

# 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 3

July/August, 2003

## Calendar of Events

### August 6, Time: 1130-1300

Retiree Medical Benefits Lunch and Learn.  
Atlanta, GA: Koger/Stanford/Mason.

### August 12

Basic Lifesaving Class (BLS). (Enrollment closed.)

### August 23, Time: 0900

Adopt-A-Highway clean-up volunteer event.

### September 3, Time: 0800-1600

Beginners BLS Class, Naval and Marine Corps  
Reserve Center, Marietta, GA.

### September 3, Time: 1400-1600

General membership meeting. "Update from  
National COA and their position on the Corps  
transformation". Guest Speaker: Jerry Farrell,  
Director, COA. Atlanta, GA: Koger/Columbia/1064.

## CCPM Proposed Promotion and Deployment Policy Changes

Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual Policy Revisions regarding promotions and PHS deployments are posted on the DCP web page for comments ([http://dcp.psc.gov/ccpm\\_dpolicies.asp](http://dcp.psc.gov/ccpm_dpolicies.asp)). The formal comment period concludes **12 August, 2003**. Commissioned Corps Officers should review these policies and comments should be submitted individually to DCP, through your agency representative, through COA, and/or your Chief Professional Officer. COA has been inundated with e-mail comments from officers and civilian supervisors of officers concerned with some of the provisions in the proposed revisions to the CCPM instructions governing promotion policies.

National COA will submit a comprehensive set of comments and recommendations to DCP on and

and recommendations to DCP on the proposed promotion revisions. COA Executive Director Jerry Farrell wants all members to know that their comments are being received, read, and considered as he and the COA Board of Directors craft a reply to DCP.

Comments may be sent to DCP. All comments must contain the author's name, rank, Agency/Operating Division/Program, and telephone number and must be received by 12 August to be factored in for the Office of the Surgeon General's consideration.

Comments can be e-mailed to: [ccpm@psc.gov](mailto:ccpm@psc.gov) or mailed to:

Division of Commissioned Personnel  
ATTN: Policy Coordination Staff/OD  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4A-07  
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

## Table of Contents

Calendar of Events .....	1
CCPM Proposed Promotion and Deployment Policy Changes.....	1
ACOA Continues to Offer BLS .....	2
New ACOA Intranet Site .....	2
ACOA Participates in Georgia Clean-up .....	2
Introducing ACOA's New Intranet Site .....	2
Professional Category Corner: Nursing PAC .....	3
Member's Column .....	3
Are You Ready for the CCRF Fit Test? .....	4
ACOA Uniform Shop.....	4
Welcome Aboard Packets .....	4
Crunch and Run Results.....	5
2003 ACOA Promotion Ceremony .....	5
Homeland Security Summit .....	5
Compare & Contrast .....	6

## ACOA Continues to Offer BLS

One of the requirements for many health care professionals is BLS (basic life support) certification. In addition, CCRF requires BLS training through the American Heart Association (AHA) BLS Healthcare Provider Course (renewable every 2 years) or the American Red Cross CPR for the Professional Rescuer with AED (renewable every year) for all officers regardless of their professional training, including clinicians and non-clinicians (see <http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/> for more information). Neither of these classes is currently offered through CDC. Since May, ACOA has been offering the AHA BLS class monthly at various locations around the Atlanta Metro Area.

The response has been overwhelming! The August class is already full. The next open beginner's class will be held at the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center, Marietta, GA. on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8:00 – 4:00 PM. Please send an RSVP email to CDR Jeff Bosshart ([JBosshart@cdc.gov](mailto:JBosshart@cdc.gov)). Class enrollment is on a first-come-first-serve basis and is limited to 18 officers. Walk-ins will NOT be accommodated. The cost of the course and certificate will be \$2 and BLS manuals can be purchased at the training for \$10. Cash (exact change, please) and check accepted.

Other sources of AHA BLS certification are listed in the table below. The cost is generally \$40-60 per person including the book. Classes are offered at various times and locations. Contact the sources directly for details or go to the AHA website [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) to search for classes by zip code located closer to your residence.

1. Atlanta Technical College. 1560 Metropolitan Ave SW, Atlanta, 30310. Phone: 404-756-3740.
2. Grady Health System. 80 Jessie Hill Jr. Drive, Atlanta, 30303. Phone: 404-616-4850.
3. ExtendLife.Net of Georgia. PO. Box 723832, Atlanta, 31139. Phone: 877-698-4900.
4. CARECO, Inc./SOS Technologies. 699 Roundtree Rd, Riverdale, 30296. Phone: 770-996-5433.
5. Chattahoochee Tech College. 2680 Gordy Pkwy, Marietta, 30066. Phone: 770-509-6317 x 254.
6. Gwinnett Tech Institute 5150 Sugarloaf Pkwy, POBox 1501, Lawrenceville, 30043 770-962-7580.

The national COA position statement on the Commissioned Corps Transformation Plan is available on the COA website at:

<http://www.coausphs.org/>. See Secretary Thompson's speech on the transformation at: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/speech/2003/030703.html>

## ACOA Participates In Georgia Clean UP Program



During the early hours of April 19, 2003, Atlanta Branch COA PHS officers and family members gathered together for their assigned quarterly environmental public

health project. The branch has adopted a one mile strip of roadway on Ponce de Leon Avenue near the Virginia Highlands and is responsible for maintaining a clean and safe walking area. In the month of April, volunteers from all over the state participated in a special nation-wide cleanup campaign. Twelve officers (CAPT–LTJG) and four family members braved the unseasonably cold weather and traffic and were successful in collecting over 12 bags of rubbish during this event. Our volunteers were stopped by many residents to thank us for our efforts. The event concluded with a lively discussion over hot chocolate and doughnuts while bragging about the most inauspicious object collected during the excursion. The next road cleanup is August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 0900. Come join the camaraderie with your fellow PHS officers. Contact CDR Larry Cseh for details ([LCseh@cdc.gov](mailto:LCseh@cdc.gov)).

## Introducing ACOA's New Intranet Site!

The ACOA is proud to announce the release of our new website on the CDC intranet. Please visit us at <http://intranet.cdc.gov/coa>. At this site, you will find lots of up-to-date and important information relevant to PHS Officers in the Atlanta area. Please send comments or suggestions for our new site to: LT Danice Eaton at [DEaton@cdc.gov](mailto:DEaton@cdc.gov).

## Professional Category Corner

### The PHS Nursing PAC

Looking for timely, relevant information about nursing and public health issues? Consider joining the PHS Nursing Listserv.

The PHSNURSING-L listserv functions as a communication mechanism for all PHS Nurses, both Civil Service and Commissioned Corps. You can expect to see information from your nursing peers on a variety of topics: public policy, employment opportunities, special initiatives, messages from the Chief Nurse Officer, clinical practice updates, continuing education information, emerging topics in nursing and healthcare, awards and opportunities for participation in different activities etc. The Professional Advisory Committee for Nurses (PAC-N) meeting minutes are also posted to the listserv to keep PHS nurses involved and updated on matters critical to the workplace and public health.

The Listserv gives you options to digest messages so that you do not add to your email overload. It even lets you go back and view previously posted messages through an easily accessible archive system.

Follow these instructions to subscribe:

Go to: <http://list.nih.gov/archives/phsnursing-l.html>. Scroll down and click on the 3rd button that says Join, or Leave the List. Follow the instructions and you are subscribed!

If you have questions or problems subscribing to the list please contact: Cherryll Ranger ([chr4@cdc.gov](mailto:chr4@cdc.gov); 404.498.0388) or Kitty MacFarlane ([kjm8@cdc.gov](mailto:kjm8@cdc.gov); 770.488.1883).

The US Public Health Service Nursing web page is located at: <http://phs-nurse.org/>. Check this page for career information and to identify the CDC/ATSDR representative for the Nursing PAC.

---

**The ACOA Executive Committee is planning a Fall Officer's Social for October. If you have ideas for the social, please contact LTJG Jennifer Di Pietra ([JDIPietra@cdc.gov](mailto:JDIPietra@cdc.gov)).**

---

## Member's Column

### Reflections of a Junior Officer on the 2003 COA Conference

The annual Commissioned Officers Association conference was held in spectacular Scottsdale, Arizona from June 15 -21<sup>st</sup>. The most well-attended conference to date, nearly 1000 of the finest PHS officers were in attendance. It was the second COA conference that I have attended, and I'm quite sure I had forgotten the value of this event and the opportunities that it affords. It would take only one minute to remember. This conference left me fully charged and passionate for public health, excited for a diverse and rewarding career, and proud to be a commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service.

There was truly no better part of the conference than meeting fellow officers and establishing what will prove to be life-long relationships. A senior officer once told me that at his first conference, he shook hands with six of his future supervisors. Several junior officers stood together for a picture and then mused that one day all wear solid gold on their shoulders, quite certain that one of them is destined to be Surgeon General. I returned home with contacts, junior and senior, from every agency and category, in research and in clinical care, many of whom will be future coworkers, Chief Professional Officers, mentors, and promotion board members!

There is simply no better feeling than the camaraderie of PHS officers. I was continually amazed by the quality of officers that I met, of their varied and vital research, and the devotion to quality clinical care our PHS officers provide to people without running water or floors in their homes. As an officer at the CDC, I was reminded that the CDC is part of PHS, of a bigger public health infrastructure in which thousands of officers play critical, remarkable roles. It is energizing to learn of possibilities for future assignments and geographic locations. I had the privilege of meeting pharmacists from Alaska and Arizona who see patients and make house calls, engineers who build pumps to bring clean water to Indian reservations whose drinking water is from ground wells, and

*continued on page 4, column 1*

*Member's Column, continued.*

researchers at the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute who forge national policy from vital research on diabetes, obesity, and cancer prevention. Exchanging a chat over a drink in the lobby or sharing a dinner with 30 other officers, I became filled with outright pride to share a history and a uniform with such an honorable group of people.

VADM Carmona gave a rousing speech during the Luther Terry Lecture that raised the roof of the hotel. Yes, we will be in uniform. Yes, the Corps will become the uniformed service that our benefits tell us we should be. RADM Charles Grim, IHS Director-Select, announced that all IHS officers will be in uniform, and the directors of the FDA, HRSA, and the NIH were present to speak in support of the transformation, future, and value of the PHS.

There wasn't one officer in attendance, O-1 or O-9, that didn't say it was their best conference yet. It was such a good conference that I stole a couple of minutes for a phone call – I had to make my reservations for Alaska in 2004! Make yours today. It will be one conference you can't afford to miss.

## Are you ready for the CCRF Fit Test?

As many are aware, commissioned officers will soon be required to demonstrate an acceptable level of fitness as defined by the core exercises for the CCRF fit test. The fit test consists of 3 exercises for which a minimum level of fitness must be achieved. These include: 1) sit-ups or side bridge, 2) push-ups, and 3) running/power walking 1.5 miles.

Does passing the fit test seem like a daunting task? Are you having trouble getting motivated to get in shape for the fit test or are you unsure where or how to begin your training?

Two commissioned officers (who have already passed the fit test) are willing to assist in formulating a group exercise schedule to assist in preparation and instruction for fit testing. LCDR Lisa Fitzpatrick is a certified group exercise trainer and is available to offer assistance early mornings and some

weekends and LCDR Tina Lankford will be available at Lifestyle Center at the Rhodes Building on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11:30 and 1pm.

Group exercise and training times will be determined based on interest and availability. If you are interested in this assistance preparing for the CCRF fit test, please contact either Lisa Fitzpatrick ([lfitzpatrick@cdc.gov](mailto:lfitzpatrick@cdc.gov)) or Tina Lankford ([tlankford@cdc.gov](mailto:tlankford@cdc.gov)).

## ACOA Uniform Shop

Don't forget that ACOA has a uniform swap!! If you have uniforms to donate, wish to purchase uniform components (at very reduced rates), or if you would like to swap gently used uniforms/shoulder boards, contact LCDR Tina Lankford, [tlankford@cdc.gov](mailto:tlankford@cdc.gov).

Items in surplus now include: LT (O-3) hard boards (\$10), soft boards and collar device sets (\$5); 4 men's service dress blues (\$65 set); 0-5/0-6 female combination cover (\$45).

For a complete inventory list, please see the ACOA intranet site (<http://intranet.cdc.gov/coa>).

## Welcome Aboard Packets Calling All Resources!

When you first arrived in Atlanta, did you muddle through finding uniform components, housing, military sponsored activities and recreation, etc.? The ACOA is in the process of developing a "Welcome Aboard" packet for relocated and newly commissioned officers in the Atlanta area. If you have websites or other resources you think might be helpful, please pass them on to CDR Jeff Bosshart at: [JBosshart@cdc.gov](mailto:JBosshart@cdc.gov) or phone him at 404-639-6275. We would like to make the packet as comprehensive as possible. Thanks!

---

**To submit articles or announcements to the ACOA newsletter, please contact the Editor, LT Danice Eaton ([DEaton@cdc.gov](mailto:DEaton@cdc.gov) or 770-488-6143).**

---

## Crunch and Run Results!

The ACOA's June 28<sup>th</sup> Crunch and Run was a great success! The rain held off and 22 officers were able to get their fit test completed. We had a great time and felt it was a worthwhile Saturday morning venture.

A big "Thank You" goes out to all the planners: CAPT Arnold Manangan, CDR Steve Inserra, CDR Robert Knowles, and LCDR Tina Lankford.

And a very gracious "Thanks" to those fellow officers who already completed the fit test requirements but were willing to take time out on Saturday to help out: CAPT Holly Williams (monitor), CAPT John Moran (timer), LCDR Lisa Fitzpatrick (warm-up stretch), and LT Dana Jones (timer).

And "Kudos" to all who are DONE (this year): Nelson Adekoya, Diana Bensyl, Jeff Bosshart, Bob Brewer, Dan Budnitz, Jennifer Di Pietra, Dale Hu, Steve Inserra, John Iskander, Ruth Monina Klevens, Robert Knowles, Tina Lankford, Robin MacGowan, Arnold Manangan, Andrew Margolis, Tom Peterman, Don Sharp, Dorothy Stephens, Tim Walker, Jay Wamsley, and Mildred Williams-Johnson.

Stay tuned for more fit testing in the Fall.

## 2003 ACOA Commissioned Officers Promotion Ceremony



*RADM Clinton discussed the history and significance of the PHS flag during his opening remarks at the ACOA Promotion Ceremony.*

"On July 1, 2003, twenty-one Atlanta-area commissioned officers, families and co-workers attended the ACOA Promotion Ceremony to have their boards changed by RADM J. Jarrett Clinton, DHHS Regional Health Administrator, Region IV, Assistant Surgeon General. Congratulations to all the Atlanta officers who received promotions this year! Special thanks to LCDR Kirsten Ernst and LTJG Jennifer Di Pietra for planning and organizing this special event.

## Homeland Security Summit

### Education. Exercises. Exhibits.

From September 22-25, 2003, the Homeland Security Summit 2 will bring together approximately 1,000 government officials, business leaders, security directors, first-responders and other health care providers, and interested citizens. The summit is a unique environment for homeland security professionals and others to network, brainstorm, and develop solutions to strengthen the defense of the nation. Exhibitors and attendees are encouraged to participate in all activities together, joining in the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Highlights will include world-class training from America's Homeland Security Leadership, full-scale exercise with Weapons of Mass Destruction scenarios, and the country's largest exhibit floor of Homeland Security technology.

#### Summit Partners:

The Public Forum Institute and the Homeland Security Summit Foundation

#### Affiliates:

4th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, FBI SHIELD Program, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Georgia State Defense Force, Homeland Security Foundation, Homeland Security Research Corporation, and the Homeland Security Technology Council

#### Dates and Locations:

September 22 - 24  
Fort Gordon - Augusta, GA

September 25 & 26  
Dobbins Air Reserve Base  
1430 First Street  
Dobbins Air Reserve Base  
Marietta, GA 30069-5009

The cost for registration is \$295 for federal, state, and local government employees. For more information, visit <http://www.publicforuminstitute.org> and click on activities.

## Compare & Contrast: Atlanta Branch and COA National

**JOIN COA and ACOA now and invest in your future**

Atlanta Branch (ACOA) and COA national are guided by a mission statement and bylaws (seems trivial but can you imagine management otherwise).

Atlanta Branch leadership is comprised of 12 officers elected annually by simple majority vote, whereas COA leadership is guided by PHS category—and geographic-specific criteria. Unlike COA, Atlanta Branch has EIS and junior grade officers serving in a leadership role (hardly the junior!).

For Atlanta Branch and COA leadership, any officer can self nominate regardless of their grade.

Atlanta Branch operations' rely on volunteer service solely, whereas COA has a paid staff of five full-time and one part-time positions (supporting COA's business/lobby operations).

Atlanta Branch leadership serves for one year, whereas COA Board of Directors serve for three year terms.

Atlanta Branch and COA rely heavily on annual dues to fund operational and educational goals.

Atlanta Branch has maintained its \$5 dues for practically forever, whereas COA has raised dues when appropriate.

Atlanta Branch and COA create career and promotion worthy "opportunities" for interested officers. All contributed effort, big and small, are meaningful.

Atlanta Branch and COA benefit by members assisting with committees, special projects, and/or task force (*friendships made are forever*).

Atlanta Branch has nearly 400 members, whereas COA has approximately 17 times the number of members or ~7,000 members and growing!

Dollar for dollar, Atlanta Branch and COA do some pretty creative initiatives and trainings with modest financial support. Our Atlanta Branch's ability to leverage funds to provide services is noteworthy, even if only \$5.

Atlanta Branch and COA benefit greatly from donations including personal cash or check, food or supplies for ceremonies, uniforms, and time & talent contributions. Thank you to the "dependents Corp", too.

Atlanta Branch sponsors the annual Atlanta area USPHS Corps Promotion Ceremony; a unique professional and family-friendly milestone of an event. See you again on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Atlanta Branch and COA most efficiently collect dues through the payroll-deduction method, a low cost, and no hassle method.

COA offers a limited number of college scholarships (range \$750 to \$2000) to member officers and their dependents. Atlanta Branch is taking donations to sponsor the first annual "Atlanta Branch" scholarship thru the COA.

Atlanta Branch and COA have leaders that serve in leadership capacity in other professional associations and organizations, a synergy for leadership.

Atlanta Branch and COA provide a newsletter, ours is germane to the needs of Atlanta area officers (e.g., how to secure the new ID card in ATL). Both newsletters are read, and serve separate clientele... and sometimes create "healthy" controversy.

**For information on joining ACOA, please visit our intranet site <http://intranet.cdc.gov/coa>.**

Article By: CDR Steve Inserra, ATSDR

---

## T-Shirts for Sale!

**100% cotton short-sleeved t-shirts have the COA seal on the front and Atlanta skyline on the back. Cost is \$8.00 each. To purchase, contact Tina Lankford at: [tlankford@cdc.gov](mailto:tlankford@cdc.gov) or 770-488-1886.**

---