



FDA Billets Transformation Transcript

Q&A Session with CAPT Byron Bailey

Thursday, 18 November 2009

Transcriber: LCDR Samantha Fontenelle on behalf of the JOAG Communications and Publications Committee

Operator: At this time officers should be in a listen only mode. This is the Question and Answer session of today's conference. At that time you may press *1 if you would like to ask a question. I would like now to turn the call over to you. Thank you Ma'am, you may begin.

CAPT Shaffer: Hi everybody this is CAPT Diann Shaffer with ORA. I know that all of you are probably having a lot of questions about the billets that are coming up and coming out very soon. And it was great of CAPT Byron Bailey, from the DHHS Office of Public Health and Science, to give us a little presentation today. CAPT Bailey is our transformation officer for billets. And I am going to turn the presentation over to him now. Thanks CAPT Bailey.

CAPT Bailey: You're welcome. Thank you for this opportunity and, as I mentioned to Diane a little bit earlier, I always welcome the chance to spread as many truths as possible so we can reduce the rumor mill. I don't really have a formal presentation put together, because I want to definitely allow the majority of the time to answer people's questions. I know there are a lot of questions and also I would be willing to bet (well I hope and that I am correct in my assumption) that a lot of folks have at least a general sense of what billets transformation is about. I have provided a lot of presentations to virtually all of the PACs, through PAC conferences and teleconferences and to a lot of other groups of folks in different venues. Therefore, I don't want to bore you by giving some of the same information unless there is a general consensus that there are a lot of people who really haven't heard anything yet. Which, like I said, I hope that isn't the case. If so, however, I could give some background information and talk a little bit more about what billets transformation is all

about. So, Diane, do you have a sense from folks whether a basic knowledge of billets transformation exists? This is your call, so I will go with however you think we should proceed.

CAPT Shaffer: Okay, CAPT Bailey that would be great. If you can just give a little synopsis because I know I myself worked on billets for the Nurse PAC a few years ago but since then I really haven't been getting updates as to where we are, because I know the multidisciplinary billets (which FDA uses) are not coming out until next May. So if you can just give us a little background synopsis, quickly, and then just go from where we are going to be at in all this.

CAPT Bailey: Okay, well hopefully folks kind of have an idea of why we're doing billets transformation in that our billets system compared to the other uniformed services is inadequate. Take this with a grain of salt, however; we are not the other uniformed services. So I don't want to say that we're anything like the Navy, the Coast Guard or anyone else like that. But our billet system really is kind of a mess right now. Because really, they [billets] don't reflect our true positions needs to meet the missions of the Agencies who hire Commissioned Corps officers. So, a few years back there was a Classifications and Positions workgroup that was then set in motion by then Secretary Leavitt. This group of folks, this workgroup, they looked at our current billets system. They looked at other billets systems in the other uniformed services, and they looked at what needed to be done, and they came up with a set of recommendations. Then Secretary Leavitt endorsed those recommendations, and for the past three years that's what we've been working (from on those recommendations) to build a new billets system for the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service. We've been working very closely with all the PACs through that three-year period to develop standard billets for each of the category-specific standard billets. Right now, CAPT Eugene Freund (Medical officer), is here with us as another transformation officer in the office. He is working with some folks (including CAPT Greene) to create a set of standard billets for multidisciplinary positions, also. So we've been working on that, as I mentioned, for the past three years. This new billets system will definitely be a big improvement both for officers involved and also for the agencies. We will now have an objective system to grade billets that is formula driven and won't be subjective; the way billets are currently graded is very subjective. We will have real time vacancy monitoring. Hopefully folks have heard about the Direct Access system. We, the Commissioned Corps, we are merging our HR systems with the Coast Guard system. It is a PeopleSoft HR system and within PeopleSoft there is a component called Direct Access. Hopefully folks have heard about that through the officer profile system. Officers' profiles have already been

merged into Direct Access and our new billet system will be merged into Direct Access. With this new electronic system, we will be able to match officers and officer profile information with the electronic billets. Billets will be specifically identified with specific attributes and we will be able to match those attributes to officer attributes. It will be a much improved way for our officers to search for jobs. It will also be a much improved way for agencies to find officers that meet the attributes for the positions that they are looking to fill.

There are a lot of pluses on both sides of it. The biggest culture change with the new billets is that the new billets will very directly reflect positions and not officer capabilities. I have been in the Corps for 27+ years now, and I've seen plenty of instances in my time (and I am sure a lot of folks on this call have also) where an officer will be in a position and that officer is coming up for promotion. Let's say that officer coming up for promotion is in an O-4 billet and coming up for their O-5 promotion. In the current system, billets tend to be rewritten if an agency especially wants to retain that officer. They agencies will do what they can (which you can't blame them) to rewrite a billet to get that officer potentially an advantage in the promotion process. Sure, that serves the officer, but it definitely does not serve the Corps. It definitely does not serve us in trying to identify, for recruitment purposes or whatever, what kind of officers and at what grade levels we need in the Corps, because the billets tend to reflect officer capabilities and not truly the position requirements. That's the big culture change in the new billets system.

There will be a unique billet for every position in the Corps. The Commissioned Corps professional categories have come up with 390 of standard billet titles which will be used as templates to create these unique billets. For example, in the Nurse category, there are 21 standard billet titles. If you are a nurse in the Commissioned Corps, and you are working in a category-specific nurse position, i.e., not multi-disciplinary, no matter what Agency you work for in the Corps you will have 1 of these 21 billet titles. Even though you have 1 of those 21 titles, it will still be a unique billet for your position because along with the standard title with standard associated duties, there will be position-specific components that the officer will add as part of the billet creation process. The officer will add those components to the billet and make that billet unique for his or her position. There are standard components that the PACs have developed or, in the case of the multidisciplinary billets, the agencies are helping to create right now, and there will also be the position-specific components that the officers will help us to identify when we create billets in the new system.

We have gone through quite a lengthy process—as I've mentioned, three years for developing the standard billets and also testing those billets in several different venues. A couple of years ago, we had about 100 officers from the four largest agencies in the Corps who did a beta test of the system to help us refine the format and how we are going to collect billets information. We did a smaller prototype test with 20 officers from the nurse category, about a year or so ago, to refine that process a little bit more. What we have, now, is an almost completed system – an electronic system for creating billets, and that is what is described in the tutorial. If you have not looked at those tutorials yet, please do. There are three tutorials – there is an officer tutorial, there is a supervisor tutorial, and there is a reviewing official tutorial that are all on the CCMIS website. Please take the time to review those tutorials, because they are very instructive of the whole process and how it is going to work. It would be helpful if you see that before we launch into this system.

It is going to be an electronic system where each officer will be identified by category. Whether you are in a category-specific billet or a multidisciplinary billet, you will receive an email. It will be an automated system. Let's say you are a nurse in a nurse specific billet, for example. You will receive a list of the standard 21 billet titles for the nursing category. You will choose a billet title based upon the description that accompanies each title that most closely approximates your current responsibilities. One of the things that will be harped on, over and over again, throughout this process is that each officer needs to enter into the process with the background that or thought process that if I left this job tomorrow, what would be the minimum duties and responsibilities required of the officer that would backfill my position. Now we all know that sometimes when you are hired for a position, and you stay there for 2, 3,4, or 5 years, your duties sometimes change and collateral duties are added on based upon capabilities that you have as an officer that are identified by your supervisor. Those aren't necessarily responsibilities of that position, however, because if you left, the person who would backfill for you would not necessarily look for that person to do those same responsibilities because they were tied to your personal capabilities. That's the differentiation that is very important to make throughout this process.

We have the tutorial for the supervisor and the reviewing official because the billets creation review process is designed to try to eliminate bias as much as possible in the creation of these billets. The review process is very similar to the COER performance appraisal process. The officer is going to initiate the billet and then there is an electronic review system. Electronically, the

supervisor would be prompted to review that billet and then, just like the COER, the reviewing official (in most cases, your supervisor's supervisor) will also review the billet. Then there will be summary reports after it goes through these two review stages of the supervisor and the reviewing official. Summary reports of all the billets that are created will go to the PACs. So for example the nursing PAC will look at all the nursing billets that have been created. They won't be reviewing each one individually because it is just too large of a job. They will be reviewing the summary report and basically looking for outliers. In the example of junior clinical nurses, the Nurse PAC will be looking at all the junior clinical nurse billets that are being created across all the agencies. They will be looking to ensure that there is equity in all those junior clinical nurse positions that are being created across the Corps - equity in grade, in job responsibility and those types of things. They will be looking for outliers. The agencies will be doing the same thing. The agencies will have these same summary reports and they will be able to review the billets across the Corps. They will be able to see the billets that were created for their agency and for all agencies. It will be a very open, transparent system where folks will be able to review those billets on many different levels. The final approval level will reside in OCCO. We're in the process now of hiring, it hasn't been advertised yet but it will very soon, a billets program manager. Basically a billets master, at the OCCO level, who will have the final review—summary level review of all the billets and the final approval will reside in OCCO. Billets will be able to be edited in the future after they are created but in the editing process, OCCO will be ensuring that billets are truly just being edited because the position responsibilities have changed and not edited because there is an officer who is up for promotion or whatever. Now, the biggest question that always comes up when you start talking about grades (you get a lot of anxiety built up among folks because the biggest thing that always comes up is about grades) is what if in the new system I am in an O-5 billet and in the new system it turns out that my position grades out as an O-4. What happens to me? The answer is that there will be a two year grandfather clause. For two years from when your new billet becomes official, you cannot be harmed if your billet grade decreased. For promotion boards, for assimilation or for whatever purposes where a lower billet grade could potentially hurt you, you will not be harmed because the promotion board or whomever will still have your old legacy system billet grade and that grade is the one that will be considered. During those two, the officer will have decisions to make. Do I want to, after 2 years is up, have that lower billet grade have the potential negative effect that could go with that or do I, in that 2 year period, start to want to look for a different position with a billet that is more commensurate with my grade as an officer. That 2 year grace period will allow the officer time to make those decisions.

We have a tentative schedule for implementation, where if everything goes correctly, we are looking at probably the end of January where we would start. We would go category by category with roughly a 1,000 to 1,500 officers at a time. Every 30 days we will launch another 1,000 to 1,500 officers. The first group of folks is going to be the Nurse and Therapist categories in January or the end of January, and we will move forward with categories from there. There is a frequently asked questions page on the CCMIS website, under Transformation, under Billets Transformation, This is a very exhaustive list of frequently asked questions and responses to those questions. I've received a lot of questions over the past 6 to 9 months from folks every time we released a new tutorial or did something different. There are probably 20 or so frequently asked questions on the website that talks about what the schedule is for release and how grading is going to be handled and those kinds of things. I would strongly encourage you to visit that webpage and look at those frequently asked questions. As I've said, I don't want to take too much time actually presenting here, but I hope that kind of gives you a background on how things are going to work. I'd be pleased to take questions, now.

Q&A

Operator: Thank you Sir. We will now begin the question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question please press *1. Please unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question. To withdraw your question, please press *2. One moment please for the first question to queue up.

Q1. Hey, CAPT Bailey this is LT Hardin in with CAPT Shaffer. Yes. How are you doing today Sir? Good. How are you doing? Good. I was just wanted for ORA specific, Office of Regulatory Affairs, I know there are probably a lot of ORA folks on the phone going oh my gosh I'm a nurse, I 'm gonna be graded starting January. I just want to let all ORA officer know that pretty much 98 percent of all ORA officer are all in multi-disciplinary consumer safety officer billets even though you are a nurse or a pharmacist or whatever. So today will be the last, according to the schedule to rate their billets and we pretty much have to standard templates with the information almost basic information ready to go for that. I just wanted to say that to hopefully maybe ease some of the tension that may be building for some of our ORA folks.

A1. That is very true. Multidisciplinary will be the last ones. And we know, through the OCCO database for all the officers in the Corps, if you are currently in a multi-disciplinary position or in a category-specific position. If you are a nurse in a multidisciplinary position, you will not get an email in January because we know you are not in a category specific nurse position.

Operator: Once again if you would like to ask a question, please press *1. Our first question comes from Matt, your line is open.

Q2. Hi this is LCDR Matt McNew of Richmond. I had just a question about once these billets go through and are approved you mentioned earlier that there is a slight possibility that the billet could be downgraded but is there a possibility that an immediate upgrade would be available?

A2. Let me give a little background first before I answer your question. One thing that I did not make clear is that when we go through this process of creating billets, we will be starting in the end of January or so until we hit the last section of billets (multidisciplinary) in May or June. The entire process won't be completed probably until late summer. When all the billets are created, by late summer, we've done a review here at OCCO, and we've made an approval—only then will any of those billets become official. I don't see it until the latter part of 2010 where the billets will become official where folks will be getting orders saying this is your new billet title. Nothing will become official until late in 2010 –even for the billets that are created early in the calendar year. With that being said, when they do become official, if your billet grade increases in this process, increases will become official in late 2010 and, if it decreases, there will be a two year period before the decrease becomes official.

Q3. CAPT Bailey this is CAPT Shaffer. If OCCO is reviewing and OCCO does not have a clue as to what we do in ORA, who is going to be reviewing to look at that side of it?

A3. From the Agency perspective you mean? Yes sir. The agency will be reviewing summary reports of all the billets that are being created for your agency. We will be working with the

liaisons, and the Agency liaisons will be able to delegate or designate other individuals within their agencies to assist in that review from the agency perspective.

- Q4.** Hey, good morning this is CDR Bryan Cronin, here in Cando. My question was, obviously specifically towards ORA. As we develop specialty, specialized training through FDA, obviously that's a different realm than our nursing kind of spins off of CAPT Shaffer's comment there that hat I have PHS colleagues that may have the exact same rank that I do but have different experience levels by training. Are we suppose to incorporate our personal specific training that we receive by FDA because we bring and I know it kind of ties in saying you are more capable but the basics skills that everybody needs to have to come in there ultimately management wants us to go to specialized training and be values specialists not generalist. So are we given that latitude to be able to incorporate that training into our billets? And I'll listen offline.
- A4.** The only training that will be incorporated in the billet will be the minimum training required for that position—not officers' capabilities that may be above and beyond what is required for the position. That is the biggest departure from the current system, and I know that is a big change for folks. It is a big thing to grasp but that is a very critical part driving the success of the new billet system—the position does not reflect officer capability but only minimum requirements of the position.
- Q5.** Hi my name is Danielle DeDonna and I work out of San Pierdo for ORA. I guess this is specific to the ORA agency but I am a little but confused and I don't know if you can provide some clarification. For example, I am a physician assistant, so that qualifies me for my job with the FDA ORA specifically. And in this job there are other people doing the same thing that I am that may not even necessarily have a Bachelor's degree. So these are civilian people that I am speaking of. I do the same job as some civilian counter parts. So, the billet will be created based on your educational background and have some input from your actual Agency. How will that go down because I am confused because my training and education and I worked formally for Immigration and I was a clinician. I had collateral duties and to diversify with PHS I came to a non-clinical billet and I am just kind of wondering how that will play out because I do have a lot of different skills but I don't necessarily use my clinical skills for my current billet. So I guess my question is, will that

somehow or another take away from my ability to promote when I was trying to help my promotion potential by diversifying.

- A5.** It should not take away from your ability to be promoted. If it is truly a multi-disciplinary position that you are in, i.e., you are a PA, but you didn't have to be a PA—you could have been a nurse (or other category) to fill the position. That position will still have to reflect level of responsibility and level of independent judgment, and all of those things factor into the formulas which determine grade. And if those levels of responsibility and originality and things that are required of this position will drive the grade. If it drives the grade to an O-5 or an O-6 (I'm sorry I do not recall what your current rank is) that grade is independent of your officer grade. The new billets system includes a very objective process for creating grades based on responsibility. Therefore, as long as the billet grades out to an O-5, and that's what would be most beneficial to you, then it should have no negative impact on your promotion capability.

LT Hardin: Hey CAPT. Yes. This is LT Hardin and I'm gonna speak most specifically to the ORA folks on the line. ORA actually in a very good position because we pretty much have a somewhat of a detailed stratification of our officers already. We already have it set out to be O-6 in an O-6 billet you need to be a national expert or a Sr. level supervisor. To be in an O-4 billet you need to be doing independent inspections on your own and available for the foreign cadre. So we already have a very detailed stratification. So our transition compared to other agencies should be a little easier as far as our multidisciplinary consumer safety officer billet. Such as a nurse at IHS vs. a nurse at NIH – one may be in an O-4 billet and one may be in an O-3 billet and they both may be doing board duty. I think people should understand that they are trying to make those types of billets across the board, standard. As far as ORA is concerned our advanced trainees are pretty much all at the same level. You may have a PhD and you may only be a dental hygienist but your level as a consumer officer is the same. Which may be confusing to some people but your skill at that position will put you in an O-4 billet – essentially you are available to do independent inspections and you are available to be with the foreign cadre, etc. I hope that helps out some of our Corps officers.

In the FAQs section on the billets transformation webpage I mentioned previously, one of the questions in there is in regards to the old CC Personnel Manual Pamphlet 57. That old Pamphlet 57 was created 20 something years ago. It was never formally used for grade development in the

Corps. But the workgroup that we assembled a couple years ago, to look at the whole billet transformation issue, that workgroup decided that Pamphlet 57 had a lot of value. We took that Pamphlet 57 and upgraded it and refined it to meet our current needs. The grading criteria that were in contained in Pamphlet 57 are the grading criteria that are formula based in this new system to determine the grades for billets. The reason I bring this up is because it is raised in FAQs, and the response to that FAQ specifically list the types of factors and the point range that are associated with those factors. How those points will equate into grades answers that question. That may give you some insight and it will kind of give you an idea of the types of things that will drive grades. Ffor example, in a multidisciplinary billet those factors are independent of what your category is; they are more reflective of your work contact, your duty station criteria , your supervisor responsibility, and what your accountability requirements are for your job. It discusses those things. So that might help to answer some questions by viewing that FAQ.

Q6. LCDR Matt Diaon: Yes, hello, I have a question. I work for ORA, and currently we have certain standard billets, such as O-5 would be a Sr. Regulatory Affairs Specialist, O-4 is an Investigator, full level. If you are in one of those categories and you are performing those duties, are those going to be altered at all? Are the characteristics of the O-4 or O-5 billets going to be changed?

A6. There will be new billet titles. What is being proposed now, I know CAPT Freund is working on multidisciplinary billets, and that there will be approximately 12 billet titles for all multidisciplinary billets across the Corps. That is what they are proposing right now, like I said, but it hasn't been finalized yet. All multidisciplinary billets, including the billet you currently encumber, will be one of those 12 billet titles. The attributes of your current billet will be reflected in this new billet title and it will just have a new billet name. The attributes, in terms of what you do, your job responsibilities, and your level of responsibilities—those will all be reflected in the new billets. One of the things, of course, people start worrying about, once again, are grades. I want to mention grades one more time, another aspect of this, a little bit for clarification. I mentioned that we did a beta test a couple of years ago and in that beta test (and I really do believe this will probably carry over) 85% of the folks who participated in that did not see their billet grade change. In only 15% of the billets did the grades actually change. Grades only went up or down in about 15% of the cases. To get back to your question though, what is currently in your billet

should be reflected in the new billet but it will have a new billet title to fit 1 of the proposed 12 billet titles that exists for multidisciplinary. Does that answer your question?

Q7. Partially, but I am a pharmacist working for ORA and when you go to ORA and you are expected to perform in drug investigations or “biomo” investigations would your prior experience as a pharmacist - are you just going to be held against other pharmacist- because it is a multidisciplinary billet. So if you were going to give my billet to someone who is in environmental health officer, it may require additional training because they don't have the prior knowledge of pharmacy work. And I know you said that prior experience and officer capability aren't being considered for a particular position, but how does that factored in?

A7. The question that needs to be answered is, is your billet truly multidisciplinary or is it a billet that a pharmacist needs to fill?

That is one of the questions that will come up. And this is one of the things that will arise. There are over 1,500 multidisciplinary billets out there—I think that 1,800 is the most current count. From the 1,800 multidisciplinary billets out of the 6,500 total billets for Corps officer right now, we suspect that there are quite a few billets that aren't truly multidisciplinary. The bottom line is there may only be specific category of officer that an agency is willing to consider to fill a billet. That is going to come out through this process. When we get to multidisciplinary billets, and people start reviewing those billets, there may be some changes made. There may be point where, and I am not saying this is your case, (but potentially a case like yours) where it comes back that in reality we really just want a pharmacist for this position. It isn't truly a multidisciplinary position. If that's the case, in the pharmacy category (which I cannot remember off the top of my head how many standard billets were developed by the pharmacy category—I think around 30, if one of their standard billets doesn't fit, we may have to go back to the pharmacy category and say look, here is a pharmacist that works for FDA ORA and ORA has decided that it really isn't a multidisciplinary billet, it is really a pharmacist billet. If one of the current 30 something standard billets doesn't fit, the pharmacy category may have to create another standard billet to fit that specific situation. We aren't going through this process thinking that we have it all completely figured out, it's all cast in stone, and what we have now will be forevermore and we know we're going to learn from lessons as we go through this process

of billet creation. So, just know that that flexibility is out there. We are going to be looking at each case independently and making adjustments as needed.

- Q8.** CAPT Bailey. Yes, ma'am. This is CAPT Shaffer. LT Hardin and I were talking because I was a little concerned that if we had 12 titles for all the multidisciplinary billets and 12 people picked 12 different ones, what would happen. He explained to me that before the billets will go out to the field, the liaisons will go through them and pretty much say if you are in an O-6 billet this is the one you will choose and if you are in an O-5 billet this is the one you will choose. Correct? And if they are in a certain billet, this is the one that they would select to fill in?
- A8.** Yes there is a crosswalk that's true, not necessarily by grade but there is a crosswalk that CAPT Freund and the folks that have been working on multidisciplinary billets have created. They looked at all the titles that are out there right now and created a crosswalk that will help folks sort out exactly that. If this is your current billet title, this is the new title that most likely is the one that applies to your position. So you cut out a little bit of the confusion that could result from folks just having open season.
- Q9.** **LT Hardin:** So CAPT that's what we would all like – picking a position or title that is higher than the one we already. As far were concerned, ORA is very stratified already and we pretty much have our levels already broken down. So we can pretty much in advance let our officers know, once we're notified say you're a national expert that fits into this level billet. You're a full performance investigator so you fit into this O-4 level billet that's labeled program analyst or whatever and fill in the rest from there. We could hopefully help our officers upfront so they are not picking billets that are not appropriate, right?
- A9.** Well, the new billets aren't stratified by grade. The 12 unique billets titles that are proposed by CAPT Freund, in working with CAPT Green on this, are not stratified by grade. They are just titles, and depending upon the level of responsibilities that are selected within those titles, that is what will drive the grade. There definitely can still be some preemptive work that goes into helping to identify, for example, for the different levels you've identified, what the selection should be on the standard billet to help drive the grade. For example, level of responsibility or personal responsibility requirements—those types of things. That could be

predetermined and be helpful for guiding selections to result in the proper grade for that billet.

Q10. So basically what you're saying if I understand you right, there is 12 names and 6 pay grades within each pay grade mean there is a 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 level pay grade along with the billet title. And hopefully one of the billet title names will be consumer safety officer. And then we can say this is a 2-level, 3-level, 4-level within that name?

A10. Not predetermined levels. Those levels will be determined based upon the selections that are made within the standard billet. If you look at the tutorial, the description in the tutorial where it shows how people are going to make the selections is in there. It talks about how the selections are going to drive grade. That very instructive in telling you how it is going to work. I'm trying to bring up here quickly, CAPT Freund, he sent me – hold on just a second I am pulling up a document because I want to tell you what some of these preliminary billet titles are that he's come up with. It might be instructive. Okay, these are the 12 billet titles they have come up with at this point – that are proposed – Program Coordinator, Program Management Officer, Research Officer, Technical Specialist, Epidemiologist, Watch Officer, Statistician, Analyst, Consultant, Personnel Management Officer, Educator – I think that's all of them. Anyway those are the types of titles that they've come up with. Like I said, they have done a crosswalk to look at all the current multidisciplinary titles that are out there for which one that they would fit in. The descriptions for these 12 titles are relatively generic and it's going to allow a lot of latitude for the agency or the officers, with input from supervisors in the agencies, to get more position-specific responsibilities to go with that. It might have been a good idea, I should have pulled CAPT Freund in here, but he could tell you what they are working on and what he's been working on with CAPT Greene, how they have come to this point. It would probably be a good idea, and we will have to address that and get him in here and get more feedback from him, especially since your issues are primarily multidisciplinary. But there are not six predetermined levels. It not like, for example, technical specialist O-2, O-3, O-4 – it is not predetermined. It will be technical specialist and depending on the level of responsibilities that are selected for those attributes, that will drive whether the billet is an O-2, O-3 or O-4. You won't be going into this thing saying, "oh here is a technical specialist multidisciplinary billet and here are the 6

levels”, and you’re not going to say that “I’m going to select the O-3 level”. You won’t select it upfront. You will select attributes that drive – formula driven calculations.

Q11. So since we already have predetermined attributes at each level we can at least give that information upfront at least they can load their billet with the predetermined information.

A11. That is very true. You can definitely do that. Now you need to look at what those attributes are. Make sure that your predetermined attributes match the attributes that are available in the new system. That would be the only thing that you need to make sure that they match.

Q12. CAPT Bailey, this is CAPT Shaffer. In ORA, before an officer can be put up for an increase billet, they have to go through supervisory and management approval. I have a feeling if we have officers whose billets would be increased; we’re going to receive some resistance from that.

A12. CAPT Bailey: Receive resistance from?

CAPT Shaffer: From managers, if there are increased. In the review, if there are officers who are increased or downgraded we may receive resistance from managers as to the fact they are being increased.

CAPT Bailey: There is a process for adjudication for billet discrepancy and grade discrepancies, which we know will occur. But when that type of thing occurs, there will be an opportunity to appeal. We will look at them on a case-by-case basis and deal with them accordingly. There is an adjudication process that is set into the new billets policy.

CAPT Shaffer: Okay thank you!

Q13. Yeah, hi, hey. This is **CAPT Clint Chamberlain**, Division of Human Resource Development. I was kind of asking, thinking about a big picture question. I was curious to know when all the billets get sorted out, and OCCO has this ability, do you think their role is going to change in any manner as far as the future. Maybe, for example, assignments and centrally managing

assignments for officers given new capabilities? Do you know what the end result is going to be from where OCCO sits?

A13. The main difference between what OCCO does now, in the current legacy system, and what OCCO will be in the new billet system is—well let me preface this first by saying that the Agencies will always own the billets because agencies pay for those positions. So there will never be a point where OCCO will be calling the shots. What the effort is with the new billet system, though, is to at least have a central approval process at OCCO which ensures that there is equity in billets and billet titles across agencies and even looking between categories to ensure that there is equity in the entire process. The current process, is willy-nilly. Basically, the way it is now, an agency sends a billet in here and they pretty much decide what the billet is going to be and it is rubber stamped by OCCO. There needs to be some oversight to ensure that there is equity across the Corps in similar position titles. There is going to be more of a centralization, obviously, of the entire process within OCCO and the new system but by no means will OCCO ever own billets. We will never be in a position where we are calling the shots.

LT Hardin: CAPT, may I interject just a second or two, this is LT Hardin, to help expand on that a little bit. Direct Access is probably a little more of what you're looking for there, Sir. In the fact that billets will help Direct Access and Direct Access in the near future will be our closest thing to a force management tool. Because once we populate Direct Access with everybody with their current billet, when somebody vacates that, Direct Access will be able to say, hey, here is an open position. These people said that they are willing to move within this timeframe, to this location, to perform these types of duties and it will generate a list of potential officers for that vacancy so that the agency does not necessarily have to go out and shop. We can actually generate for them a list upfront so that ...Actually we cannot dictate that you have to move because agencies own you and your billet. But when you are ready to move, Direct Access will be able to tell us when those vacancies occur. And also, there are many, many jobs out there that officers can hold ...that we don't know about. And as we begin to follow that in Direct Access we will see those fields populated so they may only be 6,500 officers but we will know in 10 years if there are 15,000 positions available for officers. And I hope this helps with maybe what you were asking before.

CAPT Bailey: Actually, that is excellent information. That is the long term goal, but the immediate goal is to describe the current positions held by the 6,500 officers in the Corps. The long term goal is to describe any position in HHS or in other participating departments or agencies that potentially could be encumbered by a commissioned officer. So, we could expand. There are some positions now that are held by civilians that maybe in the past were held by commissioned officers, or there is a potential in the future to be held by a commissioned officer—we will describe those positions also. We will greatly increase the pool of potential job opportunities for Corps officers to fill in the future. So, yes you are correct. The other part of that is that to make clear, and I know you mentioned this Josh, but I also want to make clear that when the officers are identified for positions that come open, they will only be officers who have self-identified themselves as potentially interested in moving. Therefore, if you are an officer and you have not self-identified that you are interested in potentially switching positions, an agency won't be knocking on your door and saying hey, come work at this job. You will maintain, as an officer, some control over that process.

Q14A. This is LCDR Diem Ngo. Sir, I have two questions for you. Regarding the comment that you made about the two year grandfather which you get if your billet gets downgraded and if your billets get upgraded it gets upgraded immediately. In terms of promotion boards, I understand that they look at the PIR for different billet changes. So are you saying that if your billet is downgraded your PIR will not be changed for 2 years and if it is upgraded it would be changed immediately in your PIR?

Q14B. And my second question is, for those who have critical billet addendum under administrative rules, how would this affect us?

A14A. Great questions. The answer to your first question is yes! It is exactly as you've described it, so if you're upgraded it's a bonus and it happens immediately once things become formalized or otherwise in 2 years a downgrade would be reflected in your PIR. The way you described it is correct.

A14B. The billet addendum – it is interesting that you bring that up because we are in the midst of dealing with that right now. Billet addendums are really specific to the officer and are not specific to the billet. So, if addendums continue to exist in the new system, they won't be part of a billet anymore. They will still be potentially identified as part of the officer's profile

or part of the OPF but they won't be tied to the billets anymore, because our billets will be describing positions, not specific officers. The future of that is really up in the air right now because there is a federal court case, in regard to Tort claims, and whatever the outcome of that case could greatly change realities for folks in nonclinical billets working in clinical roles. The bottom line is that I can't answer the question as to exactly how it's going to happen because we are awaiting the results from this federal court case in regards to Tort claims. I don't actually know what the future holds for billet addendums other than to say that it won't be "a billet addendum" anymore it would be an outside work related activity and will somehow be tied to the officer's OPF.

Q15. CAPT Bailey this is LT Hardin again. If am going in front of a promotion board and my billet has been downgraded or stayed the same, wouldn't a promotion board then see that my billet isn't one of the new billet titles or an upgrade. They will know that I am still in the same billet and that my billets been downgraded just because it has the same old name.

A15. Theoretically! That's a good point. Do you know what I am saying? Yes, I know exactly what you're saying and we will have to figure out how to deal with that some way. Maybe in the system we will find a way to give you the new title but still show the old grade. That's a good point and we haven't figured out how to handle that yet. But yes, that's a good point.

Q16. CAPT Green: Thank you. CAPT Bailey, Thank you very much for answering some of these complex questions. CAPT Shaffer, you will be a part of the process of evaluating the appropriateness of the billet levels for all billets in the ORA but you will work with your managers to make sure that all is well and that the billets *(unable to decipher what was said)*. Initially after going through this beginning process officers can initiate the billets and assign various attributes to their billets and management at that point will review those attributes and say yeah or nay and make modifications accordingly and you will be a part of that process and our decision from ORA will be cleared management and blessed and the agency level and forwarded to OCCO.

So what CAPT Bailey is saying is that management will have input into the process and really the final decision about whether an officer billet will be at an O-6, 5 or so on. So that won't be a problem. The billets with regard to the multidisciplinary billets, in FDA we went

from about 70/80 something billets down to like 12. So this crosswalk is really going to assign a title. So it's going to say that if you are a consumer safety officer at this level then you are going to be "performa" 1 and there are going to be certain attributes that will be assigned to that and that will determine whether the "performa"1 is at the 6 level, the 5 level, the 4 level and on. Once that is signed by the officer, management has to approve it along with CAPT Shaffer. Once you guys clear it then it's gonna come to the agency and then forwarded on to OCCO.

CAPT Shaffer I will share with you some preliminary information that CAPT Freund and I have been working on so you will understand exactly how we are progressing here. No officer is going to be harmed in any way. One interesting point that CAPT Bailey made that is very important is a billet requires you to be a nurse or a pharmacist – that may not be a multidisciplinary billet so that gonna trigger if you must be pharmacist working in a certain position then we will have to look at the system and this is not a multidisciplinary billet, it is a category specific billet and therefore, that will be a change and we will have to look at that and determine whether or not certain credentials are required for certain positions. For the most part, it is progressing very well and I am very comfortable because, I was not opposed but I had a lot of concerns because I didn't want to see officers get harmed. LT Hardin, you asked a good question about how will promotion board see the change and CAPT Bailey responded that they are going to work out the details so that promotion boards will not be able to distinguish whether or not my billet is a new billet vs. grade change, etc and I get harmed during the promotion review process. So, I think we are headed in the right way. It is going to be streamlined, the billet process; it is going to be more efficient. Again as was said earlier, its going to tie into Direct Access which down the road it will be mandated. If you use the system, it will help drive more of a centralized command system with regard to officers being able to take on new positions, etc., etc.

Thank you very much CAPT Bailey, CAPT Shaffer, LT Hardin and everyone for pulling this all together so that people could understand how the new system is going to work.

- Q17.** This is CDR Ponte?? from the San Francisco District Office and I have a question about the billets. Some of the comments that have been made by CAPT Green and some of the other people have sort of reference this and doing the tutorial may actually answer some of the

questions also. But it is a question in my mind along with the pharmacist that spoke earlier and some of the comments from CAPT Green made about being Consumer Safety Officers, Investigators. I am a nurse and I do biologics and well you don't have to be a nurse to do biologics and certainly you don't need a Masters Degree in nursing to do biologics. But not only am I an investigator there are collateral duties there. So what I was wondering about and possibly there could be a few more comments made on this that might help out. The other collateral duties that I do are registration monitoring and administrative things that really have a managerial role as well as the other duties that I perform as an investigator. So (1) I would like to hear some comments on the officer-specific information of where the officer has experience and training that may not necessarily be required for that particular billet but brings a lot of advantage to the Agency to have those attributes coming into that billet. So how do those get incorporated into this? Do those have an impact on the grade level that is shown for that officer? And for the other comment that I want to make, and I think I heard this earlier, is that for an O-4 grade for some of these multidisciplinary billets in ORA should reflect that the officer is available to the international cadre. I have to be honest what I have heard before this is that really was not an expectation and yet there are O-4 that are available to the international cadre that do international inspections but management here and other officers that I have spoken with think that this is more an activity for an O-5 billet to represent the Agency in an international arena and do inspections overseas. So could someone make comments on that because I would like a little bit of clarification on there and thank you for hearing my questions.

- A17.** You're welcome. In regards to collateral duties, that has been a central subject of discussion throughout this entire process of creating these new billets. It was very clearly stated in the recommendations of the Secretary's Positions and Classification Workgroup, the multi-agency, multi-category workgroup that did a lot of work to create these recommendations, they were very clear in stating (and obviously you are right, the Agency is gaining a great deal of value from the collateral duties and additional attributes that officer possesses) that those things had no business being in a billet description unless it truly did become something that was required of that position. Those attributes and collateral duties would be reflected in the officer's CV and reflected and acknowledged in the COER, the Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report, but would not be part of the billet. I know exactly what you're talking about, because my first 16 years in the Corps was with the

Indian Health Service and I spent about 9 years in the California Area office in Sacramento. In the course of 9 years you take on a lot more duties than were you hired to do. So, I know exactly where you're coming from on that, but in the new billet system those collateral duties will not be reflected in the billet.

LT Hardin: This is LT Hardin again with CAPT Shaffer. Just to let you know, once again the billet is what helps you get the job. Your collateral duties are what make you a more valuable person. All that information does not get lost. That's what you get to cover in your COER and your promotion information, etc. The Boards doest understand that the billet title is the absolute minimum to hold the job. All the extra collaterals that you do gets covered in your COER and that gets signed off by your supervisor and reviewing official. As far as ORA force cadre stuff that you mentioned I doubt CAPT Bailey has much info on that because he doesn't work with ORA but GS-12 are an O-4 equivalent but they are moving forward with the fact that O-4 billets are GS-12 equivalent, so there will be exceptions that you will be available to perform trips. And I will let CAPT Shaffer say a little about that.

CAPT Shaffer: We all know that in a GS-12, well O-4 billet is supposed to be doing independent work which means you should have applied for the foreign cadre. I would expect that to be one of the criteria for an O-4 billet. You should be applying for the foreign cadre. If someone has issues with that, I'll be glad to discuss.

Q18. Good afternoon, this is LCDR Boden. I have a question about if a person gets a billet with position description has certain aspects that they are not performing would I include that in my reviewer documentation through this process we are doing. Also, if when I leave or vacate that position and someone else comes in will they have to do a new process. Will they have to go through that again if they pick up the duties that are under that position description?

A18. CAPT Bailey: I am not sure I understand the first part of that question. Is there something in your billet that you are not doing? Give me an example.

LCDR Boden: Okay, I am an emergency coordination, Sir in ORA. One of my standard position descriptions does describe that I am going to be a contracts officer or duties similar

to that with the state contracts – a reviewing officer for that. I am not performing these duties at this time and I don't know if I will be in the future. That is up to my District Director. So would I include that even thought as part of my position description?

CAPT Bailey: Well from the point where you start creating this billet, and your supervisor and all the folks start reviewing it, I guess they need to make the determination if it is truly part of your position responsibilities or not or part of the position you encumbered. If it not, then there needs to be review of whether or not it should be in there from the folks above you.

CAPT Green: This is Russell Green, CAPT Bailey I agree with what you're saying that would be something that the officer, if it a part of his/her billet, they would go ahead and include it and if that management in ORA would make the determination whether or not that officer should have that characteristic remain as part of their billet. And also, if management decided not, then CAPT Shaffer would remove that characteristic from that billet. So the officer should not remove that on their own because they may hurt their billet in terms of what level because management today may not have you doing that but tomorrow all of a sudden management may have you doing that. So management will make that determination whether it should be included.

CAPT Bailey: Exactly, and the second part of your question in regards to when a new officer comes into a billet—billets will have the capability to be edited at any point in time. It's not like they are frozen in stone but the difference between the way they are edited now, sort of willy-nilly, especially to reflect officer capability, that's the part where there will be a very strong stance taken. When a new officer comes into a new position, the vast majority of time there should be no rewriting of billets because if the billets accurately documented the attributes the first time around, there really should be no changes made unless there truly is a change in position responsibilities that are independent of officer capability.

Q19. CAPT Shaffer: Hey CAPT Bailey and CAPT Green, I am assuming if someone tries to rewrite a billet that that's gonna have to go through the chain, through a liaison. Is that correct?

- A19. CAPT Bailey:** Yes. All the way to the top. All the way to OCCO. The billet program manager is going to reside in OCCO. That individual will be taking a very hard look at any edits that come through, and if they are legitimate that's fine. But it is really going to be closely looked at ensure that they are legitimate position changes.
- Q20. CAPT Shaffer:** Whenever we do billet changes now we do a 1662 but it sounds like once this is put into effect that is probably going to be done away with. Is that correct?
- A20. CAPT Bailey:** You are correct. It will be a new electronic way of doing it, but the details of that are still being worked on.
- Q21. LCDR Walberger:** This is LCDR Matt Walberger in Kansas City. CAPT Bailey thank you for taking my question. Some of this may have been answered in some of the other questions and maybe this is more of a summary. So, can we take a look at our billets at this point and say okay most of us work along side civilians and there is a level of civilian equivalency. So if I am working in a position where a civilian would be a GS-12 and I would be an O-4 billet and if the civilian would be a GS-13 I'd be an O-5 and if a civilian would be a 14+ then I'd be an O-6 billet. Is that correct for the most part and if so what positions are there that might fall in that equivalency. It seems like they might be rare and if that is the case it seems like there is quite a process in place that we have for getting these new billets in place if there is such an equivalency as far as this process that's going to start in January. Can you speak to that and maybe speak to what the intent is of this process that is going to take half a year that we all are going to provide input to. Thank you.
- A21. CAPT Shaffer:** Hi Matt this is CAPT Shaffer. I hope I can explain a little bit. A few years ago, well I am sure it is more than a few years ago, they went through all of the billets in ORA and made all the CC billets equivalent to the civil service job descriptions. They did that so that it was more fair of an advantage during our evaluation time and that kind of thing. I foresee, if I am understanding this correctly, we are going to proceed with that in the sense that when we look at the billets and we send them out to the managers they are going to be based on if you are doing GS-12 work, and we are not going to say that you are doing GS-12 work, we are going to describe what you will be doing in that position and make that an O-4 billet and going on with O-5, O-6, whatever. I don't foresee that changing very much based on the

fact that it has taken a lot of work to make that equivalency in the past. CAPT Green is that true?

CAPT Green: Yes ma'am that is true. That's right. And again that doesn't change and once you are assigned attributes associated with the new billets, if it was really an O-6 or an O-5 or an O-4, under the new billet system they should remain the same. We may see some cases and I am not saying in ORA but some cases in FDA where certain billets attributes may not point to a 6, it may be a 5. So we're gonna have some correction going on. But in ORA they did a very good job to normalize the equivalency between Corps and civilian billets. So we shouldn't have any problems when we go to the new billet system. I agree with you CAPT Shaffer.

I think I foresee just a couple little problems with the situation in that some people in the past long ago were put in higher billets and may not have some of the characteristics that we are going to be expressing in our attributes. So let say someone has an O-6 billet in our attributes, we say that person should be doing foreign work. If they are not doing foreign work and if they are not meeting all the attributes we've outlined that a situation where you may see a billet downgraded. And that something that people might have to look and decide what am I gonna do to get that back up. Am I gonna stay in this downgraded billet or am I going to move to a new position where I can get my billet that I need.

CAPT Bailey: Exactly! In the Pamphlet 57, that I mentioned earlier, that we used as the framework to come up with the new grading, we were very careful to do a crosswalk to civil service job responsibilities and attributes and the weighting those attributes have in the civil service system. We made sure we are comparing apples and apples. For example, in the new billet system, the attributes that drive grading have to do with education, experience, job accountability, supervisory responsibility, personal responsibility, personal work contact requirements and all those things are also the basis for the grading for civil service positions. We made sure that we were looking at the same types of attributes and the same weighting that the civil service system says. For the most part, there should be a very close match. When you go through the system of creating billets and you correctly identify those attributes in the new billets, you should come up with a grade that is very close, if not exact, with civil service grades for equivalent positions.

Q22. CAPT Shaffer: So CAPT Bailey I have a question. As a liaison, we are going to be reviewing these billets. I have a concern where there are situations where an officer is not working to the billet level that they should be – say an O-6 billet but we have some very wonderful and nice supervisors and managers who say you know what I want to see you promoted I will go ahead and let you be in an O-6 billet even though you are only doing O-5 work. How do we stop that and whenever we are reviewing these billets can we say no you are not going to be put into that even though your manager says it's okay.

A 22. Yes you can. As it moves up the review chain, you will have that opportunity to do exactly that.

CAPT Green: CAPT Shaffer we will have to be very careful with that and we will have to talk about that offline – you and I, with regards to what management will want because at some point I'm sure a strong willed individual will see this as ..whether you will go with what you and I decide vs. what a manager decides. So we will discuss that offline.

Q23. CDR Bryan: Well at this point this is CDR Cronin....in Candoo. A lot of the questions have been answered but it still kind of ties into the O-4 vs O-5 CAPT Shaffer. As far as historically, I have been accustomed to Corps officers not competing against our civilian counterparts for specialist position because that directly affects their pay. If we hold a specialist position officially by saying there are three "biomo" specialists or biologic specialists in Cando - if I don't directly compete for that and essentially not holding the title but performing the work there may potentially be a point of conflict where if we were put in a position that we need to now directly compete with our civilian counterparts where it does affect their pay and doesn't affect our pay if we're for holding that position or not and still able to be a valued asset to our particular district without holding that specialist position. I mean other investigators would have those same capabilities and they may be a specialist in Biomo and still do high risk food inspections or something. That I could potentially see as a problem which I am sure you all have identified as well. And the other question that I had – is this all function within Direct Access? Or are these electronic billets that are created on a different system and then imported into Direct Access?

A23. CAPT Bailey: The latter. The billet collection system has been devised just as a front end to create and collect the data which will be imported into Direct Access.

Q24. Just a clarification, when we do a PCS in the new billets, whether it is a duty station change or not, we're not really expected to create a new billet to do that job. We're expecting that it will be there in this initial wave of these 6 to 8 months of the process to create all these potential jobs out there. Is that correct?

A24. For 6 to 8 months while this is going on the current legacy billet system will still be in place to move around. Therefore, at the end of this process to create the new billets, we're obviously going to have roughly 1,000 officers who will be new to the Corps or will have moved during that process. We will have to identify those officers, at the end of the process, and ensure that they have moved into a billet that was created during this process or, if a new one came about, we will have to find a way or devise a way to create a new billet in the new system to match that. It is a very complex process, but the legacy system will coexist during this time period until the new billets become formal.

What also may help, say in two years, Sir, you decide that CAPT Edwards retires, and you are going to take CAPT Edwards Sr. supervisory position out in Philadelphia or wherever, that his basic job requirements, his minimal basic jobs requirements billet is already done and there will not be a creation. His supervisor or whoever is above him will already know what the minimum qualifications to hold that position are and that you guys won't have to rewrite anything. Right CAPT Bailey?

CAPT Bailey: That's correct.

CAPT Shaffer: Bryan I think you asked a question about the specialist position. I was in that exact situation when I was in Baltimore. I was doing the work of an O-5 specialist; however there were not any positions open and the positions that did open they did prefer to give them to civilians because they did get an increase in pay. So what they did was to increase my billet to an O-5 billet just to show that I was at that level. So, if you are in a situation like that and you are a specializing and you just don't have an actual title per say in the District that something you will have to let us know whenever you are filling in your attributes on

your billet. Just let us know you are specializing and it won't be hard for me to determine – if you are doing 100% of your work in Bimo, biologics, etc. I will be able to determine that you are a GS-13, O-5 level.

CDR Bryan: Okay Ma'am. I appreciate that clarification.

CAPT Bailey: I would like to add one more thing – the final thing is, if I can reemphasize it, is to please take the time to view the tutorial. The officer tutorial is just under 15 minutes long. It doesn't take that long, and you will be able to visually see exactly what it's going to look like. The form that will be attached to the email that you will receive, even though it is not a multidisciplinary form or not specifically addressing the multidisciplinary billet—the form that is on the tutorial is the same exact format you will just see except for the multidisciplinary information and attributes attached to it. But the process will be exactly the same for multidisciplinary. I strongly encourage you to take 15 minutes. All that you have to do is sit there and click the button and the tutorial is going to guide you through the forms and show you exactly how the process runs. It will make life a lot easier for you when the time comes if you've already seen that.

CAPT Shaffer: Thank you CAPT Bailey. I know we ran over a little bit and I don't want to hold officers up. So, thank you again. Thank you CAPT Green for your input to.

CAPT Bailey: Thank you for the opportunity.

CAPT Green: Thank you Ma'am

CAPT Shaffer: Okay, we will conclude the call at this time. Thank you everyone.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]