

CAPT Margaret Riggs, PhD, MPH, MS

CDC Liaison to Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Center for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (CSTLTS)



Captain Margaret “Margo” Riggs serves as the CDC Liaison and Healthy Communities Director with Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR), a regional nonprofit that champions local projects, programs, and advocacy in Eastern KY to fill economic gaps. She leads coordination for health improvement across rural Appalachia KY to prevent diabetes, obesity and substance use. CAPT Riggs has been working in domestic and international public health for 16 years and throughout her career has built public health capacity in underserved areas. As an Associate Director at CDC Zambia she worked with the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to establish the first Zambia National Public Health Institute. As a CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer (CEFO) supervisor she oversaw the work of 30 senior epidemiologists assigned around the country. She also served as acting Territorial Epidemiologist for the U.S. Virgin Islands, conducted outbreak response training in Kabul, Afghanistan and has participated in several large public health response efforts to include: COVID-19 pandemic, Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa, Superstorm Sandy in NJ and the Haiti Earthquake. She was a CDC CEFO assigned to the Kentucky Department for Public Health in Frankfort, KY and worked across Kentucky responding to natural disasters and outbreaks, building environmental health capacity and helping to improve overall health by getting Kentucky kids outdoors thru relationships between local health staff and environmental educators. CAPT Riggs began her career with CDC in 2005 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Cincinnati, OH. She graduated with all degrees from the University of Florida, served five years in the US Army and grew up in Northern Kentucky.