

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

**CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS  
Fall 2010**

**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 United States 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 National 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 United States Public Health Services, 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 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 United States Public Health Service 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 United States Public Health Service 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 1 honorary member shall be elected in any one calendar year. Notification of any honorary membership will be transmitted to COA.

### Article Four: Governing Body

The governing body and officers of ACOA shall be known as the Executive Committee and shall include the President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively and up to eight (8) Executive Committee members who shall be Members-at-Large. These positions shall also have 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 transaction of official business of the Executive Committee shall require a quorum of half of the Executive Committee members plus one. 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 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 3/4 of those members returning ballots 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 Atlanta Branch of the Commissioned Officers Association must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible voting members of the Executive Committee present at a meeting called to specifically consider such action, for which meeting prior written notice has been issued to all Executive Committee members eligible to vote in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws. 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 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 or two members of the Executive Committee and if possible, hold as members, one or more officers from the general membership. The committees shall be nominated by the President and ratified by the Executive Committee.

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

This committee will be chaired by the Vice-President and can include Members-at-Large 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 USPHS 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 COF Scientific Training & Symposium. 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 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 career 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 career fairs are special requests, and must comply with the guidelines below.

#### Career Fair Day 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 Personnel Office (CCPO) to ensure that both groups are not working the same issue in parallel. CCPO will have the lead if they choose to take it.
- Requests for support should be made at least ten business days (2 weeks) 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 with fewer than ten business days notice will be honored on a case-by-case basis.
- If ACOA is asked to support a recruiting activity, support will be limited to issuing an announcement of the activity and helping the lead Associate Recruiter (AR) coordinate 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 (the AR lead for the activity). 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 (blood pressure screening, for example).
- If the backdrop from the Rockville Associate Recruiter Program is requested, that request will go directly to Rockville from the lead AR for the activity, and not through the Executive Committee.
- Wearing of the uniform for recruiting activities is required.

#### Section Two: Membership Committee

This committee will be chaired by the Treasurer 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 Treasurer 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) Member-at-Large officers and can have one 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 three (3) members, when possible. The Immediate Past President will serve as the Chairperson, and the other two members will be jointly selected by the President, Immediate Past President and Vice President. 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) Member-at-Large officers and can have one 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 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) Member-at-Large officers and can have one or more officers from the general membership. Senior officer(s) can be asked to serve as advisors to the committee. 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; present plan for approval by Executive Committee for all topics and speakers; provide a report of Program Committee activities at each Executive Committee meeting; and work closely with the other Executive Committee members regarding inclusion of topics/speakers in ACOA activities and events. 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) Member-at-Large officers and can have one or more officers from the general membership. The purpose of the committee

shall be to plan the Anchor & Caduceus Dinner, the ACOA Promotion Ceremony, the ACOA Fall Social, other events which develop throughout the year and 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 30th of each year. The fiscal year for paid dues will begin on July 1 and end on the following June 30th.

#### 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 this Branch for the balance of the fiscal year. It will be this officer's responsibility to inform COA of their transfer and desire to be a member of ACOA. Otherwise, ACOA may inform COA if it becomes aware of officers residing in the Atlanta area that should be listed as members of the local branch.

#### Section Four: Honorary Members

Any member deemed an honorary member of ACOA shall not be required to pay chapter 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 \$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 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
- Serves as liaison for Commissioned Corps interests with Agency leadership (CMS, CDC, ATSDR, HRSA, EPA, OS/HHS Regional Office, FDA, BOP, etc.) employing Commissioned Officers in the Atlanta area.
- 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.
- Other duties as required

#### Section Two: Vice President

- In the absence of the President, assumes all duties and functions of that office.
- Serves as Chairperson of the Program Committee.
- Serves as the liaison with the National Association and COA board members
- Provides written information following each Executive Committee meeting for inclusion in the ACOA newsletter
- Reviews the Constitution and Bylaws of the ACOA every three years and provides a written report to the Executive Committee identifying any proposed changes
- Serves as Parliamentarian during Executive Committee meetings
- 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 membership and Executive Committee meetings via the ACOA listserv
- 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 after Executive Committee meetings for inclusion in the ACOA newsletter
- 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 follow-up sending Thank you letters.
- 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 at meetings and social functions, such as the Anchor and Caduceus Dinner or the Fall Social, for meals, beverages, etc.
- Provides status of funds and membership reports 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.)
- Prepares an annual projected budget for chapter activities and events in November of each year for the following calendar year; (the budget will be made available within 15 business days to the membership upon written request)
- Serves as Chairperson of the Membership Committee
- Provides written information after Executive Committee meetings for inclusion in the ACOA newsletter
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President

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

- Serve on at least one 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 after Executive Committee meetings for inclusion in the ACOA newsletter
- Other duties and functions as requested by the President

#### Section six: 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 Chairperson of the Elections Committee
- Introduces new Executive Committee to the membership at first meeting following election
- Provides written information after Executive Committee meetings for inclusion in the ACOA newsletter
- 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 meetings may attend via telephone conference call; however this method should be used only 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 one of the other Executive Committee members. 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 have in excess of one (1) unexcused absence or five combined excused and unexcused absences 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) Officer's reports (President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer); (5) Committee reports, (6) old business; (7) new business; and (8) adjournment.

### Article Six: Elections

The ballot prepared by the Elections Committee will be submitted to the membership by October 31 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.

All active duty and retired 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 OFRD, are eligible to run for office. Officers shall serve for a period of one calendar year commencing January 1 of each 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 Executive Committee may hold a special election to fill vacancies at any meeting of the Executive Committee. A majority 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.

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 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 term of office, the Vice President assumes the Presidency and serves without a Vice President until the next regular election. 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. (No one can therefore serve as President or Vice President unless elected by the membership.)

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 per Section seven, article six, 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.

#### Article Seven: Amendments

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

#### Article Eight: Rules of Order

The general procedure of meetings of the ACOA EC shall follow the "Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised" on parliamentary procedure, insofar as they do not conflict with any provisions of the ACOA Bylaws.

#### Article Nine: 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 Career 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. Public Health Service to lend weight and significance to privately held convictions on public issues.
- b. Members of the U.S. Public Health Service (including retired members and members of Reserve components) are prohibited from wearing uniforms of the USPHS 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; would be so construed by an observer; or that the demonstration, assembly, or activity does relates to matters in public controversy.

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