

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee  
Thursday October 28, 2004**

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all Public Health Service Engineers and Architects. Those who are not able to attend in person may attend via conference call. Please contact the EPAC Recorder, LCDR Hilda Scharen, at 301-827-6795 for the place and conference access number.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

CDR Kathy Poneleit, EPAC Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM ET in Rockville, MD. The September minutes were approved with editorial changes and will be held for two weeks. The next meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on December 16, 2004 and the location is Plaza Level, Tower Oaks Building, Rockville, Maryland (Library near room 183). All EPAC and EPAC Subcommittee meetings are held Eastern Time (ET) unless otherwise specified.

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

- The Engineers' 2004 Regalement will be held today at Guapo's at the Rio in Gaithersburg, MD from 4:00-6:00 PM.
- Next week (Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>) is the 64th Annual Benefit of the Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance (SAME NYC) at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City.
- LCDR Sean Boyd is coordinating Category Day for the 2005 COA Conference in Philadelphia, PA.
- Thanked all engineers who contributed to the engineering category readiness level of 55%, above the 50% required by OMB.
- Officers are advised to follow the CDC Guidelines concerning who needs to receive the flu shot and flu shots are not a requirement for all officers up for promotion this year. The policy currently advises flu shots be given to population groups that are in direct patient care, have chronic diseases, or in high risk categories.
- Congratulations to all engineers who deployed for the environmental issues related to the Florida hurricane response. The engineers were well received and represented in numbers. They contributed to solving issues related to water waste and treatment. In addition, RADM Babb was recognized as an "honorary engineer".
- The Surgeon General's (SG's) first report on "Osteoporosis and Bone Health" was released and very well received by the medical community. Osteoporosis is not only a concern for the elderly as by 2020 half the people under 50 years of age will be at risk for fractures. An easy to read version of this report is available from the SG's website or by calling 1-866-718-BONE.

- The permanent promotions have not yet been cleared for release and will be coming out shortly after the promotion success rates have been signed.
- The transformation of the Corps document options will be sent to the OPDIV heads around November 1 for their review. These options will then be forwarded to the Secretary and a decision concerning the transformation of the Corps will be made around the end of November.
- Additional issues related to the transformation of the Corps are being developed and are related to communication and recruitment. This document will require input from the PACs and is related to branding of the Corps, as well as recruiting the right type of individuals to join the Corps.

**B. EPAC Chair:** CDR Poneleit reported the following:

- Congratulations to all 30 engineers who responded to the Florida hurricane and those who are still responding. Special thanks to CDR Beck for acquiring the total number of engineers who deployed.
- A Listserv for engineers is being developed and will have calendar capability, PAC meeting information, and working documents. It will be a good mechanism to keep engineers abreast.
- Deadline for submission of Regular Corps Assimilation packages is February 11, 2005.
- The permanent promotion rates were sent downtown and are awaiting final approval. The permanent promotion percentage rates by rank will be released shortly.

### **III. OLD BUSINESS**

#### Chair-Elect

- The Chair-Elect nomination and subcommittee chairs (Awards, Career Development, Emergency Response, and Mentoring) are being discussed and will be addressed at the next EPAC meeting on December 16.

#### Curriculum Vitae (CV) format

- Standardized CV is being discussed with PAC Chairs.
- The Career Development Subcommittee looked at CV formats. The engineering category will either adopt the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) CV format or use it as an example and develop another format for the category. The EHO CV format includes the promotion benchmarks in the cover sheet.
- The Chief Professional Officers (CPOs) have reviewed the promotion benchmarks and a decision has been made to remove Awards from the Progression section and have it remain only under Performance.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> precept related to isolated hardship duty will be added in this year's promotion cycle for officers meeting that particular criterion. Officers are encouraged to highlight this in their CV and CV cover sheet.
- If you are interested in providing input to the promotion precepts, contact CDR Kathy Poneleit at [Kathy.Poneleit@hhs.gov](mailto:Kathy.Poneleit@hhs.gov).

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

#### Career Development

- LCDR Keats and CDR Rector responsible for Career Development in OCCO shared with the PAC their role and the Career Development outline

document. Their role is to augment the PAC's Career Development Subcommittee and their goal is to assist officers with "Corps Values" and their OPF by providing career counseling to groups of officers. They will be contacting the Career Development Subcommittee.

## **V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Awards:** CDR Meredith Bond reported the following:

- The Subcommittee met on September 29, 2004 from 2:00-3:00 PM.
- Six Nominations for 2005 PHS Engineer of the Year Award have been received.
- Information concerning Awards need to be updated by the Information Subcommittee.

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

- Subcommittee's monthly meeting was held on October 12, 2004; the next meeting is on November 11 from 2:00-3:00 PM (Conference call 877.791.8054 passcode 676060).
- The committee for the Surgeon General Workshop on Healthy Indoor Environment continues to move forward.
- Subcommittee continues to work on sharing Environment of Care (EC) information for Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) among HHS health care facilities.
- The PHS facilities manual is currently being redrafted with input from HHS agencies. Established in the late 1980's to set forth Departmental operational requirements for the HHS facilities program, it assists in resolving HHS facility issues. It consists of two volumes: acquisition/delivery and operations/maintenance.
- Following up on the July 24, 2004 report, NIH has procured the Earned Value Management (EVM) software wInsight from C/S Solutions ([www.cs-solutions.com](http://www.cs-solutions.com)) as part of implementation of the OMB Circular No. A-11 Part 7 "Planning, Budgeting, Acquisition, and Management of Capital Assets."
- Subcommittee had some discussion on the evaluation process of outdoor air quality as related to indoor air quality including filtration means, exposure limits, and air comparison values, and may lead to further investigation.

### **C. Career Development:** LT Savalia (reporting for LCDR Jennifer Mosser):

- Planning is underway for the June 6-10, 2005 COA conference in Philadelphia, PA and Category Day is on Tuesday, June 7. The overall conference theme is Global Health.
- The agenda for Category Day, due to COA by November 15, has been finalized and the speakers have been confirmed for both the morning and afternoon sessions. The final agenda is due to COA by January 10, 2005. The deadline for Category Day submissions is October 29. Engineers are asked to consider submitting an abstract for Category Day or attending the conference as a participant.

- Officers planning to attend the meeting are asked to contact LT Savalia with suggestions of activities for Category Day in the evening at [varsha.savalia@fda.gov](mailto:varsha.savalia@fda.gov)

**D. Rules:** LCDR Jennifer Mosser not present.

**E. Emergency Preparedness:** CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following:

- The Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee met on October 13, 2004.
- Several Subcommittee members have been deployed, either via the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) or agency specific, to respond to the hurricanes in Florida. Several of those deployed provided an overview of their experiences.
- At the time of the Subcommittee meeting, 55% of the engineering category met the requirements for Basic Readiness. That is a 52.8% increase over several months ago and 5th best out of the 11 PHS categories. Overall, 50% of the total Commissioned Corps meets the requirements for Basic Readiness. CAPT Rodenbeck thanked all of the Subcommittee members for their efforts to get as many engineers to become Basic Ready. This completes the Subcommittee project to get at least 50% of PHS Commissioned Corps engineers Basic Ready.
- During the September EPAC meeting, all of the response roles developed by the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee were approved by the EPAC. The Chief Engineer sent the roles to OFRD for their consideration. This completes this particular Subcommittee project.
- The Subcommittee has begun to develop a proposal to conduct joint emergency response field training of biomedical engineers and healthcare facilities engineers. USPHS officers may be able to take training with the Air Force reservists that would offer a hands-on experience and would possibly simulate the set-up and operation procedures of a real deployment situation.
- Subcommittee members are also thinking about how we can better market our emergency response capabilities. Some initial thoughts were: Updating the “Public Health Service Engineering Capabilities During Disaster Responses: Handbook for Deploying the Appropriate Public Health Service Engineer” Handbook that is located on the PHS Engineer webpage (<http://www.usphsengineers.org/EmergencyPreparedness/EngineeringDeploymentPrimer.pdf>); format the new engineer deployment roles to meet the FEMA ICS (Incident Command System); develop questions or case studies for the SERT (Secretary’s Emergency Response Team) training course.
- The next Subcommittee meeting will be on November 10, from 3-4:30 PM ET. Please contact CAPT Sven Rodenbeck for the conference call information.

**F. Information:** CDR Michael Coene was not present.

**G. Mentoring:** CDR Scofield was not present.

**H. Recruiting & Retention:** CDR Ludington reported the following:

- Last meeting was on October 5, 2004.
- The Subcommittee has redesigned their website and the documents have been submitted to the Information Subcommittee for posting on the EPAC website.
- Subcommittee is looking for pictures of engineers “in action”; contact LCDR Carol Rogers if you have any pictures to submit.
- A free pass for students to attend COA in Philadelphia is being looked at.
- The next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2004 at 1:00 PM

## V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A. **OCCO/DCCR Liaison:** LCDR Claire Karlson reported the following:

- If you have any difficulty filling positions, LCDR Karlson can assist you. She can be reached preferably by e-mail at [Claire.karlson@hhs.gov](mailto:Claire.karlson@hhs.gov) or 240-453-6008.
- OCCO Changes:
  - CDR Marjorie Wallace promoted to Director, OCCSS (OSB)
  - Staff leaving: LCDR Claudia Brown, LCDR Edwin Vazquez, CDR Bill Wyeth, Penny Coppola.
  - Nakia Logan can be reached at 240-453-6060. She will be handling the mailing of items for conferences.
  - New employees- CDR Theresa Minter will be joining Staffing Officer II. LCDR Camille Hawkins – OCCSS Assimilations
  - LT Daisy Mitchell – Promotion
  - CAPT Dave Burnie – Adverse Actions
- OCCO/DCCA- all 1662 personnel orders are being checked in by CDR Wyeth or LCDR Karlson and distributed to HR specialist.
- Reminder - HR Specialists (5) will be handling all the PHS officers’ orders and all applicant orders.
- Closing out applicants that have had their files open for 1 year is proceeding and 20 files are marked for closure next week. Please notify [Claire.Karlson@hhs.gov](mailto:Claire.Karlson@hhs.gov) or 240-453-6008 if you know of someone whose file should not be closed out.
- If you have any positions that you are having difficulty filling, send an email to: [Claire.Karlson@hhs.gov](mailto:Claire.Karlson@hhs.gov). Remember to include the region (state) and job description.

### B. **TISP Liaison:** CDR Dan Beck not present.

### C. **COA Liaison:** LCDR Nate Tatum reported the following:

- The last meeting of the COA Board of Directors (BOD) was October 27, 2004.
- The next meeting will be on December 9, 2004.
- The most significant achievement of the COA and Military Coalition this year is the revocation of the so called “widows tax.” This bill is now with the White House and is expected to be signed into law shortly. The widow’s tax is an offset in survivor benefits levied against surviving spouses of retired military members upon reaching 62 years of age when social security becomes available. The offset will be phased out over the next three years.

- Pay raises for “uniformed services” as designated in the National Defense Authorization Act has been set at 3.5% for active duty members in 2005.
- COA Board of Directors has expressed a strong interest in supporting the Transformation Recommendation Committee. The board stands ready to assist the EPAC in anyway possible. The EPAC can reach out to the COA BOD either directly or via LCDR Tatum.
- The COA Board and COA Awards Committee are seeking nominations for the high level award of Health Leader of the Year Award. The criteria for Health Leader of the Year are as follows: scientific and or clinical research; administration; outstanding productivity or delivery of service.
- The COA now has a membership of approximately 7,200 with 69% being active duty officers.

**D. SAME Liaison:** CDR Randall Gardner reported the following:

- New committees have been formed including: Design & Construction, Facilities, Homeland Security, and Readiness.
- If you wish to get involved with SAME, check the local Post in your areas; some Posts are more active than others.
- The Surgeon General will be the keynote speaker at the SAME conference May 17-20, 2005 and many PHS activities and programs are being planned during this time.
- Upcoming conference meeting with TISP in St Louis; CAPT Rodenbeck will represent the Chief Engineer.
- Saturday, November 6th is the 64th Annual Benefit of the Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance (SAME NYC) at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City.

**E. Junior Engineer Report:** LCDR Geoffrey Wachs reported the following:

- The Committee provides advice and consultation to the SG, CPO, PAC, and other Commissioned Corps groups on issues relating to professional practice and personnel activities affecting junior officers in the USPHS.
- New members were introduced.
- Committees and workgroups were identified.
- Transformation information was verbally presented to the members.
- Junior Engineers (Temporary grade 0-4 and below) interested in JOAG can sign up for the listserv <http://list.nih.gov/archives/joag.html> and join JOAG’s committees and become a non-voting member.
- The next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2004 at 1:00 PM ET and the call-in information is USA Toll Free Number:888-807-8641, Passcode: 11247.
- Contact LCDR Wachs for any additional information at [Geoffrey.Wachs@ihs.gov](mailto:Geoffrey.Wachs@ihs.gov).

**VI. VACANCIES**

- No vacancies to report.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

CDR Poneleit adjourned the meeting 2:32 PM.

**VIII. AUTHORIZATION**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LCDR Hilda Scharen  
Recorder, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
CDR Kathy Poneleit  
Chair, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date