

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

**CHARTER**

**JUNIOR OFFICER ADVISORY GROUP**

**I. MISSION**

The JOAG is a public health professional group whose purpose is to provide advice and consultation to the Surgeon General and other Corps and non-Corps entities on interests and concerns specific to junior officers in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

**II. RELATIONSHIP OF THE JUNIOR OFFICER ADVISORY GROUP TO THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (USPHS)**

The Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officers (CPOs), Professional Advisory Committees (PACs), the Commissioned Officers Association (COA), and other Commissioned Corps groups on issues relating to professional practice and personnel activities affecting junior officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The JOAG members represent junior officers from all USPHS categories, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Operating Divisions and Staff Divisions (OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs), and those non-HHS programs routinely staffed by Commissioned Corps personnel. The JOAG consists of knowledgeable professionals who represent a cross-section of the interests, concerns, and responsibilities of junior officers of all categories in organizations staffed by USPHS personnel.

**III. OBJECTIVES**

The JOAG serves in a resource, advisory, and liaison capacity to assist in the development and coordination of activities related to junior officers in the Commissioned Corps with the specific functions of:

1. Identifying and advocating on behalf of junior officer issues and concerns.
2. Assisting the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG), the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) or its successors or assignees, the PACs, and the CPOs in the assessment of policies, personnel needs, and in recruitment, training, utilization, and recognition of junior officers.
3. Developing position papers, statistical reports, and/or guidelines where appropriate, to advice and comment on issues relating to staffing and utilization issues, professional practice and personnel activities affecting junior officers.

4. Promoting junior officer development and utilization.
5. Promoting cooperation and communication between junior and senior officers throughout the USPHS.
6. Serving as a liaison between junior officers and other USPHS or external components and providing advice and consultation to the Agency Heads and OPDIV/STAFFDIV upon request.
7. Serving as communication link and information resource for junior officers.

#### **IV. FUNCTIONS**

1. Provide general professional advice and recommendations:
  - a. Review and comment on issues referred to JOAG by the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officers, PAC Chairs, Special Initiatives Workgroups, Agency Heads, and/or Program Heads.
  - b. Deliberate issues, develop findings, and present recommendations to groups designated in Section IV, Subsection 1(a).
  - c. Provide advice on the professional aspects of junior officership (e.g., new technologies, regulations, curricula, roles, etc.)
  - d. Provide advice on ethical and professional standards issues that impact junior officers.
  - e. Review and provide recommendations concerning proposed or needed changes to appointment standards and professional requirements (e.g., licensure required to maintain high quality staff.)
2. Act as a resource for and provide junior officer career development:
  - a. Advise on Commissioned Corps practices concerning career development.
  - b. Advise on operating practices concerning the appropriate/optimum use of personnel designed to best meet USPHS needs and the needs of the individual.
  - c. Advise on issues related to USPHS promotion practices.
  - d. Provide recommendations for the selection of candidates for training and/or other career development options.

- e. Identify both continuing and long-term intramural/extramural education needs of junior officers, and identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs.
  - f. If requested by Agency Heads or OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs, review applications for long-term training, assess appropriateness of requested training in terms of the individuals and the services needed, and provide recommendations for the approval and disapproval of such requests.
  - g. Provide professional development (e.g., Journeyman Speaker Series, ad-hoc Q&A sessions).
3. Provide advice and assistance on staffing issues:
- a. Assess and project the need for junior officer staffing levels throughout the USPHS, when requested.
  - b. Provide advice on the goals, objectives, and procedures designed to meet junior officer staffing needs.
  - c. Provide guidance for recruitment to the short-term student affiliation programs (COSTEP, summer students, etc.). Facilitate mentorship for these officers when appropriate.
  - d. Develop, and/or review and critique USPHS recruitment materials, procedures, and programs. Assist in the development of orientation materials for newly-hired junior officers and provide advice/recommendations concerning orientation.
  - e. Help establish networks of current junior officers who can assist and facilitate recruitment activities for junior officers.
  - f. Provide guidance to approved USPHS recruiters concerning the recruitment of qualified junior officer candidates.
4. Communicate and encourage appropriate use of awards/recognition systems:
- a. Identify, establish, and help administer special professional JOAG awards.
  - b. Promote awareness of the existing award programs and opportunities.
5. Serve as a communication link and information resource for JOAG:
- a. Communicate to the PACs and other professional groups and programs (MOLC, BCOAG, ARP, COA Board, etc.) information concerning professional, ethical, and technical issues relating to junior officers.

- b. Encourage individual membership in, and involvement with, professional organizations and societies in order to promote open communication with non-federal colleagues.
- c. Ensure the distribution of minutes and/or other JOAG-developed materials to the extent possible and appropriate to junior officers. Ensure the availability of JOAG minutes to other PACs and the Office of the Surgeon General through the JOAG website.

*This list of functions is not all inclusive. JOAG has the responsibility to identify and add functions as necessary to carry out its objectives. Such functions shall be in concert with the overall mission of JOAG.*

## V. MEMBERSHIP

1. **Basic Eligibility Requirement:** At the time of appointment to the voting membership, each JOAG member shall be an active duty officer at or below the rank of Lieutenant Commander (LCDR/O-4), and not be eligible for promotion to the temporary rank of Commander (CDR/O-5) prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> of the second year of their appointment term. A JOAG voting member may hold a simultaneous membership in their respective PAC, if permitted by the PAC.
2. **General eligibility:** Staff from any Agency or OPDIV/STAFFDIV may serve on JOAG as a voting member, so long as they meet the basis eligibility requirements listed in Section V.
3. **Size of the JOAG:** The JOAG shall have no less than 11 and no more than 20 voting members.
4. **Organizational Representation:** In order to provide the range of experiences and perspectives necessary for addressing issues before JOAG, every effort must be made to have the broadest representation possible among all agencies that are routinely staffed by junior officers in the Commissioned Corps.
5. **Geographic Considerations:** The JOAG shall have, as voting members, at least two individuals whose regular duty station is geographically removed by a distance of 75 miles or more from the Washington and Atlanta Metropolitan areas.
6. **Gender and Minority Representation:** Every effort will be made to assure that the JOAG does not consist (1) entirely of men or entirely of women, or (2) entirely of one race or ethnicity, so long as no selection is made to the JOAG solely on the basis of gender or race.
7. **Personnel System:** JOAG will consist entirely of junior officers commissioned in the USPHS.

8. **Rank Restrictions:** Voting membership in JOAG is restricted to officers at rank of Lieutenant Commander (LCDR/O-4) and below.
9. **PAC Representation:** At a minimum, a voting member must be selected from each of the USPHS categories.
10. **Ex-Officio Members (non-voting):** The former JOAG Chair may serve 1 year as an ex-officio member, regardless of rank. The JOAG Senior Advisor is an ex-officio member with a 3 year term. Ex-officio members need not meet the basic eligibility requirements identified above.
11. **Liaison Members:** The JOAG shall have formal and informal liaisons who interact with the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG), the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) or its successors or assignees, the CPO/PAC Chairs Committee, the Minority Officer Liaison Committee (MOLC), and each categorical Professional Advisory Committee (PAC). Liaisons may be identified and selected, as needed, to address ad hoc issues of importance to the JOAG. The JOAG Chair shall assign JOAG liaisons to these group.
12. **JOAG Senior Advisor (non-voting):** The Senior Officer Advisor to the JOAG is an Ex-Officio member with a three-year term. The Senior Advisor is expected to be a consultant to the JOAG and advise the JOAG on its issues, concerns, policies and procedures. The Senior Advisor may advocate for the JOAG but may not officially represent the JOAG. The Senior Advisor must be an officer ranked O-6 and above and can work for any agency. The Office of the Surgeon General will solicit nominations for the JOAG Senior Advisor. Application packets received for the JOAG Senior Advisor will be reviewed and discussed amongst the JOAG voting membership. Nominees for the JOAG Senior Advisor will be interviewed by the JOAG voting membership and ranked in order of preference. This list will be provided to the Surgeon General who will make the final selection and appoint the Senior Advisor to JOAG.

## VI. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. Annually, the JOAG Membership Committee will solicit nominations for upcoming JOAG voting membership vacancies via newsletters and Listserv solicitations. Self-nominations are acceptable. After applications are received, the JOAG Membership Committee will notify the appropriate Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and respective Agency Head (Agency Commissioned Corps Liaison) in writing concerning nominees under consideration from their respective professional disciplines/programs, and, if necessary, make requests for additional nominees meeting the membership requirements as set forth in Section V. The nominee's Agency Head or CPO has the option of eliminating, from consideration, nominees from their respective agency or category.

The JOAG Membership Committee will collect and prepare all application packets for review by the rest of the voting membership. Eligible voting members will review and make member selections. The Membership Committee will review all agency/CPO

responses and present their selections to the JOAG. The JOAG will review and approve the Membership Committee selections for new voting members. The JOAG recommendations and accompanying nomination materials will be transmitted to the Surgeon General for concurrence and appointment.

2. This nomination process shall be conducted so that the final nomination package is available for consideration by the Surgeon General no less than sixty (60) calendar days prior to the expiration of any regular term of membership (August 1 of each term year).
3. Should the need arise to fill an unexpired term, the same process used for regular term appointments will be followed, except that the nomination package will be conveyed to the Surgeon General as soon as possible for action.

## **VII. TERM OF APPOINTMENT**

1. The term of appointment for a voting member will be two years. Terms will be staggered so that approximately one-half of the terms will expire annually. The JOAG operational year begins October 1.
2. If the election of a member to an executive position on the JOAG would necessitate an extension beyond the officer's initial membership term, their term will be automatically extended. The extension can be up to 2 years, and is dependent on the needs of the position (e.g., Chair-Elect (2 years), Vice-Chair (1 year), Financial Liaison (1 year), or Executive Secretary (1 year)), and the officer's preference. However, once a member has accumulated four years of service on the JOAG, they are not eligible for term extensions, regardless of circumstance.
3. Cognizant of the demands of the member's primary work responsibilities, and the JOAG's need to conduct business, each voting member shall appoint and inform the Chairperson and Executive Secretary of a single individual who can serve as their alternate. Such alternates do not have voting privileges when serving in the place of a primary member. The alternate does not have to be of the same category or rank as the voting member. It is the responsibility of the primary JOAG member to keep the alternate fully informed and knowledgeable of JOAG activities. Any Agency clearance or approval requirements for travel/per diem will have to be handled within the Agency by the primary JOAG member.
4. Any JOAG member who frequently misses meetings in a year without just cause can, at the discretion of the JOAG, be asked to voluntarily resign from the JOAG, or the JOAG can initiate a request to the Surgeon General to terminate said membership and so inform the Agency and CPO.

## **VIII. JOAG Chair**

1. **Election and Role of Chair:** The JOAG Chair will be elected by the voting membership.

2. **Term of the Chair:** The JOAG Chair shall be elected as the Chair-Elect in the year prior to serving as Chair. If a circumstance arises where the Chair-Elect is unavailable to progress to Chair, the JOAG may choose to elect a Chair without serving first as Chair-Elect. Alternately, the JOAG may choose to re-elect an incumbent Chair for one additional year if the Chair-Elect is unwilling or unable to progress to Chair in the subsequent year and the incumbent Chair has not been promoted to the rank of Commander. In no case will any Officer be allowed to serve more than two years as the JOAG Chair.
3. At the expiration of the Chair's membership term, the Chair may serve an additional year as an ex-officio member, regardless of rank. The election of the Chair-Elect, Vice Chair, Financial Liaison and Executive Secretary can be found in the JOAG Bylaws.

## **IX. (OMITTED)**

## **X. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

1. The JOAG shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (Bylaws), but these shall include, at the minimum, the following:
  - a. **Operational Year:** Determine the day and month chosen as the beginning of its operational year.
  - b. **Frequency of Meetings:** At a minimum, meetings will be held once per quarter.
  - c. **Agenda:** A meeting agenda, with appropriate background material, is to be made available to the members.
2. Records and Reporting:
  - a. Minutes of each JOAG general membership meeting will be developed and approved by the JOAG voting members.
  - b. Minutes and reports of the JOAG will be distributed in accord with Section IV (FUNCTIONS), Subsection 5 (c).
  - c. JOAG must establish a system to maintain a permanent file of the official minutes and reports of JOAG.
3. **Executive Secretary:** The Executive Secretary must be a JOAG voting member.
4. **Quorum:** A quorum consisting of at least 50 percent of the JOAG voting membership is required for voting.

5. **Voting:** Where voting is required or appropriate, i.e., election of the Chair, action will be determined by the simple majority of those voting members present so long as a quorum is met.
  
6. **Committees:** Where JOAG elects to establish standing or ad-hoc committees, said membership may include non-JOAG voting members provided that the Chairman of the committee is a voting member of JOAG.

[Revision, April, 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011]

**Decision:**

*Regina M. Benjamin*  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Date **MAY 13 2011**

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