

The Signal Newsletter

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

(representing members assigned to Atlanta area federal agencies)

Vol 14 Issue 6

December, 2003

Calendar of Events

December 6th, Time: 0930

ACOA Adopt-A-Highway Clean-up. To volunteer, contact CDR [Larry Cseh](#).

December 10th, Time: 1100-1300

ACOA General Meeting and Holiday Social. Special presentation: "Stress Less"; plus: Uniform Q&A, AMC flight and travel planning. Refreshments provided! Corporate Square Bldg. 8, Conference Rooms 1A & 1B.

December 12th, Time: 0900-1200

CCRF Module Completion. Century Center Room 3-A. Contact [CAPT Ralph O'Connor](#).

December 12th, Time: 1600

Crunch and Run: CCRF Fitness Testing. St. Pius High School (<http://www.spx.org/directions.html>). Contact LCDR [Tina Lankford](#) to sign-up / volunteer.

December 17th, Time: 0800-2100

Volunteer to greet military travelers at the Hartsfield Atlanta USO. Contact [LTJG Jennifer Di Pietra](#).

Announcements

For more information on these opportunities, see Announcements at www.atlantacoa.com.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is giving away undergraduate scholarship money. Student dependent children of personnel in the USPHS are encouraged to apply!

You can nominate a fellow officer or self-nominate for the COA Responder of the Year Award.

PHS officers who were deployed or otherwise provided services to National Naval Medical Center between 5 December 2002 to 15 September 2003, may be eligible for the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation, NNMC.

Pending Release of Promotion Category Benchmarks

The ACOA Executive Committee approached the PACs concerning the 2004 category benchmarks for the upcoming promotion cycle. Because of the recent concerns about the transformation of the Corps, ACOA felt it would be highly desirable for our members to receive access to this information. The ACOA also felt that our members needed access before the usual December 31 deadline for placing items into their Official Personnel Folders. The following message was provided to the ACOA from the Chairman of the EHO PAC, CAPT Mike Herring.

Continued on page 2, column 1

Table of Contents

Calendar of Events	1
Announcements.....	1
Pending Release of Promotion Category Benchmarks.....	1
Important Dates to Remember for the Upcoming Promotion Cycle	2
Lifestyle Program offers BLS	2
ACOA Accomplishments for Year 2003.....	3
Professional Category Corner: PPAC.....	4
PPAC Membership – Call for Nominations.....	4
Update on 2004 U.S. Figure Skating Championship Volunteer Opportunity.....	4
Atlanta Branch-Sponsored Fitness Testing Gaining Momentum	5
Crunch and Run: CCRF Physical Fitness Testing to be Offered December 12 th	5
The Benefits of Aerobic Cross-Training.....	5
Call for Nominations – COA Villforth Leadership Award.....	6

Pending Release of Benchmarks, Continued from page 1, column 2

“Category benchmarks for the newly established promotion precepts remain under review at DCP. The PAC Chairs Committee has raised concerns that further delays in releasing the benchmarks could impact officers who are eligible for promotion during the 2004 promotion cycle.” CAPT Denise Canton, Acting Director of DCP, has agreed to follow-up on the current status of the category benchmarks and get information back to the CPOs and PAC Chairs as soon as possible so that the draft benchmarks can be shared with all officers. Upon final approval, the new benchmarks will be placed on the DCP web site and printed in the DCP Bulletin.

The revised draft promotion and deployment policies are now available on the DCP Web site at: <http://dcp.psc.gov>. Send comments to the CDC EPO task force (epotaskforce@cdc.gov) by 12/4. DCP has requested comments by December 8, 2003 via email to ccpm@psc.gov. The policies are considered a final draft, and although all comments are welcome, it is not anticipated that further major revisions will occur.

The ACOA encourages all officers to watch their PACs listserves and websites in addition to the ACOA and DCP websites.

Important Dates to Remember for Upcoming Promotion Cycle

Promotion Information Reports (PIRs) and Official Personnel Folders (OPF) can be viewed online at <http://dcp.psc.gov>. At the DCP homepage, go to the ‘Secure Area’ then ‘Officer and Liaison Activities.’ Documents should be **faxed** in directly to the OPF. Only CVs and similar text documents that originate outside of DCP (training summaries, letters of appreciation, etc.) should be faxed into the OPF. **Do not submit copies of COERS, OISs, PIRs, published articles, PHS awards, or photographs for inclusion in your OPF. They will be discarded upon receipt.** Please fax documents for placement into your OPF to: 301-480-1436 or 301-480-1407. Copies of your professional license can be faxed to 301-594-2711.

Please note that the software only accepts 8½” x 11” images that are from clean copies (copies with various shades of contrasts do not scan well). Therefore, please refrain from using a ‘highlighter’ marker, since the highlighted sections appear as dark lines and cannot be read. All faxed documents should adhere to the following guidelines:

- On the upper right corner of all submitted sheets, include your name, Public Health Service (PHS) serial number, and category. For multiple page documents indicate page sequence (e.g., page 1 of 3, page 2 of 3).
- One-page cover sheets summarizing your CV must be included as page 1 of the CV as only one document is retained in this section.
- Continuing education documents should be grouped by year.
- Licenses/Registrations/Certifications must be faxed to the Licensure Technician at fax number 301-594-2711.

Officer files for this year's promotion review will have to be completed by January 31, 2004.

Lifestyle Program Offers BLS

The Lifestyle Program recently announced they will be offering American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) Classes. These classes are being provided exclusively for CDC/ATSDR Commissioned Corp Officers. According to Lifestyle, priority enrollment for these classes is for active duty officers who may be eligible for temporary and/or permanent promotion in Promotion Year 2004. Officers who anticipate meeting a promotion board in the upcoming cycle are offered this training to meet compliance with the BLS certification requirement that is expected to be integral to the new deployment readiness policy. Other CDC/ATSDR officers that need BLS for their CCRF requirement can attend space permitting.

At this time classes are scheduled through the end of March. Lifestyle may continue to offer BLS classes after this date but it will depend on whether there is a continued need and the results of their contract renewal with CDC.

If you have any questions, please call Terri Thompson, Lifestyle CPR Program Coordinator at (404) 639-2164.

ACOA ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR YEAR 2003

Come celebrate at our last General Meeting this year and Holiday Social on December 10th, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Corporate Square Bldg. 8, Conference Rooms 1A&B.

The Atlanta Branch Commissioned Officers Association (ACOA), Executive Committee (EC) set a priority at the beginning of the year to support, encourage, and communicate with our officers throughout the Commissioned Corps (CC) transformation process in an effort to build a cohesive and reputable uniform service capable of achieving a higher state of "readiness". These efforts have been realized in 3 core areas: professional development, communication, and esprit de corps functions.

- ACOA provided a means for certified, volunteers to provide AHA-BLS training for local officers at various points throughout CDC and ATSDR locations and local military bases resulting in five BLS courses certifying over 100 officers.
 - Coordinated and proctored by fellow officers who had completed the fitness test requirements, the ACOA has successfully completed two Saturday morning "Crunch and Run's" resulting in slightly over sixty officers accomplishing this objective, and approximately ten officers have begun a training program for future completion.
 - ACOA provided oversight for the coordination of planning and staffing ten full days of reserved computer training spaces in an effort to provide officers the privacy and convenience to complete this requirement. Approximately 100 officers have taken advantage of these sessions.
 - "The Signal" has kept the pace through the year offering a minimum of four pages of densely packed informative briefs regarding transformation correspondence, professional advisory committee notes, junior officer views, healthy lifestyle articles, and volunteer opportunities just to name a few.
- The new ACOA website, www.atlantacoa.com, has kept Atlanta officers up-to-date on a variety of issues and events and includes information on such topics as training, uniformed services benefits, and uniform shopping. Previously, officers (active and retired) outside the CDC/ATSDR could not easily access ACOA information and updates. The new website is accessible to all.
 - As part of the traditional uniform service spirit, we hosted the 2nd Annual ACOA Promotion Ceremony (open to all Atlanta officers and family members). Highlights of the ceremony included opening remarks by RADM Jarrett Clinton and shoulder board placement for the newly promoted rank by a guest of the officer. All officers enjoyed a wonderful reception following the ceremony.
 - The Atlanta Branch also supported Federal Fitness Day 2003 and kicked-off this year's ACOA T-shirt fundraiser opportunity as a means to promote a visible volunteer cadre while performing roadside clean-ups, fitness testing, and other various events.
 - USO: December 17th, the ACOA coordinates the staffing and food preparation for a twelve (12) hour shift serving up to 300 military families at the Uniformed Support Organization at Hartsfield International Airport. This day will be exceptional for ACOA volunteers because of a large contingency of soldiers returning from Iraq, a very welcome, joyous return to U.S. soil and their families.

Thanks to such a great membership volunteer pool that made these functions possible!! If you have some ideas for next year, please let us know. Also, volunteers to serve on the 2004 Executive Committee are needed. If you are interested, contact LCDR Tina Lankford at TLankford@cdc.gov.

Visit the new Atlanta Branch COA website at
[http://www.atlantacoa.com!](http://www.atlantacoa.com)

Professional Category Corner

The Physician PAC

The Physicians Professional Advisory Committee (PPAC) is constituted by the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). The mission of the PPAC is to provide advice and consultation to the Surgeon General on the application of medical science for the protection and advancement of the health of the Nation. Additionally, the PPAC seeks to represent the activities and interests of all Department physicians. The PPAC currently meets every other month.

The PPAC maintains a listserv and a website to keep PHS physicians informed of activities and events that may impact them. Physicians can subscribe to the listserv, PHSPHYSICIANS-L, at list.nih.gov. This list serve is open to all physicians.

Some suggestions on the use of this listserv:

- A communication forum for Corps and Civil Service physicians
- PPAC announcements
- PPAC minutes
- Job opportunities
- Discussions
- Questions
- Training opportunity announcements
- Finding a mentor (actually, everyone subscribed to the list can be your mentor).

The PPAC maintains a website for news and information of interest to physicians in the Public Health Service. The site has information on mentoring, special pays, PPAC membership, and news of interest to the physicians. The website can be accessed at:

<http://gis.cdc.gov/atsdr/ppac/default.htm>.

CAPT C. Virginia Lee, MD, MPH, MA

Visit www.atlantacoa.com for up-to-date information on upcoming training and events!

PPAC Membership Call for Nominations

The PPAC is seeking motivated Commissioned Corps and civil service physicians who are interested in serving as members on this categorical panel. PPAC membership is open to all physicians who are employed in the Department's Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) as well as Corps officers in the medical category working in any of the major programs that employ Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers.

One position will be available as of January 1, 2004. The PPAC will recommend successful candidates to the Surgeon General for appointment, with the concurrence of the line supervisors and OPDIV representatives. Corps officers or civil service physicians who are interested are encouraged to self-nominate. Individuals should submit a curriculum vitae that includes the name and phone number of their immediate supervisor, along with a one-page cover letter describing their interest. This document should be e-mailed as a Word or WordPerfect attachment by January 1, 2004 to:

CAPT Eric Mann
Chair, PPAC Workforce Subcommittee
E-mail: exm@cdrh.fda.gov
Phone: 301-594-2080 x187

Update on 2004 U.S. Figure Skating Championship Volunteer Opportunity

Training sessions for volunteers of the 2004 U.S. Figure Skating Championships will be held December 13th from 9 a.m. through 5 p.m. or December 14th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Lovett School. Volunteers may stop either day at any time. The entire orientation, training and credentialing process will take approximately 1 hour to 1.5 hours. Attendance at one of these sessions is not mandatory, but it is strongly encouraged. More information on the training sessions is provided at <http://www.atlantacoa.com/skating.htm>.

Atlanta Branch-Sponsored Fitness Testing Gaining Momentum

ACOA was pleased to host another well-attended physical fitness testing on Saturday, October 18th at the St. Pius High School track. This was the 2nd ACOA-sponsored fitness testing in 2003. Approximately 60 officers have participated in ACOA-sponsored fitness testing. Truly a wonderful start! ACOA would like to thank member volunteers and participants for making this possible. Although fitness testing can be done with just two officers, when done as a group there is demonstrated Corps camaraderie, added personal motivation, and even some laughs and fun.

For the October testing, 21 officers participated in the 'crunch and run.' Most officers completed the three components of the CCRF fitness testing in less than one hour. Each participant received a signed certified copy of his/her results (don't forget to enter your results in the CCRF fitness home page.).

Congratulations to all officers who participated:

CDR Elise Beltrami, CDR Ulana Bodnar, LCDR William Bower, CDR Michael Campsmith, LCDR Maria Cano, CDR Louisa Chapman, CAPT Michael S. Deming, CDR Jean Gaunce, CDR Gary Hlady, CDR John Holland, LCDR Terri Hyde, CDR Sonja Hutchins, LCDR Lauren Lewis, CDR Mark Lobato, CAPT Joe Mulinare, CAPT Andrew Vernon, CAPT Charles Vitek, CAPT David Wallace, CDR Paul Weidle, LT Jennifer Williams, CDR Stephanie Zaza

ACOA would like to thank the following officers who volunteered a part of their Saturday morning in making the testing a success: CAPT Holly Williams, CAPT Ralph O'Connor, LCDR Joe Little, LCDR Nelson Adekoya, LT Dana Jones, LCDR Danice Eaton, LCDR Tina Lankford and LTJG Jennifer Di Pietra. Special thanks for LTJG Di Pietra for leading the warm up exercises.

If you liked the event, tell a fellow officer.

Crunch and Run: CCRF Physical Fitness Testing to be Offered December 12th

Have you been putting off taking the physical fitness test required for CCRF? Procrastinate no more! ACOA is organizing an event for officers on Friday, December 12th at 4 p.m. at St. Pius High School Track. See the following link for directions: <http://www.spx.org/directions.html>.

We anticipate it will take less than an hour for an officer to complete the three components of the fitness test which include: 1.5 mile run/walk, push-ups and crunches (sit-ups) or the side-bridge exercise. For more information on the qualifying standards for physical fitness in CCRF go to: <http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/physical.htm>

Please RSVP for this event via e-mail to LCDR Tina Lankford (TLankford@cdc.gov). Officers should bring their own water bottles and towels/mats. Your scores will go home with you, so feel free to use this as a practice or the actual fit test.

The Benefits of Aerobic Cross- Training

Participation in daily physical activity provides numerous health benefits. Not only does it enhance general fitness levels and aid in weight loss, it also helps strengthen the heart, bones, muscles, and joints of the body. For the average fitness enthusiast, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends the following guidelines for developing and maintaining cardiorespiratory fitness:

Frequency: 3-5 days per week

Intensity: 55-90% of maximum heart rate
(220-age = predicted maximum heart rate)

Time: 20-60 minutes of continuous or intermittent (minimum 10 minute bouts) aerobic activity

Type: any activity that uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously, and is rhythmic in nature (e.g. walking, jogging, cycling, stair-climbing, aerobic exercise classes)

Continued on page 6, column 1

Benefits of Cross-Training, continued from page 5, column 2

It is important to find fitness activities that you enjoy to increase the likelihood that you will continue with your exercise program. However, keep in mind that performing the same exercise everyday sometimes leads to boredom, injury, and plateaus in your fitness training. This is where cross-training may help you. Cross-training is a way of adding variety to your fitness regimen. For instance, if you usually run 3 days a week, try substituting another aerobic activity on one of those days. The benefits of cross-training are numerous. These include:

- Decreasing boredom by adding variety; this may also serve to enhance adherence to an exercise program.
- Decreasing risk of injury by preventing repetitive stress on a particular muscle, bone, or joint. Cross-training may also allow you to continue exercising if you are injured.
- Achieving a higher level of fitness by emphasizing the use of a variety of large muscles rather than just developing specific areas.

Any variety of activities that are aerobic in nature will help to enhance your fitness level and provide the benefits listed above. There are various ways you may choose to cross-train. You may choose to perform different activities on different days of the week, or you may choose to perform two or more activities in one exercise session. Regardless of which you choose, remember to follow the ACSM guidelines to get the most out of your workouts. Also, don't forget to include a sufficient warm-up and cool-down before and after each exercise session.

If you are preparing for the CCRF Annual Physical Fitness Test, you will either be participating in a 1.5 mile run/walk or a 500-yard/450-meter swim. While the best way to train for these events is to run or swim, respectively, cross-training can be a beneficial part of your training program. Include the elliptical trainer, bicycle, or another mode of aerobic exercise that you enjoy in one of your training days. It is also a good idea to include circuit weight training (1-2

days/week) in your routine to help develop muscles that you might not target otherwise. And, don't forget to always stretch after your workouts. Flexibility training has been shown to improve joint function and enhance muscular performance, both of which will help to keep your body prime for working out!

Lauren Williams, M.A.
Exercise Program Coordinator
The Lifestyle Program

Call for Nominations **COA-Villforth Leadership Award**

The COA-Villforth Leadership Award recognizes Public Health Service engineers and architects whose service in the public trust meets high ethical standards and is in the best interest of the public's health. The award honors those individuals who demonstrate exemplary professional conduct and are committed to constant improvement, exhibiting the highest degree of character, technical excellence, and competence. In 2003, this award was elevated to be co-sponsored by the Commissioned Officers' Association of the USPHS (COA). Annually, COA together with the Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) and the Chief Engineer, acknowledge those who exemplify and excel in leadership, either as individuals or as a team, in carrying out the mission of the engineers and architects of the PHS.

Eligible candidates for the award include Commissioned Corps and Civil Service engineers or architects working within a PHS Operating Division (OPDIV), and PHS Commissioned Corps officers in the Engineering category but assigned to departments or operating divisions outside the PHS. Nominations may be submitted for an individual, or an OPDIV section, unit, or work team carrying out public health engineering activities.

Nomination forms and instructions are posted at the USPHS Engineer Category's website, www.usphsengineers.org/Awards/awards.htm. The nomination deadline is January 9, 2004. Questions may be directed to: CDR Meredith Bond, Chair - EPAC Awards Subcommittee, Meredith_Bond@partner.nps.gov, 303-969-2848.