

**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE OPTOMETRY OFFICER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUP
(OPAG)**

Teleconference Report – 11:10am to 12:50pm, Wednesday August 31, 2005– Page 1 of 10

1. Attendees:

1.1. OPAG Members

- 1.1.1. CAPT Greg Ketcher (Chair)
- 1.1.2. CDR Carmen Palma (Vice-Chair)
- 1.1.3. CDR Mike Candreva
- 1.1.4. CDR Nancy Nichols (HSO PAC member and ex officio OPAG member)
- 1.1.5. LCDR Kim Lewandowski-Walker (OPAG secretary - Absent)
- 1.1.6. LCDR Barbara Massey
- 1.1.7. Dr. Michael Duenas (CDC Representative – Absent)

1.2. Guests

- 1.2.1. CAPT Richard Hatch (IHS Eye Care Coordination Committee Chair)
- 1.2.2. CDR David Bellware (Discipline Liaison - HSO PAC Recruitment Subcommittee)

2. Meeting called to order at 11:10am

- 2.1.1. Approval of minutes from June 29, 2005 OPAG meeting performed via e-mail to OPAG members

3. Old Business/Standing Agenda Items

3.1. Retention pay (ORSP)/Loan Repayment

- 3.1.1. CDR Candreva reported on a conversation with CAPT. Schleisman that the status of this issue remains unchanged. ORSP and IHSLRP are unable to be received concurrently by PHS Optometry Officers.

3.2. ORSP Renewals

- 3.2.1. CAPT Ketcher stated renewal forms for ORSP instructions/agreements should be arriving via e-mail within two weeks or so from OCCO. Even if one signed a three-year agreement, a renewal form must be submitted on a yearly basis. The renewal form is signed by the officer's supervisor regarding satisfactory performance. Those not in clinical billets will need to submit proof of clinical hours with the renewal and a copy of Clinical Privileges. An active 2004 COER needs to be on file to be eligible. CAPT. Ketcher will follow-up with Alicia Welsh at Compensation Branch; if CAPT Ketcher is deployed CDR Candreva will follow-up.
- 3.2.2. CAPT Hatch reported ORSP can be received yearly until an Officer is off probation. At that time a Multi-Year ORSP can be signed.
- 3.2.3. Capt Hatch reported that the ORSP is based on an anniversary date; so disbursement will occur in the same pay cycle as it has in the previous year.

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3.3. OFRD/Transformation

3.3.1. To be eligible for the Medical Readiness Badge the Presidents Challenge will not be an acceptable replacement for the APFT.

3.3.2. Officers that may not serve in their Primary Deployment Role will in the future be able to sign on in a Secondary Deployment Role.

3.3.2.1. It is reported the RADM Peter, CMO of Navajo Area is requesting the Navajo Area Optometrists use Liaison as their Primary Deployment Role.

3.3.2.2. CAPT Ketcher also use recommended the use of a Secondary Deployment Role.

3.3.3. Re-Educate Facility Administrators who are reluctant to deploy Officers.

3.4. Selection of JOAG and COA Liaisons for OPAG

3.4.1. Selection of JOAG Liaison is currently on hold. CAPT Ketcher will re-send information pertaining to JOAG Liaison.

3.5. Title 38 & Civil Service Reclassification

3.5.1. Recent contact with Bruce Kertcher; this issue is being revisited; HQE staffing levels are allowing this to occur.

3.5.2. CAPT Ketcher is re-forwarding CDR Massey's template referencing Title 38 for Optometrists; this is to be used by CEO's, Clinical Directors, and Tribal entities to support Title 38 pay.

3.5.3. Status remains unchanged on the re-classification of the GS-600 Series.

3.6. OPAG FUNDS

3.6.1. CDR Nichols reported Sylvia Tetzlaff, HSO PAC Treasurer, conveyed that it was still undecided on how PAC funds should be kept; a policy will be formulated in the future. In the mean time, with no formal mechanism in place a PAC/PAG should use its own discretion.

4. New Business

4.1. Uniform Policies

4.1.1. New Uniform policies have been released, CC26.3. Access through CCMIS website <http://dcp.psc.gov/navigati.asp>.

4.2. Retirement

4.2.1. CAPT Richard Hatch, early 2006

4.2.2. CAPT Siu Wong, March 2006

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- 4.2.3. CAPT John Garber, 2006
- 4.2.4. CAPT James Hughes, 2006

4.3. Medical Benefits

- 4.3.1. CAPT Ketcher forwarded an e-mail pertaining to Hearing Aids. Beginning Sept. 1, active-duty family members (ADFMs) who meet specific hearing-loss requirements, will be eligible to receive hearing aids including services and supplies as a TRICARE benefit.

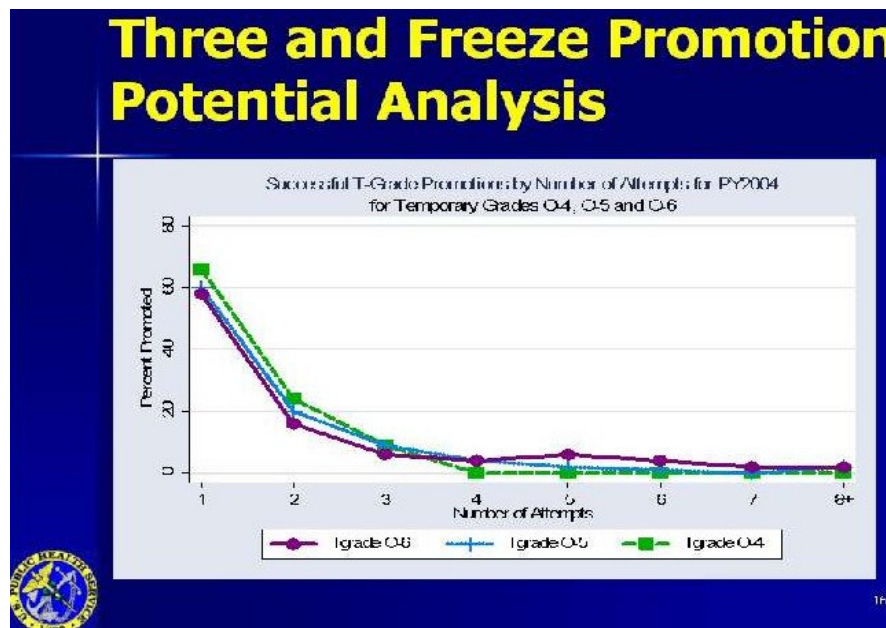
4.4. COER

- 4.4.1. New Circular available for 2005 COER. Note rating period extended to the end of the Fiscal Year September 30, 2005. Access through CCMIS website http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/MC380.pdf
- 4.4.2. Draft Guidance/Information for Completing Attachment 1 to the COER.
 - 4.4.2.1. Duties, Accomplishments and Goal remains the same, however within these one must address ‘Activities and accomplishments evidencing officership, leadership, and force readiness in the context of the transformed Corps’.

5. Career Development/Promotions/Awards

5.1. Promotions

- 5.1.1. ‘Three and Freeze’ policy officially exists. However, even without this policy, the more times you are up before the promotion board your chance of promotion statistically decreases. See OCCFM slide:



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5.1.2. Information for those up for promotion will be sent directly to the individual by CAPT Ketcher and placed on the Web Board. Promotion assistance will also be available for those who request it.

5.1.3. Readiness level may still be considered for promotion boards in the future.

5.1.4. Permanent promotion results will be available in Fall 2005.

5.1.5. Review and become familiar with promotion benchmarks. Attempt to meet as many as possible.

5.2. Billets

5.2.1. No change in revised billet status.

5.3. Awards

5.3.1. CDR Palma plans to link the biographies of Ed Hamilton (CC Award) and Les Kaplan (CS/Tribal Award) to their respective awards. She will forward brief biographies by end of September for review.

5.3.1.1. The applications deadlines for the Ed Hamilton and Les Kaplan awards will be December 31 of the respective award year. Selection will occur by February 1 of the respective award year. This will allow the recipient time to arrange travel plans to the COA or Biennial IHS Meeting for award presentation. The design of the plaque still needs to be completed.

5.3.2. Contact CDR Palma or an Awards Committee member for assistance concerning awards.

5.4. Assimilation – nothing new to report.

5.5. Positions

5.5.1. The most recent Recruitment Announcement was updated in September 2005. This could be found on the IHS Optometry Website at www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Optomtry/Optjobs.cfm.

5.5.2. LT David Langford will be leaving the Browning, MT in October 2005.

5.5.3. Dr. Jamal Masalmeh has left Rosebud, SD.

5.5.4. CAPT Cliff Brown has transferred to Crow Agency, MT.

5.5.5. Dr. Amanda Haber started at Poplar, MT.

5.5.6. Dr. Ronda Olson started at Tuba City, AZ.

5.5.7. Dr. Nicholas Keszo started at Keshena, WI.

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6. Communications

- 6.1.** The Optometry Web Board continues on. The address is <http://www.forum.ihs.gov/~optometry>. Needed is a Webmaster to replace LT Langford.
- 6.2.** Contact CAPT Ketcher if you wish to place information on the OPAG web page. This webpage can be accessed via the HSO PAC website <http://www.usphs-hso.org/OPAG/opag.shtml>.

7. Meetings, Recruitment Activities and Liaison Reports

7.1. Meetings

- 7.1.1. AMSUS Meeting** – October 30 – November 4, 2005, Nashville, TN. CAPT C. Brown will represent PHS Optometry. CAPT Brown will be invited to the appropriate OPAG Meeting to provide a report.
 - 7.1.1.1.** After a brief hiatus Capt C. Brown will again review AMSUS awards.
- 7.1.2. FSO Meeting-** November 7-10, 2005, Double Tree Inn (800.222.8733) Orlando, FL. PHS representative is unknown at this time. Meeting information can be attained through <http://afos2020.org>.
- 7.1.3. AAO Meeting** – December 08-11, 2005, San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina (800-266-9432) San Diego, CA. Meeting information can be attained through <http://www.aaopt.org/>.
- 7.1.4. SECO/AFOS** – February 24-26, 2006, Georgia World Congress Center and Omni Hotel Atlanta, GA. CAPT Ketcher will represent PHS Optometry. Meeting information can be attained through <http://www.secointernational1.com/index.cfm>.
- 7.1.5. COA Meeting** – May 01-04, 2006, Adams Mark Hotel (303.893.3333) Denver, CO. If attending please bring a copy of your travel order to receive possible tax exemption on room rate.
- 7.1.6. IHS Eye Care Biennial Meeting** – May 08-12, 2006, Southern California College of Optometry Fullerton, CA. Rooms can be reserved at the Fullerton Marriott (714.738.7800). The meeting is open to all IHS and PHS optometrists. CDR Richardson is working on meals. Contact Sue Atkinson satkinson@scco.edu or CAPT Hatch Richar.Hatch@ihs.gov for registration information.

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7.1.7. AOA Convention – June 22-25, 2006 Las Vegas, NV. Dr. Cespon will represent PHS Optometry. Meeting information can be attained through www.aoa.org.

7.2. Recruitment Activities

7.2.1. The idea of Welcome Packets for new optometrists was brought to the table.

7.2.2. To assist in Civil Service Recruitment, optometry announcements should be advertised as GS-09/11/12 series. This will have the potential to provide for an increase in applicant pools and promotions.

7.2.2.1. After one year of employment at the entering a lower GS level, potential exists for a Grade increase.

7.3. Liaison Reports

7.3.1. CDR Bellware Discipline Liaison - HSO PAC Recruitment Subcommittee

7.3.1.1. Reports working with HSO applicants.

7.3.1.1.1. 3 applicants removed.

7.3.1.1.2. 1 lost; USAF did not release.

7.3.1.1.3. 1 wants Urban or East Coast; over 12 years of active Navy duty – needs waiver.

7.3.1.1.4. 1 Okalahoma Area; will transfer to CC if military time approved.

7.3.1.1.5. 1 places at Fort Belknap.

7.3.1.2. Requested that Area Chiefs review Vacancy Announcements and Position Descriptions.

7.3.2. CDR Clary, COA Board of Directors, HSO Representative

7.3.2.1. See Attachment #1 – National Commissioned Officer’s Association (OPAG) Report – August 2005.

7.3.3. CDR Nancy Nichols, HSO PAC Member

7.3.3.1. See Attachment #2 – HS-PAC Meeting Minutes Summary, 5 August 2005.

8. Action Items

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- 8.1. CDR Palma will distribute the verbiage for the Les Caplan and Ed Hamilton Awards for review.
- 8.2. CDR Clary will be invited to provide a report on COA.
- 8.3. CDR Zobel will be invited to report on OFRD.

9 OPAG Meetings

9.1 Next meeting scheduled for November 02, 2005 at 11:00 CST.

- 9.1.1 CAPT Richard Hatch, CAPT Terry Schleisman, CDR Clary, and CDR Zobel will be invited as guests at the next meeting.

9.2 OPAG members should use the same conference call number and password

9.3 Meeting adjourned at 12:50pm

Minutes prepared by CDR Michael Candreva, OPAG

Distribution: HSO CPO, HSO PAC, PHS Optometry Officers.

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ATTACHMENT #1

National Commissioned Officer's Association

(OPAG) Report – August 2005

CDR Dawn Clary

Health Services Representative to the COA Board of Directors

Upcoming COA Events:

January 4, 2006 Anchor & Caduceus Luncheon

May 1-4, 2006 USPHS Professional Conference. Adams Mark Hotel in Denver, Colorado. This is an important annual event for the PHS Commissioned Corps. We need to encourage our Junior Officers to attend. Scholarships are available for them to attend.

Improvement of CE credits offered. This is very difficult for our category because of the diverse group we have. Presentations regarding common issues for Officers. COER workshops, deployment workshops, etc.

New Business:

COA will have a 1-800 number for officers to call with questions/concerns

New COA Headquarters database – ready by NOV 1? WHY? Better tracking of members, updated information, helping to update the COA Website to make it useful and helping to generate reports.

Awards Process – HSO awards link on the website is useful.

<http://www.usphs-hso.org/Awards/awards.shtml>

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ATTACHEMNT #2

HS-Pac Meeting Minutes Summary

5 August 2005
0800-1400

Note: this is a brief summary of the minutes. These are not the official minutes, which will be released at a future date.

Topic	Summary
1. OCCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going through personnel changes: 1 retired, 1 transferred to Coast Guard, 1 was on vacation for one month. They are currently making selections for 2 more HR specialists. • There have been > 200 associate recruiter applicants, are currently being reviewed, and applicants will be receiving an email in the next week or so. Contact CDR. Blackwell if you do not receive an email & you are an applicant for the associate recruiter program. This information will be posted on the listserv. • FYI: they are working on security clearances for all active duty officers. If you have a clearance as indicated in your OPF, then OCCO already has this information. This information will also be posted on the list serve at some point.
2. CPO Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amsus coming up in November in Nashville. 23% of the award nominations were from PHS officers. • The issue of officers having government passports is on the horizon, especially for those deployed. The agencies will fund the passports and they will contact the officer. This does not have an impact on your promotion. • May 1 was the deadline to have completed the Hep A & B series, which is a change from previous policy, which said only that the officer had to have started the series. This change in policy meant there was a large drop in number of officers who met basic requirements (for HSO was 70%, now 59%). SO for those officers up for promotion next, they will have had to complete the series for the 5 points. • Field Readiness Badge issue: is in the process. RADM Babb has asked for comments from the PAC – will be sent out later today. Hope to have something in place by January 1. Officers will probably have to renew annually. Also, the President’s Challenge probably won’t be eligible and no officers with medical waivers. • Call for nominations for Flag officers coming soon. Have to be in a Flag billet to be eligible & your agency nominates the officer. • Temporary promotions announced. Currently waiting for the ASH where to draw the line

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	<p>before permanent promotions are announced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto leave tracking date pushed back to Sept 1. • MOU has been signed with the VA for officers to get clinical hours for either licensing or deployment. • The 3 and freeze policy: still a lot of concern on the part of CPOs. CPOs have asked OCFM for number of officers who could potentially be affected & information on the DOD's policy.
3. Awards Subcommittee	Kissel & Garcia announced at recent COA meeting. Our subcommittee also helped with the AMSUS awards. We are currently working on award criteria revisions.
4. Membership Subcommittee	We have 36 applicants, with no civil servant applicants submitted. We are meeting at the end of August and will submit the ranked list to the HSO CPO with our committee's recommendation.
5. Recruitment Subcommittee	Looking at ways to involve more field officers. Considering "cyber-involvement" for those committees communicate through email, rather than conference calls or meetings.
6. Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAPAG accepting nominations to fill in 4 slots. Deadline Sept 30th • AS of August 1, there were 339 HSO officers not meeting basic requirements • Issues of JOAG managing their fundraising money—currently attorneys are evaluating. May or may not affect others in terms of how their money is handled.
7. Future Meeting of HS-PAC	October 2005

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Nichols, OD, HS-PAC member 5 August 2005