



**U.S. Public Health Service
Pharmacist Professional Advisory Committee**

Chief Professional Officer Pharmacy Update

September 2011

Commissioned Corps

- The furlough status discussed in the last Report is (and has been) continually ‘researched’ by many in the chain of leadership. Please keep in mind that the Commissioned Corps has actively sought out information and is still communicating with leadership ‘above’ OSG regarding our status. No new findings have been relayed back to us thus far, but they are still working this issue. Unofficially, the current discussion (in brief) seems to revolve around the fact that as ‘active duty’ officers, we are to be paid. Unless we are not ‘active duty’, which would take official orders or some sort of other official status that is not possible, we must be paid. Therefore, from that standpoint, although it may be *potentially* possible to ‘not have us come to work’, we would remain active duty and be paid. Not sure of the value of not having us work. Remember, this is just discussion and no official position has been passed down to the OSG.
- The new accountability structure of the Corps will be placed in the Federal Register in the coming days. This will immediately be put into place consolidating many Offices (OFRD, ORA, OCCO, OCCFM) into one large Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (CPR).
- As you may know, I was selected as the new Director of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness. It is a privilege as well as a challenge. In the coming months, there will likely be some transition taking place and I apologize for any delays in responses or usual communications. Leadership has consolidated four critical Offices into one Division and we have ‘streamlined’ much of the leadership. I look forward to continuing work with each of you.
- Our PHS Commissioned Corps pharmacists will grow to nearly 1200 pharmacist officers once all have received calls-to-active duty. The most recent nominations for commission have been sent to the Secretary in June. The list contained 567 more candidates. No word yet on movement to the President for nomination.
- Senate Bill 679 passed the Senate and is still in the House. This Bill eliminates the need (after Presidential nomination) for a PHS Commissioned Officer to be confirmed by the Senate. Although initially it may seem like a positive step to streamlining the commissioning process, it is not consistent with DOD processes. This may cause us to lose parity with DOD and may negatively affect us in the future. That said, we are still exploring the potential impact. As of 8-3-2011, it has not yet even passed the House of Representatives.

Promotions

- New promotion materials for the FY12 cycle will be forthcoming soon. Please stand by and continue to check the CCMIS webpage for promotion information.

Billets

- Billet reform continues in the pharmacy category. A more detailed update from CDR Mike Crockett is forthcoming. It is critical to keep in mind that this process is not over just yet. Some of the more important decisions regarding billet equity and parity must be discussed at the highest levels. There are many considerations across the Department, Agency, personnel systems, etc. so as to keep this process equitable and fair to all – including civilian employees. Stay tuned for further updates.

- Multidisciplinary billet release has commenced for certain OPDIVs. If you are in a multi-D billet, please be aware these billets will be released and you will be responsible for selecting a billet (step 1) and filling in a position description (step 2), just like the category specific billets as soon as possible.

Recruitment

- As you will notice in the coming months and beyond, there may be a shift in recruitment 'philosophy'. As uniformed officers, we have a responsibility to adapt and **meet the Department and Agency needs**. As the recruiting processes develop within the new Corps structure, please be aware of any potential changes. There will likely be thematic emphasis or more targeted recruitment on the following 5 'categories':
 - Vulnerable and medically underserved populations
 - Hard-to-fill positions
 - Our 24/7 response capacity and responsibility
 - Support to need identified by other uniformed services
 - Unmet public health need

As a bit of an editorial, each of these situations is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for our Corps and our category to demonstrate its value in times of need. This is another situation where our values and principles for service can come to the forefront. These are appropriate needs and are supported at the highest levels. If you have any questions, please ask our Recruitment Section leads and they may contact me for further information. We will be learning more about this process in the near future, so please stand-by and thanks (as always) for your volunteerism.

- The PharmPAC is working on a targeted recruitment project with the Physician PAC. Currently, we have worked with the PPAC to adopt a student public health award. Great job on this first collaborative initiative. You may be hearing more from me (wearing the Director hat of CPR) as to new directions in recruitment.

Readiness /OFRD

- Update from CDR Nate Yale from the PharmPAC Career Development Section. Please remember that **readiness is a year-round activity**, not just for promotion cycles or months.
- 2011 OFRD Field trainings have been successful thus far. Most recently, Pine Ridge, SD was very successful.

OBC

- OBC Graduation schedule is on CCMIS: <http://dcp.psc.gov/COTA/OBCD.aspx>.

COSTEP

- Everyone in the chain is aware of the need to bring **COSTEPs** on rapidly once the authorities have been approved to bring them into the Ready Reserves. Previously, the Department granted the ability to call COSTEPs into the Ready Reserve year by year. Now, there is no date on the policy, thus every year, COSTEPs may enter the Ready Reserve as a Commissioned Officer for 6 months. That should put our next COSTEP class in 2012 in good shape for early selection and assignment.

COERs

- A minor edit to the COER process will be identified for the 2011 COER. In 2010 for the first time, the rating official had to send the COER to the Reviewing Official prior to the officer review. However, due to logistical challenges and delays, we will rescind to the original process and rating officials will NOT have to send their COER to reviewing official first.

Meetings

- ASHP is set for December in New Orleans. Please coordinate accordingly. There WILL be a federal pharmacy forum at ASHP, similar to the APhA forum. CDR Jeff Fredy is the lead on this coordination for PHS Pharmacy.

CPO Initiatives Update

- With the release of the Prevention Strategy by the Surgeon General, I charged the pharmacy category to develop a brief strategy to demonstrate how we apply the Prevention Strategy in our daily practice. RADM Lushniak then tasked every category in the PHS to do similarly. Pharmacy category took the lead and developed a template and initial Report. CDR Diak is leading up a small group to gather input on some of our prevention initiatives. I have reviewed the first complete draft and the group did a wonderful job. I was also able to share this with the Surgeon General and she was very impressed. I believe her words were, “you (pharmacy) have done a tremendous job with this”.
- I was honored was again to recently discuss the Pharmacy Report to the Surgeon General: Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice with VADM Benjamin. We had some significant movement forward and are working on a support/guidance letter about the Report to come from the U.S. Surgeon General. All indications are we continue to move in the right direction.
- An announcement will be forthcoming for a new Special Assistant (designate) to assist LT Tsai in her duties with the CPO. I’ve kept her and LCDR Jones quite busy this past year. A special thanks to LCDR Jones who served for a full year assisting me in multiple tasks and projects. Job well done, Chris!
- Please consider utilizing the PharmPAC leadership (CDR Mallette, CDR Diak) and LT Yiyong ‘CoCo’ Tsai for any CPO business related issues: (Yiyong.Tsai@fda.hhs.gov)

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