

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee  
Thursday, August 22, 2002**

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all PHS Engineers and Architects. Those who are not able to attend in person may attend via conference call.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

CDR Michael Coene, EPAC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. EDT at FDA, 9200 Corporate Boulevard, Conference Room 330V, Rockville, Maryland. The June 27, 2002, meeting minutes were approved. **The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2002, at 1:00 p.m. MDT (3 pm EDT) in Denver, Colorado.**

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE):** RADM Robert Williams reported the following announcements.

**A. CPO PAC Chair meeting**

1. The Surgeon General and Deputy Surgeon General were both in attendance. Surgeon General, VADM Carmona is lively, has a good sense of humor and has high expectations of the Commissioned Corps. On his agenda: transformation of the Corps; determination of how we get where we need to be (focus groups); continuation of SG reports; development of measurable objectives. He expects the CPOs to provide leadership, and that we will be domestic warriors for public health. There will be a teleconference tomorrow (8/23/02) for members of the PHS only. VADM Carmona will give an overview of his vision for the Corps and then he will open the discussion up for questions, which will be asked by both the in studio audience and email/phone. He does not want anything to be sugar coated!
2. RADM Moritsugu and his wife Lisa had a baby, Emily Rene (6 lbs 9 oz, 19 1/4 inches)!
3. We have been asked to identify organizations that we feel would be opportunistic for the Surgeon General to meet with, for example, the American Medical Association or the National Medical Association. One that comes to mind is the service organization, SAME and perhaps VADM Carmona could also attend next years national conference. If you have any in mind, please send RADM Williams an email (within the next week) with the

name of the group, a contact person and number, and a brief explanation of why you think it would be good for the Surgeon General to meet with the group you are recommending.

4. Remember the importance of addressing all officers by rank structure.
5. After VADM Carmona left the meeting, there was discussion regarding the directive by the Deputy Surgeon General to re-examine the authority for PHS officers to wear ribbons other than PHS ribbons, e.g., there is an active push to allow PHS officers to wear the national defense service medal, which some officers received for their work during the WTC and Anthrax response.
6. The Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) is working to establish a rotation program for junior officers, for a 6 month detail to the OSG. More information should be disseminated soon.
7. The 30 minute 9/11 response video (interview of various PHS folks involved in the response effort), which was played at COA, is scheduled to air on WBAL on September 7<sup>th</sup> from 7-8 pm. Hopefully it will be picked up by other stations. There have been "Join the PHS" spots (shorter versions of the video, 30 seconds or less) created and these spots should air during the commercial breaks of popular shows such as ER. DCP and DHHS will send out information regarding the broadcast.

#### B. EPAC Announcements

1. Assistance to Afghanistan - IHS has the lead for developing a response to assist Afghanistan with infrastructure rebuilding. They will provide us updates as this project develops.
2. Career Counseling - RADM Williams and CAPT Sven Rodenbeck recently returned from Alaska where they had an opportunity to meet with folks who work with ANTHC and counsel 22 officers. RADM Williams commented that CAPT Rodenbeck does an outstanding job helping officers go through their record and strengthen and emphasize those parts that can help you through the promotion process. The officers in Alaska were in very good spirits, they enjoy the job and the location and they welcome others to join them! If any other group would like to set up a career counseling session, please contact CAPT Rodenbeck.
3. Presentation of Award - On the trip back from Alaska, RADM Williams and CAPT Rodenbeck stopped in Seattle to present the Green Medal to LT Matt Martinson at a local SAME meeting. RADM Williams reminded everyone that all engineers (civil servants as well as commissioned corps officers) are eligible for the awards that will be mentioned by CDR West during today's meeting. The folks in Alaska have a goal of winning all the awards, so it seems as if they have issued a challenge to the rest of us! We

also met with COL Graves, the post president, who will be in charge of the SAME annual meeting there next year. RADM Williams requested space to hold an EPAC meeting in coordination with the SAME meeting, and for our continuing leadership development seminar. COL Graves was interested in working with us and helping us in any way that he could. He would like to promote PHS through advertising, etc. Our goal is to have at least 30 PHS officers in attendance.

4. September EPAC meeting in Denver - RADM Williams encourages all to attend who can.
5. Questions to be presented to VADM Carmona - RADM Williams solicited questions from EPAC for him to present to the Surgeon General during the upcoming teleconference
  - From Mr. Mitch Williams - SG views on his role as a leader during times of crisis with regard to public health issues, versus how that role might be filled by the Secretary for HHS, or the agency heads. In addition, what is his relationship with the White House or the Secretary?
  - From LCDR Nate Tatum - Under the retooling/strengthening, it would be great if he could speak towards mobility, i.e., will it be mandatory, etc.
  - From CDR West - Does he envision any non-traditional roles for engineers? RADM Williams commented that VADM Carmona said that there would be many opportunities for engineers and commissioned officers, no matter where we served, to be recognized for expertise in our field (engineering) as well as public health, whether that is within an agency within the PHS or another agency or outside of the US.

**EPAC Chair:** CDR Michael Coene reported the following

1. Today's PAC Chair meeting - list of priorities to determine agenda items for remainder of year. One item that CDR Coene brought up was how other PACs involve civil servants. As it turns out, the other PACs aren't as successful as EPAC in having civil servants involved in meetings and activities.
2. Email to follow with instructions - LCDR Tatum will be sending out an email with information about the Surgeon General teleconference and how to submit questions.
3. Commissioned Corps Officers - Please go to the DCP website (<http://dcp.psc.gov/>) and update your information.

4. Task Force on CC promotion cycle - If you are interested in participating, please contact RADM Williams or CDR Coene. The time frame would be from September through November.
5. Denver Meeting - Approximately 12 people will be attending. Please confirm your attendance and indicate your arrival day and where you will be staying by sending an email to LCDR Nicole Wolanski, who will be sending out a formal agenda once it has been received. In general, CDR West indicated that the day will start on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 8 am and the tours and meetings would last until 4. The evening events include a cocktail hour and dinner.

### III. OLD BUSINESS

CDR Coene opened discussions on old business:

- A. Recognition proposal - CDR West indicated that he sent out the proposal by email. He indicated the minor changes that were made since the last distribution of this proposal, which were based on the discussion at the June EPAC meeting. These revisions include: a sample attachment table that would document the hours spent on EPAC duties to support the special assignment award; addition of a requirement that the candidate include a copy of their appointment memorandum; a section for a civil service honor award; language to cover advanced degrees and specialty certifications; and, a sample attachment of what an officer would submit to the OCE for a special assignment award. A motion to accept the changes was put forward and EPAC members voted unanimously to approve the recognition proposal.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS

CDR Coene opened discussions on new business:

- A. Training information materials for web - CAPT Rodenbeck is bringing two issues to the PAC
  1. First he is seeking permission to post on the PHS Engineer website two items that he attached to his August 9<sup>th</sup> email; *General Awareness Information Medical Devices for Engineers* and *General Awareness Information Disaster Inspection of Medical Facilities*. These two documents were developed by the Emergency Preparedness subcommittee in an effort to provide all PHS engineers and architects with basic information on these two topics so that they could have this knowledge when they respond in emergencies.

We are also proposing that there be linkage between the PHS Engineer web site and the IHS Environmental Handbook and the USAID Field Operations Guide which would also serve as background information and useful documents for PHS engineers and architects to have access to.

LCDR Tatum asked if this could be filtered through CCRF so that members could earn credit, and CAPT Rodenbeck said that the training requirements are already so rigorous, that there doesn't seem to be a need to require testing on these subject matters.

It was suggested that the vote be taken via email. The response was unanimously in favor of approval.

2. The second item that CAPT Rodenbeck was hoping to get concurrence to proceed, was to raise awareness that EPA can call on PHS, who, along with the Army Corps of Engineers and DHHS represent three of the ESF (emergency service functions). The idea is to conduct outreach to promote the exchange of information. The proposal is to use SAME's Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee as a neutral ground to hold the initial interactions to foster better understanding of each others' capabilities and may lead up to joint table top training exercises. CAPT Rodenbeck has already discussed this with RADM John Babb (Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness) and he had no problems with this proposal. A vote was taken and EPAC members votes unanimously to support CAPT Rodenbeck going forward.
- B. Literary Awards – CDR West requested that discussion of this item be moved down to his Awards Subcommittee report and he would like to instead discuss the request from the National Council of Engineering Examiners (NCEE). CDR Coene agreed to this minor change in the agenda.

Request from NCEE – CDR West was contacted by this group and they asked if they could get the addresses of engineers within the PHS to mail out questionnaires, the results of which will serve as the backbone to develop exams. The request was briefly discussed, but it was quickly evident that this request was not one we could fulfill because 1) LCDR Tatum explained that even he could not contact all the engineers, and 2) giving out a list of addresses is probably against a privacy act. The alternative is that we send out an email asking for volunteers, if engineers are interested then they may contact NCEE. It was decided that this is the appropriate way to proceed.

- C. Healthy Building Initiative - Summary of the "pre-workshop implementation plan" was given, and EPAC voted, and approved to proceed with the planning. The pre-workshop shall be coordinated with the Office of the Chief Engineer, and full EPAC shall be informed of status. Tentative date for the pre-workshop is one day during the week of October 7-11. Mr. Kong acknowledged LCDR Scharen's comment that ER1 <http://er1.com/>, a national prototype for the next-generation emergency department, should be part of the organized compendium of current resources.

**V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS****A. Awards: CDR Maurice West reported the following:**

1. The Awards Subcommittee is calling for papers for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Engineer Literary Awards. Awards are presented annually to the best-written work in each of five categories, Management, Research, Regulations, Engineering Applications, and Engineering Publications. Information on the submission criteria, judging, and application form have been submitted for posting on the Engineers Web Page. Papers are due November 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. It is time to submit nominations for the Agency, PHS, and NSPE Federal Engineer of the Year. These nominations will be submitted through the Agency Awards Coordinators. Last year the deadline was October 9<sup>th</sup>. This year's deadline, nomination forms, and a list of Agency award coordinators will be posted on the web site by the end of the month.
3. The Environmental and Water Resources Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineers has three new awards for professional achievement. One of these is the *Award for Achievement in Environmental Engineering Government Service* – which honors an individual who has made outstanding contributions to environmental engineering as practiced in government and service to the public, both at the individual's organization and more broadly. Deadline has passed for this year (August 1) but the Awards Subcommittee will promote this award next year.
4. The deadline for the 2003 Thomas Jefferson Awards for Public Architecture is October 11, 2002. This award is sponsored by the American Institute of Architects. Persons interested in this award can contact me for the information on the requirements for the submittal package or contact Tanisha Hoaney, at 202-626-7586. Her email is [thoaney@aia.org](mailto:thoaney@aia.org). (The Awards Subcommittee will be developing a PHS architect award cosponsored by the AIA.)

**B. Building Design & Construction: Mr. Brian Kong reported the following:**

1. The Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) can now move ahead with a \$16 million, 24 month study of the structural failure and subsequent progressive collapse of the World Trade Center buildings.
2. Minimizing contamination from the Legionnalla bacteria has become a major issue among healthcare facilities, and is a HBI issue. BBC News reported that recently in the UK, there was an outbreak linked to the bacteria causing 4 deaths and 330 received hospital treatment.

C. Career Development: Ms. Lisa Hayes reported the following.

The Career Development subcommittee had two meetings since the June EPAC meeting. The first meeting we discussed the planning process for category day and made recommendations for what we should use again next year and what we need to improve. For example, the subcommittee felt that the focused agenda (on emergency response) improved the planning process. The down side of that was that some subcommittee members felt they could not contribute to the planning process because there is no emergency response component to their job. We also made recommendations for improvement of the session itself. The videotaping was seen as positive. On the other hand, some subcommittee members felt like some speakers did not have enough time and that the attended posters were not as effective as the podium presentations.

The subcommittee also discussed the welcome program. As a result, we suggested changes to the letter that RADM Williams sends to new PHS engineers and architects. We also decided to follow up with PSC to find out if we could get a list of new PHS employees who have engineering degrees even though they may not be working in an engineering position. (For example, at ATSDR, several engineers are working in the general environmental health scientist category, and therefore, we probably would not know about those engineers using our current methods for identifying new engineers.)

In the August subcommittee meeting, we brainstormed on possible speakers for the upcoming Engineer and Architect Leadership Development seminar. Those ideas were passed on to the Leadership Development subcommittee chair.

Our next meeting is September 12 at 3:00 EDT. Call in information is the same.

D. Leadership Development Seminar Ad hoc Subcommittee: Mr. Mitch Williams reported the following in LT Jennifer Martin's absence.

1. The Subcommittee has recently received funding commitments from ATSDR, FDA and the Office of Emergency Preparedness, in addition to a previous commitment from the NIH, for the upcoming seminar.
2. The bids from prospective conference planners are due on August 26, 2002, so the Subcommittee hopes to soon have the planner actively engaged in arranging the details for the seminar.
3. Since the last report to the full EPAC, the Subcommittee has made significant progress in detailing the agenda for the three-day seminar, resulting in an impressive line-up of topics. The Subcommittee then moved to identify potential speakers for each of the sessions, and has subsequently received assistance from the Career Development Subcommittee and the Chief Engineer in identifying other potential speakers. The Subcommittee is now beginning the process of defining objectives for each of the seminar sessions.

The objectives will not only be helpful to attendees in understanding the intent of the sessions, but are necessary to obtain continuing education units (CEUs) for the seminar.

4. The Subcommittee still has significant work ahead, so is tentatively planning another meeting in approximately two weeks - exact date and time, with call-in information, will be forthcoming from LCDR Martin.

E. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following.

The last meeting was held on June 13. The most recent initiative that the group is considering is reaching out to EPA to explain what resources PHS engineers have to help EPA out under their emergency functions under national contingency plans specifically ESF-10, hazardous waste. Basically it would involve information sharing, to give them a better appreciation of the resources (i.e., knowledgeable people), they could request through ESF-8. Likewise, it could work the other way around that they could volunteer some EPA engineers to assist us if needed.

Next meeting will be held on July 11, 3-4:30 EDT.

F. Mentoring: Mr. Mitchell Williams reported the following.

1. New Mentoring Subcommittee Members - The Mentoring Subcommittee is looking for new members, including current EPAC members looking for a subcommittee in need of their contributions. Though comprised of a core of about four solid members, the Subcommittee is looking for others to help in carrying out its mission of promoting the topic of mentoring, and specifically the PHS Engineer Mentoring Programs. Interested persons should contact Mitch Williams at [william7@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:william7@niehs.nih.gov).
2. On-Call Mentoring - The Subcommittee was recently afforded the opportunity to include the mentioning of the new "On-call" Mentoring program within the welcome letter from the Chief Engineer to new PHS engineers and architects.

CAPT Leroy Mickelsen is in the process of coordinating with CDR Coene and the Information Subcommittee for the posting of details on the "On-call" Mentoring Program, including contact information for engineers and architects interested in using this tool, on the PHS Engineers' web site along with the existing information on the more formal PHS Engineer Mentoring Program.

CAPT Mickelsen is developing a directory of knowledgeable persons that would serve to respond to questions posed by PHS engineers through the "On-call" Program. The Subcommittee has decided to include EPAC members on this directory by default, though the Subcommittee will certainly respect the wishes of individual EPAC members if they indicate a preference for not being included within this directory - any EPAC member desiring to have

their name removed from this directory can contact either CAPT Mickelsen or Mitch Williams. Likewise, the Subcommittee would appreciate the identification of others that the members of EPAC would consider to be candidates for inclusion within this directory of knowledgeable persons, along with the candidates' areas of expertise, e.g., research, construction, regulatory, facility management, etc.

3. Engineering Leadership Development Seminar (ELDS) Presentation - The upcoming ELDS includes a session on mentoring, and the Subcommittee is taking the lead in developing the presentation(s) on the 1-1/2 hours allotted for the topic. Options currently under consideration for the session include:
  - a. Expert/professional specializing in the field of mentoring
  - b. Knowledgeable representative of an organization with a strong mentoring program, e.g., SAME, ASCE.
  - c. Award recipient that has cited mentoring as one of the keys to their success
4. Next Meeting - The next meeting of the Mentoring Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10, 2002 at 11:00am EDT and can be joined by dialing (919) 541-1996.

G. Recruiting and Retention: LCDR Helgeson was absent.

H. Rules: CAPT Jose Cuzme reported the following:

This subcommittee is also looking for new members. As of yesterday, there are 1202 PHS engineers (civil servant and commissioned corps). They are waiting the list of nominees for new EPAC members. The National Park Service now gets one member slot. EPAC is in need of a Chair-elect for 2003, and hope to get nominations by October. LCDR Tatum said that the OCE is collecting the list of self-nominees; the lists have been sent to the agencies through the Surgeon General's Advisory Council and the OCE has heard back from all, except FDA who will be sending theirs out shortly. Once the OCE receives confirmation on those nominations, the lists will be sent out.

On another note, in reference to the IHS assistance for Afghanistan that RADM Williams mentioned, CAPT Cuzme stated that IHS has been involved with other HHS agencies since last February preparing a plan for how to rebuild the infrastructure in Afghanistan. Originally, NIH was leading the effort. A package from all the agencies was submitted in April of this year, but there has been no response. There are four or more subgroups working on issues such as water, environmental issues and health care facilities, which are the top priorities according to Tommy Thompson. IHS may now be the lead agency. There will be a preliminary deployment of approximately 2 weeks to do an assessment. CAPT Cuzme will continue to keep EPAC updated on the progress of this project.

- I. Information: CAPT Gene Sullenger was present only for the first part of the meeting, so CDR Coene reported the following.
1. Engineer's Regalement - Usually the Information Subcommittee is responsible for this event, which is tentatively scheduled for sometime in October. It will likely be a happy hour after the October EPAC meeting, which will be held on October 24<sup>th</sup>.
  2. COA - CDR Coene recently received the tapes from LCDR Tatum which he had from the COA meeting. CDR Coene will be working on posting some of this data on the Web site.
  3. Photo book - LCDR Tatum completed the CD with photos, and the originals will be sent to the PHS Historian.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP) Liaison: LCDR Claire Karlson reported the following:

1. General Duty Applications received in July: 1

SrCostep applications: 0

JrCostep applications: 2

2. Calls to Active Duty (CAD) during July: 4

3. Current status of category as of July 31, 2002:

407 current active duty engineer officers in all agencies as of 8/22

4. Current Status for August as of August 22, 2002.

General Duty applications - 9

Senior COSTEP - 0

Junior COSTEP - 0

DCP is working on Advertising for publications to recruit COSTEP and General Duty applicants in all categories. LCDR Karlson submitted a proposal an engineering advertisement in the IEEE Magazine, which was tabled until the new fiscal year. Suggestions for publications to advertise in would be greatly appreciated:

American Society of Civil Engineers

Society of Military Engineers

Water Environmental Engineering

In September DCP is going to send out introduction letters, the colored pamphlet and CD-rom to the Deans of the Tri-state schools, to introduce the exciting career

opportunities offered by the Commissioned Corps (CC) to students, graduates and faculty of their school and asking them if we can schedule a recruitment fair next year at the school. A copy of this generic letter is being sent to CDR Coene and LCDR Helgeson.

- B. Commissioned Officers Association (COA) Liaison: CDR Kathy Poneleit was absent.
- C. Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Liaison: LCDR Scharen reported the following:
1. There was a very positive response to the Women's Symposium in Kansas City that PHS co-sponsored.
  2. In July there was turn over in committee chairs, and SAME now has a number of PHS participants on several different committees, especially the Advancement of Technology Committee and the Readiness Committee which is headed by CDR Jim Simpson.
  3. National Conference will be held in Seattle May 27 - 31, 2003. Some of the PHS folks who are local to that area are working on the planning committee; however, LCDR Tatum asked if we knew of anyone interested in participating in the golf tournament, as well as the rest of the conference.
- D. Junior Engineer Report: LCDR Sean Boyd was absent but provided the following report via email prior to the meeting.

JOAG Bylaws have been finalized and we have a full roster of 20 Agency-approved junior officers, which has been forwarded for OSG endorsement.

LT Mat Martinson (IHS engineer) recently assumed the role of JOAG Professional Development Committee Chair.

A JOAG Welcoming Brochure is available electronically and we're working to identify ways to disseminate it to new officers. The group is currently considering dissemination of the brochure through DCP in their new officer's package, through CPOs/PACs in any category welcoming activities, or through the associate recruiting program.

JOAG is preparing a junior officer position statement on How to Keep Corps Morale High, to contribute to discussions at recent CPOPAC meetings.

- E. Job Vacancies: Known vacancies are now posted or linked on the PHS Engineers website ([www.usphsengineers.org](http://www.usphsengineers.org)). The weekly OCE statements from LCDR Tatum via e-mail are another resource. CDR West mentioned that the NPS is recruiting for an industrial hygienist. It will be a civil service announcement, however commissioned corps officers are encouraged to apply.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m. EDT.

**EPAC MEETING PARTICIPATION:**

**Participants:** (Members in bold, with alternates attending matched by number to the members absent):

**LCDR David Ausdermore (CDC), LCDR Meredith Bond (EPA), CDR Michael Coene (FDA), CAPT Jose Cuzme (IHS), Ms. Lisa Hayes (ATSDR), LCDR Claire Karlson (DCP, ex-officio), Mr. Kyung Kim (NIH), Mr. Brian Kong (NIH), LCDR Jamie Natour (HRSA), CAPT Sven Rodenbeck (ATSDR), CDR Todd Scofield (IHS), LCDR Hilda Scharen (OEP, ex-officio), CAPT Gene Sullenger (FDA), LCDR Nathan Tatum (ATSDR, ex-officio), CDR Maurice West (NPS), Mr. F. Mitchell Williams (NIH), RADM Robert Williams (ATSDR, ex-officio), LCDR Nicole Wolanski (FDA).**

**Members Absent:**

**Mr. Michael Adjodha (FDA), LCDR Sean Boyd (FDA, ex-officio), CAPT Kevin Chadwick (IHS, ex-officio), CDR Jo Ann Griffith (EPA, ex-officio), LCDR Scott Helgeson (IHS), LT Jennifer Martin (CDC), CAPT Ronald L. Mickelsen (CDC), LCDR Denman Ondelacy (IHS), CDR Kathy Poneleit (OSG), CAPT Rao Surampalli (EPA).**

**GUESTS:**

**CDR Ed Cayous (IHS), CDR Scott Earnest (CDC, alternate for CAPT Mickelson), LCDR Nelson Mix (EPA, alternate for CAPT Surampalli).**

**AUTHORIZATION:**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LCDR Nicole Wolanski  
Executive Secretary, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have read the above minutes, which accurately describe this meeting, and on behalf of the EPAC approve their distribution:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CDR Michael Coene  
Chairperson, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RADM Robert C. Williams, P.E.  
Chief Engineer, USPHS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date