Leadership, Service, Integrity, and Excellence

A Publication of the District of Columbia Commissioned Officers Association

Winter 2018
What's Inside

3 - 4
President's Corner & New Board Members

5
DC COA Bonding through Bowling

6
Highlights from the 2018 USPHS Symposium

7
TDY in Crownpoint, NM

8
DC COA Regional Science Fairs

9-10
The Birth of The Food and Drug Administration’s Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Training Program

11
Show Your PHS Pride

Newsletter Editors

DC COA Publications Subcommittee

LT Stephanie Lim
LCDR Kevin Denny
LCDR Ryan Presto
LCDR Yen Anh Bui
CDR Bic Nguyen
Dear District of Columbia Commissioned Officers Association Members,

Happy New Year!

As the New Year begins it is a time for reflection on what we have accomplished in the past and all that we should be thankful for. In July 2018, I was elected DC COA President for the 2018-2020 term. The first six months of my term has been a rewarding and humbling experience. I met with so many dedicated and hard working officers from each committee who are diligently furnishing opportunities for Commissioned Corps officers of the United States Public Health Service to improve and protect public health through education, networking, and community service, I feel privileged and thankful to be working alongside them.

Looking back over the last six months I am amazed at all that we accomplished together since July. Here are a few of the highlights:

We added one new committee and three new subcommittees.

- The newly created DC COA Symposium Posting Committee is committed to bringing the USPHS Symposium back to the DC Area in 2021.
- The newly formed DC COA Broadcasting Subcommittee (under the Communications Committee) will provide filming and broadcasting services to share ceremonies and occasions with the public to raise awareness of the USPHS.
- The newly established Archives & Records Subcommittee (under the Procedures and Policy Committee) is developing a platform to enhance continuity of operations from year to year and foster collaboration.
- The newly established PHS Ball Subcommittee will co-sponsor the inaugural Commissioned Corps Ball in 2019 to increase PHS engagement with other uniformed services.

We also had a great deal of success with on-going business activities and new initiatives.

- One of the new initiatives is from the DC COA award Committee. We established a DC COA Distinguished Service Member Award which will be presented for the first time in 2019 to recognize an outstanding DC COA member who contributed significantly to the DC COA mission. Details will be announced in Feb/Mar through the email distribution list.
- The PACE (Prevention through Active Community Engagement) Subcommittee’s (under the Community Outreach Committee) new initiatives included establishing a partnership with the Maryland Department of Mental Health Opioid Overdose Response Program, providing 13 training sessions since July 2018 and resulting in 472 individuals (275 USPHS Officer and 197 Civilians) educated in administering Naloxone.
- The Career Development and Education Committee provided the first in a series of 3 networking skill presentations and practice workshops in December 2018.

There are many more activities, including some described in the photos and captions below and others in the articles of this newsletter.

If you are new to DC COA, please consider volunteering for one or more of our activities and share your experience by publishing articles in this newsletter. Although membership to DC COA is not required to participate in DC COA events, I encourage you to consider joining to strengthen DC COA and to be part of the vibrant DC COA community. Last, but not least, the DC COA membership increased by 15% in 2018 compared to 2017. Many thanks to all the new DC COA members, to the renewing members, the lifetime members and the DC COA Membership Committee.

Thanks to the DC COA newsletter team for the opportunity to share our achievements and convey my gratitude to the men and women who have made this branch one of the best, if not the best, in the nation.

I look forward to working with all of you through the end of my term in 2020 as DC COA President.

Sincerely,

CDR Qiao Bobo

DC COA President
President: CDR Qiao Bobo

Vice President: LCDR David Foss

Treasure: LT Tramara Dam

Secretary: CDR Tara Cozzarelli

Member-at-large Nurse: LCDR Jamie Cherup

Member-at-large Engineer: LT Michael Simpson

Member-at-large Scientist: LCDR Shiny Mathew

Member-at-large Medical: CAPT Suyoung Tina Chang

Member-at-large Dental: LCDR Eleanor Fleming

Member-at-large Pharmacist: LCDR Emily Baker

Member-at-large HSO: CDR Elizabeth Garza

Member-at-large Combined category: LCDR Courtney Drevo

Member-at-large Retired Officer: CAPT J. Terrell Hoffeld

Immediate Past President: CDR Judy Park
The DC COA hosted a successful bowling event on Sunday, March 18, 2018. Officers from multiple agencies and categories came out to BowlMor Rockville in Gaithersburg, Maryland to bowl and get to know other officers and their families. From 1400 to 1600 hours, the 45 attendees were able to show off their bowling skills, eat snacks, mingle, and win raffle prizes. There were friendly competitions held to promote interaction between and within bowling lanes, and many of the children competing with PHS officers gave them a run for their money! Social events are important for officers’ personal well-being, and this annual DCCOA event successfully allowed officers to enjoy quality time with each other in a family-friendly environment. Attendees indicated they were looking forward to attending this event again in the future. Many thanks to CDR Lana Rossiter, who organized the event, and to the eight volunteers who assisted in planning and executing the event. We would also like to thank DCCOA for providing financial support of this event and for allowing officers to attend this fun event at a bargain price!

Officers enjoyed bowling with their families and socializing with other Officers
Enlightening, inspiring, and unified. Those are the three words I would use to describe the 2018 U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Scientific and Training Symposium in Dallas as it was definitely a personal highlight for the year. It was my second consecutive annual conference, and a remarkable experience not only from a learning and training perspective, but also from a social and networking standpoint. There were plenty of opportunities available for attendees to receive further training and continuing education (CE) credits. This year was the largest symposium to date as over 1,300 officers from all corners of United States and abroad, including from countries like Ghana, were in attendance.

Although the Symposium doesn’t officially start on a Monday, there were additional trainings available over the weekend prior to the start of the conference for those who signed up ahead of time. Some of the trainings available included BLS, ACLS, a leadership workshop, and a retirement seminar. Once the attendees arrived at the conference, they were efficiently navigated to the registration booth where they received necessary information about the conference. In addition, I especially appreciated the fact that announcements, directions, and a complete schedule of all the events were easily accessible via mobile phone. All the attendees could download the application called “Guide”, and within the application, download the specific guide by searching the name of the conference. This app helps you customize your schedule by selecting meetings and other events you plan to attend. What made this tool even more useful were the integrated notifications and reminders for my personal schedule, which allowed me to make the most of my time and remain on track throughout the conference. The opening day was accompanied with several different meetings that included COA Local Branch meetings, IHS meeting, lunch with a Captain, and festively concluded by the Anchor and Caduceus Dinner.

The second day of the conference was marked by an official opening ceremony, which was preceded by an early morning Boot Camp Workout, and category mentoring. PHS officers who signed up for career counseling received enhanced-speed mentoring from senior officers within their respective categories. Subsequently, all officers were free to attend the official opening ceremony of the 53rd USPHS Symposium and transition to the main activities of the conference, which included five different scientific track sessions and speeches from keynote speakers and guests. Following the opening ceremony, ADM Brett Giroir, DHHS Assistant Secretary for Health, and VADM Jerome Adams, 20th U.S. Surgeon General, both shared their vision for the future of the Commissioned Corps. It was incredibly inspiring to hear directly from the Admirals as they articulated their support and commitment to the mission of our service. One the key highlights from ADM Brett Giroir speech was the following excerpt: “…To all of you, I owe my respect, my gratitude, and my word that I will do everything I can, every day, and in every way, to honor our service, and to leave our Corps much stronger, more stable, and more capable than we have been in at least for decades.” After a series of motivational speeches and events throughout the day, many PHS officers came out to join for a terrific night of music and reflection on the past and present history of USPHS. Everyone in attendance received a huge inflow of energy and had an unrivaled experience!

The last two days of the Symposium presented some exceptional opportunities. PHS Officers and guests had the opportunity to attend Category Day and network with their colleagues from different agencies and locations. At the same time, they were also able to participate in live presentations on public health topics and obtain CE credits. In addition, I immensely enjoyed visiting the Exhibit Theater which comprised of more than 70 different event sponsors and exhibitors, as they introduced new and exciting products and innovative services that significantly impact public health.

I learned a great deal from being a part of this Symposium and would encourage anyone interested in public health to attend. You will be thrilled to find out how a Symposium like this may impact your career in so many ways. It is also important to note that outside of the many training opportunities, there are also numerous volunteer opportunities that you can get involved with. The next Symposium is in Minneapolis, MN on May 6-9, 2019 so you may want to mark your calendar now, and attend!
TDY in Crownpoint, NM

By LCDR Chaltu Wakijra and LCDR Mandy Kwong

The Crownpoint TDY was the highlight of my year. Not only was I able to enhance clinical knowledge, but also enjoy the breath-taking views the surroundings offered. In February of 2018, a request was sent out to pharmacy officers for a TDY deployment to Crownpoint, NM and through the end of June 2018, over 15 officers volunteered. Crownpoint is located in Northwest New Mexico, at the edge of the Navajo Reservation. The facility is a 32-bed CMS-accredited hospital that provides full ambulatory care, emergency room, and inpatient services. The facility has two satellite ambulatory care clinics located in Pueblo Pintado and Thoreau. The facility provides healthcare to 20,000 Navajo people.

Crownpoint pharmacy has a 23 member staff, of which 13 are a pharmacist, 8 technicians, and 2 pharmacy residents. It is also an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) site for 4 different pharmacy schools. On average, the pharmacy has 4 to 6 pharmacy students onsite. The facility utilizes pharmacy automation, including automated robotic systems such as Scriptpro, and Pyxis Pharmacy, to enhance efficiency, safety, and dispensing accuracy.

**Services Offered**

Pharmacists use their a broad range of skills as they utilize patients’ health records, laboratory results, immunizations, and medical history, to assess the appropriateness of drug therapy. The clinics run by a pharmacist at this facility are the following: pain management (ran by PHS Clinical Pharmacist of the Year 2018, LCDR Keith Warshany!), diabetic clinic, inpatient and outpatient pharmacy services.

**TDY pharmacists work the outpatient pharmacy, where they assist with:**

- reviewing patient chart(s) for proper dosage and treatment
- medication reconciliation/verification
- counseling
- narcotic accountability
- responding to codes
- pharmacy staff meetings
- verifying prepackaged medication, crash cart, and Pyxis medications
- mentoring students

**Exploring**

We were encouraged to make plans for the weekend and explore the Southwest. With our colleagues, we hiked up the local mesa and at this high altitude it took some getting used. We enjoyed amazing sunsets to end our day. One memorable trip was to Durango, CO, where we took the 19th-century Durango & Silverton Railroad to Silverton, a picturesque town at the foot of a snowy mountain. Traveling along a river, mountain, and canyons, every scene was breath-taking. So many options for outdoor adventures: Exploring Albuquerque, Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and White Sands, are all within a day’s drive.

**Take-aways**

This TDY enhanced our clinical proficiency as we played a critical role in impacting the health of patients. We saw teamwork at its best in the pharmacy, where ideas are shared and implemented to improve efficiency and patient care. We had an opportunity to learn about the Navajo culture, and felt like we are members of the team. This was an amazing opportunity to see PHS officers providing care to an underserved population. We want to thank CDR Freddy, LCDR Warshany, and the entire team for a wonderful experience!
D.C. COA Regional Science Fairs

By LCDR Ashlee Januszewicz, Pharm.D., RAC

Each year, the D.C. COA Science Fair Subcommittee solicits officers to serve as judges at regional science fairs. The 2018 Science Fair season was nothing short of impressive! Forty commissioned officers (including retired officers) attended the fairs, offering their support and encouragement to local middle and high school students by serving as science fair judges. This year, ten science fairs were held in March 2018 at regional high schools in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.

As depicted in the charts below, the judges represented many different categories and agencies. The diversity of backgrounds provided great value to the many students who the judges interacted with. The opportunity for an officer to serve as a judge is not only great for networking but also allows for education on the USPHS to the many teachers, students, parents, and other professionals in attendance at the fairs.

The officers volunteered their time listening, teaching, and mentoring over 400 middle and high school students. After interacting with the students, the judges spent additional time deliberating which projects should be awarded recognition. This is not an easy task as the students’ projects are impressive. To give you examples, below is a list of some of the winning projects:

- Using a Super-Absorbent Polymer to Mitigate Tsunami and Storm Surge Damage (7th grade)
- The Toxic Effects of Plastic Contamination on Grass Shrimp in the Chesapeake Bay Region (12th grade)
- Stethoscope Using Microprocessor to Evaluate Heart Rhythm (11th grade)
- Prescription Opioid Epidemic in the USA: Building Risk Factor Classification Models Using GINI from the TREE (High School)

If you have considered volunteering in the past but hesitated, we hope that these examples demonstrate what a great opportunity this is. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to one of the D.C. Science Fair Subcommittee members or to any of the officers who have served as past judges. We are looking forward to even more exciting things for the 2019 fairs.
In Fiscal Year 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) embarked on a mission to train citizens to effectively recognize and respond to opioid overdoses through a new Naloxone training program. The goal of the training program is to help United States Public Health Service (USPHS) officers and civilians recognize and respond to opioid overdose. According to the 2016-2017 Health and Human Services (HHS) report, about 130 people of various racial and socioeconomic statuses in the US die from an opioid overdose daily, and 11.4 million misuse prescription opioids annually. The emotional impact on affected families can be devastating—parents burying children who once held so much promise, and children orphaned when they need their parents the most. Unfortunately, people are losing their lives to a disease that is treatable and preventable; and therefore, necessitates an urgent response from the public health system and community. In 2018, the Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Jerome Adams, and the FDA Commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, called on all citizens to help curb this epidemic. My job as a Public Health Service Officer could not have been better preparation for promoting a training to prevent and address overdoses, especially considering the urgent need to equip the public with the necessary tools required to address this epidemic.

The inspiration for this initiative was an opioid training event I hosted on July 19, 2018 for the Rotary Club of Pikesville as their Chapter President. As President-elect, I had the privilege of designing a community service program that would benefit the citizens of Pikesville in Baltimore County while meeting the humanitarian mission of the Rotary Club. My research for a project that would positively impact the community led me to the current opioid crisis. With this training, we aimed towards a multi-faceted approach, utilizing the Rotary club’s platform to improve community health. This required educating the public and practitioners on ways to prevent opioid addiction, empowering the public and practitioners with training on the tools required to respond and attend to an opioid overdose patient, and by encouraging an individualized approach tailored to the specific needs and demographics of one’s community and environment to curtail the opioid epidemic.

Based on an initial consultation with the Baltimore County Health Department (BCHD), providing practitioners and citizens with the information required to reduce the mortality rate was a necessary immediate first step. The training was a success due to our collaborations with the BCHD, fellow Rotarians, fellow PHS officers, federal civilian employees, and members of the Baltimore community. We used signpgenius.com to coordinate an online registration of all trainees to ensure that there were adequate amounts of naloxone available for distribution and eventually increased the capacity from 20 to 120 attendees due to unexpected demand. While reviewing the event registration list, I noticed that many officers and civilians had registered for the training from National Institute of Health (NIH), FDA, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture, and the Department of State. Thus, I sent an email requesting fellow officers to attend the training in their official uniform, and we were able to borrow a PHS flag to display on the day of the event, in order to increase Corps visibility. Soon the list of attendees grew to include now retired Pharmacy Chief Professional Officer RADM Schweitzer, Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger and representatives from the offices of Governor Hogan, Senator Ben Cardin, and Senator Van Hollen. Also, in attendance were Rotarian Area Governor, Mr. Ed Podowski, and past Rotarian Leaders, Dr. Edco Bailey and Mary Anne Rishebarger. Over the course of the evening, around 120 people were trained on how to respond when witnessing an opioid overdose, equipped with 2 prescriptions of Naloxone, and received a certification card. The event was also broadcast by WMAR-2 News, who interviewed me and other attendees after the event, providing great visibility for the PHS and showing the various roles of PHS officers in the community.

Following the event, Rear Admiral Palmer Orlandi and Rear Admiral Denise Hinton inquired about bringing the training to the FDA, and the work began. I reached out to the Montgomery County Health Department for their assistance in bringing the training to the FDA campus in Silver Spring, Maryland. Although the Montgomery County Health Department could not provide free naloxone to trainees due to a limited supply, we were able to secure a September 27, 2018 date for a collaborative training with them at the FDA campus. We also reached out to the State of Maryland’s Office of Preparedness and Response team (Dr. Romanosky), and Prevention through the Active Community Engagement (PACE) group (led by CDR Gumapas and LCDR Pesce) and RADM Kilmarx, to collaborate with them in bringing the training to the FDA. We scheduled an officer-led FDA training on September 17, 2018, and secured three presenters for the training: two from PACE and one presenter who was certified at the Pikesville Rotary event. The FDA opioid training team also collaborated with Dr. Romanosky to conduct the “train-the-trainer” session. The first FDA opioid training would be an instructor-led skills demonstration training without the free naloxone to go home with, but attendees would be educated on how to obtain naloxone from a pharmacy or the health department through the standing naloxone order passed in most states including Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia. CAPT Steven Link and LT Kodilichi Echeozo were integral in helping to organize the first FDA opioid training, and within a month of being
The inaugural FDA Opioid training comprised of two in-class training sessions and one in-class “train the trainer” session. We added a Continuing Education component to the training and were able to train 157 participants (33 of whom completed the train-the-trainer program) on that day. On September 27, 2018, the FDA’s opioid training team collaborated with the Montgomery County Health Department to conduct a second training for an additional 92 employees. This training was augmented with a hands-on skills demonstration led by USPHS Officers, some of whom were trained at the inaugural training.

As of December 13, 2018, we have conducted 7 trainings at the FDA and have trained a total over 600 people, including those who attended the Pikesville training. We have established a recurring monthly training with an online component starting with the December 13, 2018 training. This is a unique model with a Continuing Education component on a large scale offered to employees. Officers and civilians who are interested in bringing the training to their various Centers (CMS, HRSA), communities, churches, and workplaces have contacted the FDA opioid team for lessons learned to replicate the model. This model was also used to conduct a training at an Indian Health Service location. The FDA opioid training has produced many opioid ambassadors ready to provide training in their communities and across the US. This will make a huge impact in combating the nation’s opioid use crisis and will raise awareness of the various roles of USPHS officers. The FDA Opioid Training Team has expanded, and now officially named the FDA Opioid and Health Outreach Team. They will continuously work on increasing awareness and finding ways to address public health epidemics using the model created.

Opioid and Naloxone Training opportunities.

Opioid trainings are available online, and at most health departments and fire stations throughout the nation. There are variations in opioid trainings, many of which I have attended, including a drive-through 5-10 minute training at the fire station, with the eventual dispensing of a free naloxone. The more people are made aware of ways to prevent opioid misuse and the resources available to treat addiction, the bigger the dent we can make in daily deaths associated with opioids. The end goal is to create awareness, as one trained person can train thousands of people and the cycle of training continues and expands, producing a multitude of opioid ambassadors. This will go a long way towards curbing the epidemic and reducing the stigma associated with addiction.

Lessons learned and tips to set up an opioid training at your facility with skills demonstration component.

- Option 1: Contact the Health Department in your jurisdiction to check available dates for onsite training at your facility, and inquire if they will provide free naloxone for certified attendees (best case scenario). You can still conduct the training without dispensing naloxone. The health department will normally bring their training kit.
- Option 2: Utilize trained officers or employees in your area to conduct the training at your training site. Ideally, if training a target of 100 people in one training session use 2 Presenters and 10 Skills Instructors. Skills part should be 10 students to 1 Instructor (this last about 15-20 minutes.) Always have backup presenters and volunteers to accommodate for emergencies.
- Reserve a training kit from a nearby naloxone training program if you don’t have one on-site.

Training duration is 90 minutes (reserve the room for 4 hours to accommodate for set up/pack up).

- Send out a call for volunteers for skills instruction and presentation, and confirm availability.
- Reserve a Room for the training and make accommodations for tables for the skills part of the training.
- Develop a registration sign up link. If you are with HHS, you can utilize the LMS registration training link or use sign up genius.
- Explore adding Continuing Education credits to the training and an online access component.
- Craft your Announcement and disseminate to all employees.
- Set up a dry run for skills demonstration training session (very helpful—record it if possible)
- Add a “train-the-trainer” session for capacity building if possible. This will help develop your in-house program.
- Create an agenda of events for the day of the training
- Contact Information Technology folks to arrange a projector and recording of the event.
- Print out two sets of registration lists for sign-in on the day of event, and have a sign-in sheet for those interested in volunteering. Print out handouts and other materials as necessary.
- All key participants should be at the training site 2 hours before the start of training.
- Post-training activities: training survey, certificates, email continuing education codes to participants, adjudication of list, lessons learned, review feedback and comments from attendees, and keep a running data log of trained employees.

Fleece Jacket

- Non-pilling fleece coat features 1" elastic waist and cuffs.
- Full zip front and 2 zippered pockets.
- USPHS Logo embroidered in full color on the left chest.

Colors: Yellow, Royal Blue, Navy and Black,
Unisex Sizes: S, M, L, XL

$35 Each

Water Bottle

- 32 oz. Nalgene Water Bottle
  - PHS logo screen-printed
    - BPA Free
  - Tritan Wide Mouth
  - Blue bottle with gold logo or Clear bottle with blue logo

Ideal for staying well-hydrated throughout the day.

$15 Each

Padfolio

- PHS logo debossed imprint on front of padfolio.
  - Size-13”x 10”x 1”
  - Zippered closure, with exterior and interior document pockets
  - 8-1/2”x11” writing pad
  - Pen loop, 6 business card holder, 2 flash drive holders, 2 mesk ID window, and 1 media pocket

$20 Each

For more information, visit our website, www.dccoa.org/phs_pride_merchandise or contact
CDR Jill Hammond at jill.hammond@fda.hhs.gov or LCDR Nisha Antoine at Nisha.Antoine@fsis.usda.gov.

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Call for Newsletter Articles
DC COA Newsletter

The DC COA Newsletter subcommittee is now accepting articles for the newsletter to be published in the Summer of 2019. Consider submitting an article(s) in one of the following categories:

1) **Community Service events**: This section is dedicated to highlighting officers participating in community service projects within the DC, Maryland, and Virginia area.

2) **Featured Articles**: This section will include a variety of topics. Officers are encouraged to submit articles related to USPHS. Article examples include, but are not limited to; real-life responses, training deployments, MWR opportunities, PHS social gatherings, PHS updates, readiness, uniforms, and general info important to PHS officers and their families.

3) **Officer Spotlight**: This section is dedicated to highlighting USPHS officers at different duty stations and officer accomplishments, job-related and/or personal. An officer may submit an article for themselves or a fellow officer may submit these articles.

**FORMAT**
Articles must be submitted in Word format. Articles should not exceed a 750 word count. Provide author information for each submission.

**PHOTO**
Submission of photos is encouraged. Provide a suggested caption, if a caption is desired. Caption sizes should be limited and are subject to editing.

**DEADLINES**
Articles for submission in the first newsletter are due by August 30th, 2019. Articles should be submitted to LCDR Kevin Denny and LT Stephanie Lim at dccoanewsletter@gmail.com