

**Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
Atlanta Branch**

**CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS  
Spring 2016**

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas, the advancement of public health knowledge and the elevation of the professional standards and efficiency of public health workers in general, and the promotion of the interests and welfare of the U.S. Public Health Service and its officers in particular, are objectives to which we subscribe, and

Whereas, the Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Service, Incorporated, has, for many years, actively and earnestly labored on behalf of these purposes, and

Whereas, we approve of the work of the Association and believe that the effectiveness and usefulness of its efforts can be further extended by the formation of local branches; be it

Resolved, that we constitute such a branch of the Commissioned Officers Association and pledge ourselves to advance public health knowledge and practice, in every possible way, and to make the Atlanta Branch an outstanding example of cooperative endeavor, subscribing fully to the objectives and purposes of the Commissioned Officers Association as set forth in its Constitution.

**CONSTITUTION**

Article One: Name

This organization shall be known as the Atlanta Branch of the Commissioned Officers Association (ACOA) of the United States Public Health Service, Inc. hereinafter called ACOA.

Article Two: Objectives and Purposes

ACOA and its individual members shall be guided in their activities by the objectives of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc., hereinafter called the National Association. These objectives are outlined in the Constitution of said National Association.

The chief purposes of ACOA are:

- Advance the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps by uniting and serving Atlanta-based commissioned officers and advocating their interests through leadership and communication,
- Encourage and foster proper and helpful relationships between commissioned officers, their respective professions, other public health workers and the community as well as

- other uniformed services, and
- Advance the aims of the National Association.

### Article Three: Membership

The membership of ACOA shall consist of the following:

#### General Membership

Commissioned officers of the U.S. PHS who are members of the National Association and who subscribe to the Constitution and Bylaws adopted by this Branch shall be members of this Branch upon the payment of Branch and National Association annual dues.

#### Honorary Lifetime Membership in ACOA

Commissioned officers of the U.S. PHS who make a distinguished contribution to the health professions and officers who have held the office of Surgeon General, Deputy Surgeon General and Assistant Surgeon General shall be eligible. The Executive Committee shall decide the criteria. Not more than one (1) honorary member shall be elected in any one (1) calendar year. Notification of any honorary membership will be transmitted to the National Association.

### Article Four: Governing Body

The governing body of ACOA shall be known as the Executive Committee and shall include the President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer and up to eight (8) Executive Committee members who shall be Members-at-Large. These positions shall also have equal voting power. Election to the position of ACOA Vice President will be for a term of three (3) years and will progress from Vice President for the year elected, President the following year, and Immediate Past President the final year. All other positions are for a term of one (1) year. The ACOA operational year is September 1 through August 31.

The transaction of official business of the Executive Committee shall require a quorum of half (1/2) of the Executive Committee members plus one (1). When an officer has a conflict of interest, they shall declare their conflict and abstain from voting.

### Article Five: Amendments

Every proposal to amend this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee. Upon approval by eight (8) members of the Executive Committee, the Secretary shall submit the proposal in writing to each member of ACOA. Members shall, within fifteen (15) days, return the proposed amendment either approved or disapproved. Affirmative votes by three-fourths (3/4) of members shall constitute approval and shall be adopted at the next Executive Committee meeting. Members who do not return their ballots shall be regarded as "approval" votes.

### Article Six: Dissolution Clause

Any action to dissolve the ACOA must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Executive Committee members present at a meeting called to specifically consider such action, for which meeting prior written notice, at least seven (7) days, has been issued to all Executive Committee

members. If at its own option, ACOA shall cease to exist, all property real or personal shall be transferred to the National Association or its successor, after payment of all debts.

## **BYLAWS**

### Article One: Meetings

General membership meetings, such as lunch and learns, will be held a minimum of four (4) times yearly. Notification of meetings will be sent via the ACOA listserv and posted on the website. Executive Committee meetings will be held monthly.

### Article Two: Committees

Committees shall be chaired by one (1) or two (2) members of the Executive Committee and if possible, hold as members, one (1) or more officers from the general membership. The committees shall be nominated by any member of the Executive Committee and ratified by a majority quorum vote of the Executive Committee. There are seven (7) permanent committees.

#### Section One: Merchandise & Special Projects Committee

This committee will be chaired by the Vice President and can include Members-at-Large and/or officers from the general membership.

The Merchandise & Special Projects Committee will be responsible for ACOA Men's Uniform Store, Women's Uniform Store and the sales of U.S. PHS spirit merchandise and will be comprised of at least a Men's Uniform Store Coordinator, Women's Uniform Store Coordinator, and a Merchandise Coordinator. The Merchandise & Special Projects Committee will be responsible for the maintenance of the uniform inventories and prices of uniform items. The Merchandise & Special Projects Committee will be responsible for the development of ideas for merchandise to be sold at the annual Commissioned Officers Foundation Scientific Training & Symposium and maintenance of the merchandise inventory. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

The Merchandise & Special Projects Committee will also be responsible for coordinating requests to solicit volunteers for events sponsored by external groups (e.g., events planned and coordinated by groups other than ACOA). Requests must be submitted to the Merchandise & Special Projects Committee at least ten (10) days in advance of the event. If the Committee agrees to support the activity, then the request should be forwarded to the Executive Committee for final approval.

The Executive Committee will only issue thank you letters to officers who volunteer for events coordinated by the Executive Committee. Thank you letters will not be issued to volunteers of events coordinated by external groups (such as job fairs and science fairs); therefore, the Merchandise & Special Projects Committee shall coordinate with external groups to request thank you letters for the officers that participate in the event.

Requests for staffing job fairs and similar events are special requests, and must comply with the guidelines below.

**External Group Event Request Guidelines:**

- The Merchandise & Special Projects Committee will handle requests for support of job fairs, career days, and other recruiting activities which fall beyond what an individual officer can cover.
- Support for recruiting activities will be coordinated with CDC's Commissioned Corps Activity (CCA) office to ensure that both groups are not working on the same issue in parallel. CCA will have the lead if they choose to take it.
- Requests for support should be made at least ten (10) business days in advance of the activity. More time may be required if support requirements go beyond sending an email to the ACOA listserv requesting volunteers.
- Requests for financial support of any amount must be submitted to the Executive Committee using the Request for ACOA Funds form, and approved by the Executive Committee. Requests sent out to the ACOA listserv will be approved according to Executive Committee-approved procedures and must contain details of how many officers are required, expectations for the volunteers, and a point of contact. A suggested uniform may be included, but a specific uniform may not be mandated without the written approval of the Uniform Authority.
- Support will not be considered for the following: activities that require special display materials (for instance, hands-on activities, demonstrations, give-aways), or that require special licensing or regulatory issues.
- Wearing of the uniform for recruiting activities is required.

**Section Two: Membership Committee**

This committee will be chaired by the Secretary and can have one or more officers from the general membership. The committee will direct the maintenance and development of the membership of ACOA. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

The Secretary shall contact the National Association Membership Coordinator quarterly to obtain lists of members and nonmembers. That list shall be used for an annual membership drive to increase ACOA membership with emails, phone calls, U.S mail, etc. This strategy can change each year as the committee members see fit and with approval of the President.

**Section Three: Community Service Committee**

The President shall appoint a Community Service Committee. This committee shall be chaired or co-chaired by one (1) or two (2) Members-at-Large and can have one (1) or more officers from the general membership. The purpose of this committee will be to further the goals and objectives of ACOA through a

commitment to community service. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

#### Section Four: Elections Committee

The President shall appoint an Elections Committee of up to three (3) members. The Immediate Past President will serve as the Chairperson, and the other members will be jointly selected by the President, Immediate Past President and Vice President. The Elections Committee will run the general election and, if needed, any special elections. Members of the Elections Committee cannot be running for a position on the Executive Committee. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

#### Section Five: Communications Committee

The President shall appoint a Communications Committee. This committee shall be chaired or co-chaired by one (1) or two (2) Members-at-Large and can have one (1) or more officers from the general membership. This committee will oversee the publication of the ACOA newsletter and the website. These officers will serve as editors of the newsletter and maintain the website with the aid of one (1) or more officers serving as webmaster. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

#### Section Six: Professional Development Committee

The President shall appoint a Professional Development Committee. This committee shall be chaired or co-chaired by one (1) or two (2) Members-at-Large and can have one (1) or more officers from the general membership. This committee will consider issues regarding officer professional development to include, but not necessarily limited to, proper uniform wear, personal grooming standards, career development, officer evaluation, officer promotion, professional training and education, leadership development and mentoring.

The committee will solicit input from the Executive Committee and the membership for suggested topics and speakers for meetings; and present plan for approval by Executive Committee for all topics and speakers. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

#### Section Seven: Event Planning Committee

The President shall appoint an Event Planning Committee. This committee shall be chaired or co-chaired by one (1) or two (2) Members-at-Large and can have one (1) or more officers from the general membership. The purpose of the committee shall be to plan events such as the Anchor & Caduceus Dinner, the ACOA Promotion Ceremony, and other events which develop throughout the year. The committee will also be responsible for other duties as assigned by the President.

### Article Three: Dues and Assessments

#### Section One: Annual Dues

The annual dues of members of ACOA shall be fifteen dollars (\$15). These dues will be paid in conjunction with the annual association dues to the National Association. Dues shall be paid by June 30 of each year. The fiscal year for paid dues will begin on July 1 and end on the following June 30.

#### Section Two: Unpaid Dues

Any member whose dues are unpaid forfeits membership. Membership is reinstated upon payment of dues.

#### Section Three: Transfer

Any officer transferred into the Atlanta area after July 1 who was in good standing with dues paid in another local branch of the officers previous assignment, is entitled to full membership rights in ACOA for the balance of the fiscal year. It will be this officer's responsibility to inform the National Association of their transfer and desire to be a member of ACOA. Otherwise, ACOA may inform the National Association if it becomes aware of officers residing in the Atlanta area that should be listed as members of the Branch.

#### Section Four: Honorary Members

Any member deemed an honorary member of ACOA shall not be required to pay Branch dues nor shall they be eligible to hold office or vote.

#### Section Five: Expenditure of Funds

Any action to be taken by ACOA which involves an expenditure of funds greater than fifty dollars (\$50) shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration and requires a majority of quorum vote for approval.

### Article Four: Responsibilities/Expectations of the Executive Committee

#### Section One: President

- Presides at Executive Committee and general membership meetings.
- Serves as ex-officio member of all committees.
- Appoints members to chair ad hoc and permanent committees.
- Officially represents ACOA in all matters relating to the National Association.
- Signs all official correspondence for ACOA; may delegate as necessary
- Approves newsletter for publication, information posted to the website and general membership email correspondence.
- Appoints an officer who is not a member of the Executive Committee to perform an annual audit of the financial accounts of ACOA.
- Authorizes the Treasurer to sign or personally signs checks obligating ACOA funds.
- Assures that correspondence from the National Association is conveyed to the Executive Committee and to the membership.
- Provides written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.

- Runs the ACOA Officer of the Year and Committee Members of the Year nomination processes.
- Other duties as required.

#### Section Two: Vice President

- In the absence of the President, assumes all duties and functions of that office.
- Serves as Chair of the Merchandise & Special Projects Committee.
- Serves as the liaison with the National Association and its board members.
- Provides written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.
- Reviews the Constitution and Bylaws of the ACOA every three (3) years and provides a written report to the Executive Committee identifying any proposed changes.
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President.

#### Section Three: Secretary

- Records all proceedings of the Executive Committee meetings; prepares written minutes for Executive Committee.
- Distributes notices of upcoming general membership meetings via the ACOA listserv.
- Distributes notices of upcoming Executive Committee meetings.
- Maintains attendance records for all Executive Committee meetings.
- At the request of the President, prepares official correspondence for all ACOA activities.
- Maintains official files of ACOA activities.
- Notifies the National Association of results of elections.
- Develops a written agenda for all meetings to be approved by the President.
- Provides written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.
- Updates the ACOA listserv quarterly.
- Manages the ACOA listserv and distribution of announcements.
- Prepares correspondence for signature by the President inviting guest speakers, confirming their participation, and sending thank you letters.
- Creates and distributes thank you letters for officers participating on ACOA committees and events for inclusion in their eOPF.
- Serves as Chair of the Membership Committee.
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President.

#### Section Four: Treasurer

- Collects all dues from the National Association on a quarterly basis.
- Maintains the ACOA funds.
- Prepares checks for payments of all legitimate expenses incurred by ACOA.
- Signs all checks authorized by the ACOA President (may be delegated authority by the ACOA President to sign checks independently as

necessary); responsible for change of signature authorization following Executive Committee elections.

- Responsible for collecting funds from the membership for all ACOA activities. Provides status of funds at Executive Committee meetings.
- Maintains financial records according to professionally accepted standards.
- Responsible for on-time payments (annually, quarterly, or otherwise) of items to keep ACOA running (i.e., insurance, incorporation filings, state and federal filing, website domain, etc.).
- Provides written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President.

#### Section Five: Immediate Past President

- Provides guidance and assistance to the President and the Executive Committee in carrying out their duties and functions relating to ACOA.
- Serves as Chair of the Elections Committee.
- Provides written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President.

#### Section Six: Members-At-Large (8)

- Serve on at least one (1) committee as a chair or co-chair.
- Represent views of the membership at Executive Committee meetings.
- Assist in the recruitment of members for ACOA.
- Assist in the dissemination of information to the membership.
- Provide written information for the ACOA newsletter, as warranted.
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President.

#### Section Seven: Attendance

Executive Committee members are expected to attend all scheduled Executive Committee meetings. For the purposes of this section, the annual Executive Committee retreat typically held each January is considered to be a scheduled Executive Committee meeting in addition to regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Members are strongly encouraged to attend all meetings in person. If necessary, Executive Committee members may attend via telephone conference call; however this method should be used only when instructed by the President or Acting President or when attendance in person is not possible.

Executive Committee members shall notify the President and Secretary of any planned absences in advance and provide their report to their Co-Chair (if applicable) or the President if a Co-Chair is not available. Members are permitted up to four (4) excused absences from scheduled Executive Committee meetings during the year. More than four (4) excused absences are grounds for review and possible removal or replacement of that individual by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members should make every effort to avoid unexcused absences. More than one (1) unexcused absence is

grounds for review and possible removal or replacement of that individual by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee.

Attendance records at Executive Committee meetings will be maintained by the Secretary. Any member determined by the Secretary to not meet the attendance requirements described above will be brought to the attention of the President and Vice President. At their discretion, this issue may be placed on the next Executive Committee meeting agenda. Executive Committee members found to be in violation of this section will be notified of any pending action and extended the opportunity, at their option, to come before the remaining Executive Committee members at the next scheduled meeting to provide extenuating circumstances, if applicable, or indicate why they should not be replaced prior to a vote of the Executive Committee on the matter.

#### Article Five: Order of Business

The order of business of the Executive Committee shall include the following: (1) call to order; (2) introduction of newly elected members and guests; (3) reading and adopting of the minutes of the previous meeting; (4) reports from the President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer; (5) committee reports, (6) old business; (7) new business; and (8) adjournment.

#### Article Six: Executive Committee Voting Procedures

For Executive Committee votes to take place, quorum must be met. A motion must be made by the requesting Executive Committee member and seconded by another member. A member may decide to vote in the affirmative, negative, or abstain from voting. The motion will be passed if the majority votes to approve. If there is a tie, the tie will be broken with a coin toss. If the vote is taken during an Executive Committee meeting, only votes cast by members present, either in person or on the phone, will be counted. If a vote is taken via email, only votes received before the stated deadline will be counted. For email votes, if not enough votes are received by the stated deadline to reach quorum, the deadline will be extended until quorum is reached.

#### Article Seven: Elections

All active duty and retired U.S. PHS Officers in good standing with the National Association and ACOA that are assigned to the Atlanta area and meet basic readiness requirements (retired officers excepted) as set forth by Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR), are eligible to run for office. Officers shall serve for a period of one (1) calendar year commencing September 1 of each year. It is expected that elected Executive Committee members be available to serve for the entire operational year. The officer elected as Vice President will serve as President in the year immediately following election as Vice President and will serve as Immediate Past President in the year after serving as President.

The Election Committee will prepare the ballot and submit it to the membership by June 30 of each year. Ballots must be returned by the date stated on the ballot. Ballots returned after that date will not be counted. Ballots shall be distributed to the ACOA membership via the ACOA listserv. The results of the election, as determined by the majority vote of those officers returning ballots, will be verified by the Elections Committee and announced to the membership.

In the event of a tie, a runoff shall be held within ten (10) business days of the posting of the results of the election. To break the tie vote, the names of the two (2) officers receiving the greatest number of votes shall be put forth to the ACOA membership via the ACOA listserv. The officer who receives the majority of the votes cast shall be declared the elected of the position.

In the event the President is unable to complete his/her term of office, the Vice President assumes the Presidency. The Vice President who in this manner assumes the office of President completes the term of office of the previous President and then serves an additional year as President. If this occurs during the first six (6) months of the ACOA operational year, then a special election of the general membership will be held to fill the now open Vice President position. This Vice President will serve until the end of the operational year. This officer would be eligible for running for Vice President again during the next regular election. If this occurs during the last six (6) months of the ACOA operational year, the new President will serve without a Vice President until the end of the operational year.

If the Vice President is unable to complete his/her term of office, a special election will be held to replace the officer if he/she resigns during the first six (6) months of the ACOA operational year. If the Vice President steps down during the last six (6) months of the ACOA operational year, the President will assume the roles of the Vice President until the end of the operational year. In this case, the President would serve an additional year as President.

Should it arise that BOTH the President and Vice President are unable to fulfill their terms, and if both leave office before either one can be replaced, then a special election will be held and a new President and Vice President will be elected. The Immediate Past President will serve as the acting President until new leadership is elected. The Immediate Past President will chair the Special Election Committee. This special election will be held without delay.

No officer can serve as President or Vice President unless elected by the membership. The Executive Committee may hold an internal election to fill vacancies of Treasurer, Secretary, and Members-at-Large at any meeting of the Executive Committee. A majority quorum vote of the Executive Committee shall be required to elect an officer to fill the vacancy. The Executive Committee has the option of selecting new Executive Committee members from those officers who ran for office but were not elected.

#### Article Eight: Resignation Procedures

An Executive Committee member who wishes to resign from his/her term of office will be required to submit a formal letter to the President with at least two (2) weeks' notice to allow time to find a replacement.

#### Article Nine: Expulsion

Any Executive Committee member may be expelled for cause, including improper conduct, violation of the ethics of his/her profession, not meeting attendance requirements, and not fulfilling the duties of his/her position. Officers recommended for expulsion will have the opportunity to be heard in front of the Executive Committee. Expulsion will require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee.

### Article Ten: Wearing the Uniform at ACOA Events

Uniform wear at events sponsored by the Executive Committee must be approved by the Uniform Authority except for:

- Formal dinners, such as the Anchor & Caduceus Dinner
- USO support activities
- Recruiting events, such as job fairs
- ACOA meetings
- Where the uniform is worn in connection with official duties

In addition, the following guidelines will apply:

- a. The exercise of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly does not include the right to borrow the inherent dignity, prestige, and traditions represented by uniforms of the U.S. PHS to lend weight and significance to privately held convictions on public issues.
- b. Members of the U.S. PHS (including retired members and members of Reserve components) are prohibited from wearing uniforms of the U.S. PHS while attending or participating in, or continuing to attend or participate in, a demonstration, assembly, or activity with knowledge that a purpose of such demonstration, assembly, or activity is the furtherance of personal or partisan views on political, social, economic, or religious issues except:
  - 1) In connection with official duties or as otherwise authorized in advance by competent authority; or
  - 2) Incident to attendance at or participation in a bona fide religious service or observance.
- c. ACOA will not endorse, nor will request approval from the Uniform Authority for, uniform wear at events held for the purpose of lending substantial weight or significance to privately-held convictions or interests (including those that would be so construed by an observer) or demonstrations, assemblies, or activities that relate to matters of public controversy.

### Article Eleven: Awards

ACOA sponsors three types of awards: ACOA Officer of the Year, Committee Member of the Year, and the ACOA President's Award. Additional standing awards may be suggested by any Executive Committee member and will be approved with a majority quorum vote of the Executive Committee.

#### Section One: ACOA Officer of the Year

This award recognizes an officer who clearly demonstrates continual support and dedication to ACOA and its mission throughout the previous operational year. Officers may be self-nominated or nominated by other ACOA members. The award recipient will be determined by a majority quorum vote of the Executive Committee. The awardee will receive a plaque and a certificate. In addition, each year's award recipient's name will be included on the ACOA Officer of the Year perpetual plaque. Executive Committee members are not eligible for this award.

Section Two: Committee Member of the Year

This award recognizes an outstanding committee member (or team) for their work during the operational year. Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs select the recipient(s) of this award for their respective committees. Awardees will be honored with a certificate at the end of the operational year. Executive Committee members are not eligible for this award.

Section Three: ACOA President's Award

This award is given out at the discretion of the ACOA President. It is given in special recognition and appreciation of a deserving person who has had vast contributions and dedication to ACOA. While there is no awardee maximum, the President should strive to limit this award to once per year, if warranted. Executive Committee members may nominate candidates to the President.

Article Twelve: Amendments

Every proposal to amend these Bylaws shall be accomplished in the same manner as amendments to the Constitution. (Article Five of the Constitution)

=====