



LCDR Rachel Forche, MPH, REHS

Board Position: Field Representative (Applicant for 2023-2026)

LCDR Forche began her career with the USPHS at the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she worked on longitudinal tobacco research and contributed to regulatory science in the Center for Tobacco Products. In 2019, LCDR Forche PCS-ed to Dallas, Texas, where she currently serves at Federal Occupational Health (FOH), conducting and overseeing environmental, occupational health, and safety assessments and trainings for >22 federal agencies nationwide. As an Environmental Health Officer, LCDR Forche has deployed in response to Hurricanes Harvey, Florence, and Fiona; the United Nations General Assembly; COVID-19; and Remote Area Medical missions.

LCDR Forche enjoys being active with her local COA Branch. She served as the Greater Texas COA's President from 2021-2022 and as Secretary from 2019-2021, and she currently serves as both the Immediate Past President and Chair of the Newsletter Committee for the 2022-2023 Operational Year. For her dedication and achievements within the Branch, LCDR Forche received the COA Local Branch Leader of the Year Award in 2021. LCDR Forche wholeheartedly believes in the mission of COA in its advocacy for officers and views COA as an invaluable asset to officers nationwide for networking, service, camaraderie, and esprit de corps.

LCDR Forche earned both her Master of Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences and her Bachelor of Science in Honors Psychology/Minor in Music from the University of Michigan. LCDR Forche enjoys playing flute and piccolo in the PHS Music Ensemble, and in her spare time, she enjoys traveling throughout the U.S. and abroad with her husband and family.

Position Statement

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My name is LCDR Rachel Forche, and I am applying to serve as a Field Officer Representative on the COA Board of Directors for the 2023-2026 term. I am an Environmental Health Officer currently stationed in Dallas, TX. I began my PHS career in 2015 as a JRCOSTEP (ENS) serving at FDA headquarters in Maryland and subsequently commissioned as a LTJG.

For the past 3.5 years, I have been an extremely active leader and member within the Greater Texas COA (GTCOA), serving as Branch President from 2021-22 and as Secretary from 2019-21. Currently, I serve as the Immediate Past President and Chair of the Newsletter Committee. During my tenure with GTCOA, I initiated an inaugural Branch Newsletter (now on its 4th publication); initiated and sent weekly email updates to the Branch with synthesized information for officers; invited and hosted 5 guest speakers (including a RADM) to speak to GTCOA on a variety of educational topics; commissioned the first-ever Branch logo; spearheaded and oversaw the creation of the Branch's first challenge coin and t-shirt; led the creation of a new Branch website; created GTCOA liaison positions at DFW agencies to promote recruitment and membership; and led numerous community outreach and networking events across 3 years. As a result of these efforts, the Branch saw a 20.3% increase in official membership (from 64 to 77 members), along with substantially increased engagement. This year, I volunteered to serve on the National COA's Local Branch Committee to share recommendations with other COA Branches nationwide based on my experience in serving as a leader in my Local Branch.

I believe in the mission of COA, particularly in its advocacy for officers. I also view COA as an invaluable asset to officers nationwide as it provides opportunities for networking, service, and esprit de corps; COA is unique in that it allows for officers from various ranks, professional categories, and agencies to come together to share knowledge, serve, and assist one another. I am grateful this organization exists and look forward to contributing to something I truly believe in.

I aim to help COA continue its mission to achieve parity with the other Uniformed Services, advocate for us in Congress, and provide career development. An example of where USPHS does not yet have parity is the parental leave allowance; DoD servicemembers and federal civilian employees, including fathers, receive 12 weeks of leave, plus an additional 6 weeks for the birthing parent. I would work tirelessly to advocate for parity for PHS officers in this benefit, among others.

It has been extremely rewarding to serve local COA/PHS officers, and as a Board member, I would continue to promote COA to new and current PHS officers and advocate for them in any way possible. I am passionate about COA's goals and projects and would utilize my experience of leading and working alongside local branch officers to serve COA at the National level.