 - 12:00 pm EDT, 8:00 am PDT

Teleconference call number: 866-761-3314

Passcode: 6211189

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

VOTING MEMBERS							
Attendance	Rank	Last Name	First Name	OPDIV	Voting to Approve BASPAG By-Laws Revision	Voting to Approve February 2009 Draft Minutes	Voting to Approve BASPAG Coin Motion
Present	CDR	Danner	Ali	CDC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	CDR	Jones	Dana	CDC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	CDR	Toy	Phillip	USDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excused	LCDR	Brown	Laurie	OS			
Present	LCDR	Chanlongbutra	Amy	NPS	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	LCDR	Constantine	Amy	FDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	LCDR	Mainor-Harper	Juanika	CDC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excused	LCDR	Melvin	Cathy D.	FDA			
Present	LCDR	Sullivan	Destry M.	FDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	LCDR	Valentin-Bon	Iris E.	USDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present	LCDR	Vu	Chau Minh	USDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excused Stand-in	LT LCDR	Claverie-Williams Vu	Elizabeth Chau Minh	FDA USDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excused Stand-in	LT LCDR	Garza Vu	Anthony Chau Minh	FDA USDA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excused Stand-in	LT LCDR	Smith Rice	Damon Morrissa	OS HRSA	Yes	Yes	Yes
NON-VOTING MEMBERS and GUESTS							
Present	CAPT	Chan	Henry	FDA			
Present	CDR	Merriweather	Sheila	OS			
Present	LCDR	Lee-Bishop	Lynda	HRSA			
Present	LCDR	Rice	Morrissa	HRSA			
Present	LT	Collier	Debra	USDA			
Present	LT	Porter	Steven	FDA			



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- I. **Call to Order and Introductions** - CDR Ali Danner, BASPAG Chair, greeted the group and called the meeting to order at 11:08 am hours EDT. Roll call was taken by LCDR Chau M. Vu. CDR Danner stated that the 2010 Category benchmarks are posted on the CCMIS website, formerly known as DCP. Also on the right vertical menu bar, there are several new links related to uniform, insignia, as well as early commissioning program. In addition, the 2009 Medical Officer pay or medical special pay has been posted. He stated that officers would have to follow up with their respective Liaison offices or the Commissioned Corps personnel office for their agency in order to update their medical special pay, which requires that they do a new contract. If an officer is doing a recertification, they would generally go off the anniversary date, but to receive higher rates, one would need to do a new contract and also a validation record. The medical special pay contract is relevant to all medical officers but CDR Danner shares this information because some of our health service officers (HSOs) have multiple degrees. An example would be HSOs who are in the scientist category who became HSOs before they finish their doctoral degrees. In summary, for medical officers to receive medical special pay, they will have to do a new contract, which can be obtained on the unsecured part of the CCMIS website under Services and Forms. They would also have to receive the validation record from their Liaison office. CDR Danner also recommended that the Category benchmarks be printed off and reviewed. If an officer is up for promotion, he recommends that the officer do a comparison to see if things have changed, such as the number of assignments required for our category, for the next rank in your T-grade or P-grade. He also recommends looking at the level of awards that is recommended. Officers should scrutinize their accomplishments over the last year because awards can go back to 13 months past the end of the event, and officers can see if there is an award that they are eligible to write up for themselves. In the future, CDR Danner will defer more to the Professional Development subcommittee to provide everyone with light career suggestions or tips that may help officers to strengthen their careers. He stated that officers should be cognizant of the quarterly log-in that OFRD does to assess Readiness status. If officers are using the President's Challenge, remember that that it is at least 30 minutes of physical activities, 5 days a week, for 6 straight weeks to be equivalent of having taken the APFT.

- II. **Approval of Minutes** - CDR Danner requested any recommendations, corrections or input for the February 18, 2009, minutes. CDR Danner stated that in Section III, 2nd paragraph, the statement "...and since the Bylaws were not reviewed last year..." to be corrected to "...and since the By-Laws were not reviewed during 2008..." The rest of the light edits would be emailed by CDR Danner. Motion was made by LCDR Iris Valentin-Bon to accept the



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February 2009 draft minutes with the recommended and projected edits. LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper seconded. All was in favor.

III. Chair Report and Old Business:

CDR Ali Danner stated that some of our successes last meeting was identifying Subcommittee chairs, which were noted in the minutes. The major part of this segment would be the reviewing and updating of the BASPAG coin as well as doing an update on the upcoming USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium and the Breakout sessions.

- a. **BASPAG Coin** - CDR Ali Danner stated that there was an email that went out on Monday from CDR Sheila Merriweather, and that there were a couple of feedbacks from our voting members. LCDR Valentin-Bon had asked if it would be possible to add an axis to the 3-D figure and that it looks like a spectrum. LCDR Chanlongbutra agreed that the coin looks great but she had recommended an assortment of bacteria and viruses that can go on the coin. She had sent a variety of JPEGs for those. CDR Danner stated that one of the issues was the symbol at the bottom of the coin layout, which was a 3-D graphic of a peak. About a year ago someone had made the recommendation for that symbol, and it was unclear what it symbolizes. The issue is whether we should go with a different symbol or whether we delete this symbol and go with the 4 symbols that are already on there. CDR Phillip Toy stated that maybe we can go with only 4 symbols.

CDR Sheila Merriweather stated that she had received the coin in hand, and that it was a very nice looking coin. She did not want to unilaterally make any decisions. The company was already moving forward with duplicating the coin. She was able to stop them right before they started to print. The reason was that she thought the symbols on the coin were a little small. Also CDR Merriweather was in the process of writing up what the coin is about, all the symbols and their meanings and how we chose them. However, she could not remember the meaning of that particular symbol. So the discussion is whether we should delete it and/or add another one. CDR Merriweather stated that the ideas were good but we already have a symbol on the coin that represents Microbiology. She also said that there was already a symbol for Epidemiology, which was a line chart with a magnifying glass. She was not opposed to replacing that symbol to make it more noticeable since people were still asking what it represents. LCDR Valentin-Bon stated that the symbol could represent so many things, such as the spectrum for Chemistry, or the Bell chart for Epidemiology



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when there is an outbreak. CDR Merriweather stated that maybe the symbol would not be bad since it can be cross utilized between the different disciplines. She stated that she was trying to negotiate with the coin company for us not to incur additional costs to make this last minute change, but this last minute change is to be very minimal, that is, under \$100 if anything. We need to decide whatever it is. CDR Toy suggested to leave it as is. CDR Merriweather stated that if we cannot identify what that symbol is, then we should not leave it. LCDR Amy Constantine agreed with CDR Merriweather that the symbol is not identifiable. LCDR Valentin-Bon stated that we should remove it or replace it. CDR Merriweather stated that someone sent in a symbol for Quality Assurance that was very distinguishable. CDR Merriweather stated that she can send it out again.

CDR Merriweather sent out an email with the QA symbol for comments. Based on the earlier inputs, CDR Danner stated that his preliminary thoughts were to go with the 4 more recognized symbols that were on the previous coin draft sent out earlier this week. However, he is receptive to adding the QA symbol, but he did not feel that it particularly recognizes or identifies a particular subset of officers. LCDR Amy Chanlongbutra stated that when she first saw the statistical graph with the magnifying glass, she thought that it represents the statisticians or the bio-statistician group, but she does not know if that is a formal billet within our group. She also stated that if you take out the magnifying glass, that it would more clearly represent the statisticians. She stated that the Quality Assurance symbol with the footprints seems to represent Epidemiology. Thus she felt these two symbols are more inclusive. CDR Danner also stated that he likes the chart symbol without the magnifying glass. LCDR Vu asked how much changes we can make at this point and how much it would cost. CDR Merriweather stated that if we can find a chart without a magnifying glass, it is just a matter of replacing the symbol, but this would have to be discussed with the coin company. Also, she discussed the possibility of adding the 5th symbol. CDR Merriweather stated that she can go back and find out if there would be an additional cost. She proposed that we keep the three symbols that are depicted on the coin as is. She will look into a symbol of a graph without the magnifying glass, and adding the Quality Assurance as the 5th symbol. If everyone is okay with that, she will go forward. She does not want to wait too much longer as the coins need to be ready for the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. CDR Toy made a motion to support these proposals. LCDR Mainor-Harper seconded. A vote was taken and all was in favor.



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- b. **USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Breakout Sessions:** CDR Sheila Merriweather stated that the Breakout Sessions are on track. All the presenters have been notified and are moving forward with their presentations. She will be sending out an email in about a month or so to try to get a status of where the presenters are with their presentations. About a month before the presentations, she will be asking for their final presentations to send forth to COF.

IV. Standing Committee Reports

- a. **Awards subcommittee:** LCDR Destry Sillivan stated that there is no report at this time, and that he will be meeting with CDR Sheila Merriweather as soon as possible. CDR Merriweather stated that she is looking forward to hearing from him as the BASPAG needs to get some announcements in the CC Bulletin as it is already almost the end of March.
- b. **Membership subcommittee:** LCDR Chau Vu, standing in for LT Elizabeth Claverie-Williams, stated that the Membership subcommittee is having a meeting in April, and that LT Claverie-Williams is getting ready to send out an email to the Membership subcommittee to get ideas for recruiting BASPAG officers.
- c. **Mentoring subcommittee:** LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper stated that she had met with CAPT Nancy Bill. She stated that currently the Mentoring subcommittee is focusing on two areas: 1) The Junior officers who want specific advice that relate directly to their specialties as an HSO officer, and 2) Officers who have challenges or who are struggling with promotions. During the next 3 months, the Mentoring subcommittee will be identifying people within the BASPAG who are interested in remaining or becoming Mentors. The subcommittee will also be seeking people who are interested in being Mentees. CAPT Nancy Bill and CDR Phillip Toy stated that they would answer any questions that she might have in the future. Also, she stated that she currently serves on the Mentoring Committee for the HSO officers. She stated that she will be setting up a meeting with CAPT Laura Aponte, who is the lead of that group, to see how the BASPAG can align our mentoring program with their mentoring program. CDR Danner asked if there were preliminary projections that we would do stand-alone for the Mentoring arrangements or are we leaning more towards basically helping officers that are identified within the HS-PAC Mentoring committee. LCDR Mainor-Harper stated that the HS-PAC Mentoring committee has not met in a while but according to



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the last meeting, they are trying to revamp their program. So currently she stated that stand-alone would be the best idea. She also mentioned that at one point, there was a discussion of not having a Mentoring committee and just having the Mentoring subcommittees. CDR Danner stated that he would lean towards supporting that since within the last 24 hours, he had heard from a colleague who attempted to obtain a Mentor through the HS-PAC on several efforts and had been unsuccessful. Also he stated that we might consider utilizing the upcoming conference to pair people up, maybe even partnering with our booth or representatives at the HS-PAC table to actually sign people up with forms to fill out. That would be a great opportunity for networking and mentoring. LCDR Mainor-Harper stated that it was a great idea and that she will be following up on that.

- d. **Professional Development subcommittee:** LCDR Iris Valentin-Bon stated that at the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium this year, there will be around 5 to 6 public health schools that will be participating. They include the Harvard School of Public Health, John Hopkins, Bloomer School of Public Health, the University of Massachusetts, and the new Georgia Medical College. Also there will be a booth from the Association of Schools of Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Health is going to present. We are inviting all of our fellow officers to come by to get more information.

V. New Business:

- a. **BASPAG By-Laws Review:** LCDR Chau Vu stated that the BASPAG had received 4 feedback with revisions and 2 feedback with no changes. The last email that she had sent out with the document titled "BASPAG By-Laws - Revision 2" had the 4 revisions combined. CDR Danner stated that the revisions were quite good, and that he will email the syntax later to LCDR Vu. CDR Danner asked if there were any substantial changes to the edits that had already been submitted. CDR Danner asked for a motion to approve the submitted edits to the 2009 By-Laws as well as the ones that he would be forwarding to LCDR Vu. LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper motioned to move that the revisions for the By-Laws be accepted. LCDR Destry Sillivan seconded. A vote was taken and all was in favor.

- VI. **Open Floor:** CDR Phillip Toy asked when the increase in the number of regular Corps officers will go into effect. CDR Danner stated that it has been almost 17 years since there has been a substantial increase and that there has been a back and forth in the last 4 to 5 years. He stated that there is going to be a Congressional follow-up on it. A few days ago, it was said that we are



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boosted to 4,000 officers for the regular Corps, and that it was in the Omnibus package. It can be several months, but usually it happens within a 12 month period. CDR Danner has not heard the specifics but stated that we will probably hear more prior to the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. He thinks that it is likely that the Assimilation Board will be meeting this year.

LCDR Juanika Mainor-Harper asked if CDR Danner had heard anything on the traveling memo for the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. She has heard that they were trying to increase the number of the people who can attend the conference. CDR Danner stated that usually around April that the number is low, about 600 officers out of 6000 officers may attend. This means that you can use your Individual Learning Account (ILA) to pay for the conference registration. Then additional requests will go up through the Surgeon General and the Secretary of HHS to expand the number. Usually around the time of the deadline of the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, for the early bird which is around the second or third week of April, there comes a clarification of an increase number. It might go to 800 or so, and the actual attendees might be around 1200 officers, with 300+ paying out of their own pocket, and a certain percentage receiving scholarships. So if you are 0-3 or below, please submit for the scholarship and seek your supervisor's approval to attend. Make sure that your Individual Development Plan (IDP) is updated to 2009, which for CDC, the deadline was this past Friday. Normally your IDP must be updated for that calendar year before you can use the ILA fund. You can only use the ILA fund if you are selected by your agency as one of the attendees using federal funds. Your potential for being approved is dramatically increased if you are a presenter, on a particular committee or chairing.

VII. Adjournment - This meeting was adjourned at 11:59 am EDT

Next meeting will be held on April 15th, 2009
Third Wednesday of every month 11:00 -12:00 EDT, 8:00 are PDT.
Teleconference call number: 1-866-761-3314
Passcode: 6211189

Minutes taken by LCDR Chau M. Vu. Revised by Chau M. Vu.



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