

from the
Executive Director



James T. (Jim)
Currie, Ph.D.,
Colonel, USA Ret.

PHS HQ

On 11 February 2019 ADM Brett Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health at HHS, and VADM Jerome Adams, US Surgeon General, conducted a Town Hall Meeting at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building in Washington, DC. COA staff did not attend the meeting, though the COA Board Chair, CDR Heather Brake, was present for it. I was privileged to be invited by ADM Giroir and VADM Adams to meet with them after the Town Hall. Also present for the meeting, which took place in the Assistant Secretary's office, were RADM Sylvia Trent Adams, newly-named Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, CDR Brake, and several PHS headquarters staff. ADM Giroir set up this meeting so he could brief COA leadership on the content of the Town Hall meeting and to share with us some of his thoughts about current events and the future of the Commissioned Corps.

The first item on ADM Giroir's agenda was to tell us that PHS headquarters

see **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** on page 13

Dietitian Officers Celebrating 75 Years of Commissioning



LCDR Stephanie Magill, LT Jenna Cope

One hundred years ago, dietitians began serving in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and seventy-five years ago, USPHS dietitians were commissioned to protect, promote, and advance the safety of the Nation's health. In 1919 the first dietetic section was organized in the Public Health Service (PHS) Division of Hospitals, which operated a medical care program for American seamen. These hospitals were primarily located in port cities, with inpatient capacities ranging anywhere from 100 to 1,000 beds. Dietitians impacted the health of fellow service members, such as establishing 1958 nutritional standards for Coast Guard Academy cadets, providing care to migrant workers in the 1970s, and supporting the development of national nutritional guidelines and policies.

"I'm proud to be a Commissioned Corps officer and to be in a profession that embodies the mission of PHS," said CAPT Suzan Gordon, chief professional officer. "In 1839, Dunglison Medical Lexicon--a dictionary of medical science--described dietetics as a branch of medicine comprising rules to be followed for preventing, relieving, or curing

see **DIETICIAN** continued on page 15

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COA Member Benefits

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Efforts on Capitol Hill continually support all Commissioned Corps officers – active duty and retired

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Legislative Update Whistleblower Protections for PHS

by Judy Rensberger

Several years ago, over a period of several months, COA waged a vigorous legislative campaign to obtain for PHS officers the same whistleblower protections long enjoyed by armed services personnel. (As we all know, legislative proposals to enhance benefits for armed services personnel almost never include PHS and NOAA, the two smallest of the seven federal uniformed services, and the two that are not armed.)

Background

In 2012, U.S. Senator Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) was finalizing a comprehensive bill to overhaul the Food and Drug Administration. His bill eventually became Public Law 112-144, the “FDA Safety and Innovation Act.”

Sen. Grassley chaired the Senate’s Judiciary Committee. He was widely known on Capitol Hill as the most ardent supporter and defender of the rights of whistleblowers. No conscientious service member or civilian employee, he believed, should suffer retaliation for trying to do the right thing by exposing public corruption and egregious misbehaviors. COA’s position and arguments resonated with Sen. Grassley. Thanks largely to him, Section 1129 of the FDA reform legislation lays out protections for PHS officers who are whistleblowers

CCD 121.06

With all federal legislation, the affected executive branch agencies must figure out how to implement the new law. They must come up with specific definitions and legal requirements that will adequately reflect broad Congressional intent and at the same time make clear to affected parties exactly what they can and cannot do. It’s a time-consuming process that must also look at related laws already on the books.

By January of 2017, that process had been completed. Sylvia Burwell, the outgoing Secretary of Health and Human Services, released the implementing regulations as Commissioned Corps Directive 121.06, “Protected Communications.” Under the policy section on page 3, the first sentence reads, “Corps officers are free to make protected communications.” CCD 121.06 is a five-page document loaded with links. You may access it here http://www.coausphs.org/media/2046/ccd121_06-whistleblowers.pdf

Why raise this now?

Fast forward to 2019. By now, CCD 121.06 has been out there for more than two years. It is reasonable to ask: Is it working? Is it helping conscientious PHS officers who see a huge problem and want to bring it to the attention of authorities who can fix it? Our own sample of PHS whistleblowers we have

see **LEGISLATIVE** continued on page 8

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service: Officers Serve Members of the Homeless Community in San Diego



SoCal MLK Day of Service Volunteers from left. Front: Timothy Brown and LT Juanj Wu. Second row: LT Gina Tomkus, LCDR Annemarie Galle, LT Kendra Vieira, CDR Kim Bellama, Joran Bellama, Leila Bellama. Third row: LT Marie Cetoute, Holly Zepeda, LCDR Josie Zepeda, CAPT Philip Farabaugh, Roy Tomkus, CDR Song Lavalais, LCDR Renee Cannon, LCDR Gustavo Miranda, Andrea Benham, LCDR Andrew Felix, Mandy Manalastas, and Jacqueline "Jacque" Hess (PATH Volunteer Coordinator).

by LT Gina C. Tomkus, PA-C and LT Marie Cetoute, LCSW, BCD
Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Officers who are members of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) Southern California (SoCal) Branch gathered together on January 21, 2019, for a day of volunteer service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (MLK). In honor of the day of service commemorated on MLK Day, the event was also extended to the family and friends of participating officers. A total of twelve USPHS officers and seven family members/friends of the officers participated in the event.

A 2018 report published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states there are roughly 553,000 people experiencing homelessness every night in the United States. San Diego is fourth in the size of its homeless population. Specifically, San Diego has at least 7,063 people experiencing homelessness in any given night. The SoCal members partnered with a non-profit agency called People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) to engage in

a volunteer activity that addressed San Diego community's major public health problem of homelessness.

PATH is a non-profit organization providing comprehensive services to individuals experiencing homelessness, with a dedicated goal of ending homelessness for individuals, families, and communities in California. PATH has twenty-five locations in four metropolitan areas throughout the state. They are successfully meeting their mission of ending homelessness in more than 140 cities across California by building affordable housing, through transitional and permanent supportive housing, and by working tirelessly to engage multiple partners and community volunteers to collaborate and provide the homeless community with resources. Through their collaboration with other community agencies, PATH offers a broad range of supportive services, such as: basic needs of shelter, food, and clothing; case management services; medical and mental healthcare; career training; and long-term support to individuals experiencing homelessness. Also, PATH receives Veterans Affairs grants to provide tailored services to members of the Veterans community who are homeless.

see **HOMELESS** continued on page 12



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USPHS Officers assigned to the Federal Medical Center in Butner, NC (BOP) participate in 2019 Healing with CAARE Mission

by CDR Yvonne Lassiter, RN

During the COF Symposium in Raleigh, NC, in 2014, the Nurse Professional Advisory Committee was introduced to Healing with CAARE, Inc.

The mission of (CAARE), Center for Accessible Affordable Health Research and Education, is to provide effective prevention and case management services to at-risk persons and their families in Durham, NC. To address the health and social needs of the community, CAARE refers individuals to health and social resources, provides preventive health education and offers affordable housing to low/moderate income people.

Thanks to a proposal submitted by CAPT Beverly Dandridge (DHS), NPAC has sponsored the Healing with CAARE mission since 2015. The number of volunteers from across the nation has increased each year. This year, volunteers from as far as Alaska participated in this very special mission.

For our particular mission, we packaged Naloxone Kits in conjunction with TROSA and NC Harm Reduction Coalition. TROSA (Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers), is a comprehensive, licensed long-term,



Pictured here are PHS officers CDR V. Daniels and CDR Y. Lassiter. These two nurse officers are currently assigned to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Medical Center) in Butner, NC.

nonprofit residential substance abuse recovery program located in Durham, NC. NC Harm Reduction Coalition is a grassroots organization dedicated to the implementation of harm reduction interventions and public health strategies. One of their main projects is a Naloxone & OD Prevention project. The overdose rescue kits packaged by the PHS Officers will be available free of charge to: active IV drug users, people on medication-assisted treatment, formally incarcerated individuals with a history of opiate use,

those engaged in sex work and people who identify as transgene. Over 1000 kits were prepared and package by USPHS Officers from around the country.

These officers represented the Commissioned Corps with pride and distinction, doing what we are trained to do best. Demonstrate a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources and talents.

Retired Officers Breakfast

Wednesday, May 8, at 7:00-8:00 a.m.
RSVP at <http://evite.me/RxcSV9DmR7>





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Indian Health Service Reunion

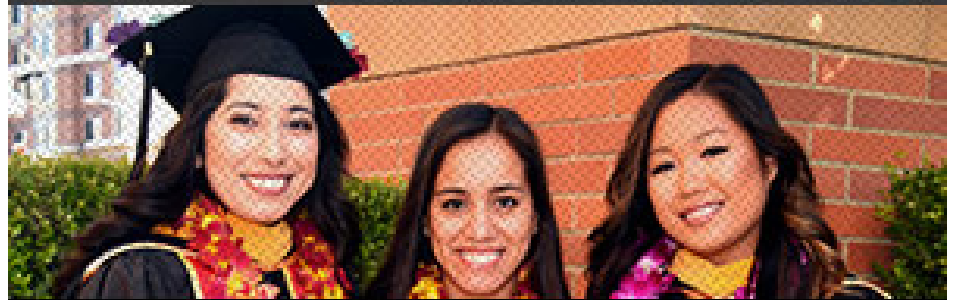
The Indian Health Service Retired Engineer/Environmental Health Officer Reunion is set for May 21, 2019, in Laughlin, Nevada. Anyone, who worked for the INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, as an engineer, sanitarian or environmental health officer is welcome to attend the gathering and reminisce with old friends and co-workers. Past reunions have been well attended with thirty to forty officers showing up for a day of remembering the history of the agency and the many fine persons that served. It is also an opportunity for recent retirees to hear of the efforts of the early officers in the formative years of the program. We also anticipate hearing updates on the current engineering and environmental health

program in I.H.S.

The reunion will be held at the Tropicana in Laughlin, NV on Tuesday May 21st. Rooms are blocked for arrival on Monday the 20th to Wednesday the 22nd for departure. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-343-4533 and identifying themselves as members of the group with Group Reservation ID: 4295. The Engineer/Environmental Health Officer Reunion is held every three years and has proven to be an enjoyable experience for all. If you are able to attend please send an e-mail to CAPT Bruce Etchison, USPHS (Ret.) at bmetchison72@gmail.com to obtain registration information.

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Interview with LT Jamie Mells on Opioid Strike Teams

by John McElligott

Lieutenant Jamie E. Mells, Ph.D., joined the Commissioned Corps in April of 2014 and works as a Health Scientist in the Health Systems & Trauma Systems Branch of the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. LT Mells has been serving as subject matter expert for evidence-based opioid prevention programs and strategies. He is the lead scientist working with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to develop State-based strike teams, who rapidly respond to communities experiencing sudden surges in fatal and non-fatal overdoses or that experience a clinic closure that places patients at risk.

Frontline: You work on evidence-based opioid prevention programs and strategies. What does evidence-based mean? How much evidence does CDC need before saying something works?

LT Mells: The CDC relies heavily on scientific literature to inform our recommendations. In terms of opioid prevention, our branch just recently published a community guide for evidence-based strategies for preventing opioid overdose titled, "What's working in the U.S." (Find the community guide online at <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2018-evidence-based-strategies.pdf>) In general, we utilize scientific literature, experts within the field (including our State partners), and input for the target of the interventions to inform our recommendations. The opioid epidemic has been rapidly evolving, and we are constantly interacting with local health departments and scientists from around the country to provide continuous quality improvements to our information.

Frontline: Please describe the State-based strike teams which respond to communities seeing surges in overdoses.

LT Mells: State-based strike teams are still in the early stages of development. We are working with several State partners to pilot different kinds of teams depending upon the needs that community.

Frontline: Who is a part of the strike teams?

LT Mells: The composition of the strike teams will depend on what the State or locality needs. They can range from medical providers and social workers to public safety and risk communications specialists.

Frontline: What do they do?

LT Mells: These teams are being designed to help States respond to sudden spikes in overdoses or a pain clinic closure that displaces patients who are need of continued care or medication-assisted treatment (MAT). Consequently, the nature of the issue and a State's capacity will determine the composition of the team.

Frontline: Do you foresee any role for PHS response teams to



assist the State-based strike teams?

LT Mells: Yes, and that is already in the works and is being led by the Opioid Response Coordinating Unit. Questions can be directed to ORRT@cdc.gov

Frontline: You've been involved with PACE on its Opioid Lesson Plan. Do you get a sense that most PHS officers know how to administer naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose?

LT Mells: I think based on the Surgeon's Call to increase the number of people that know how to reverse an overdose, there has been a tremendous push to get officers trained on how to administer naloxone. Our CDC training was widely attended by PHS officers, and we hope to be able to offer the training again in the future.

Frontline: What are some barriers to anyone learning more to administer naloxone or get naloxone to carry?

LT Mells: The great thing about the training is that it has been used to even teach children how to administer the training. To quote Dr. Al Romanosky, who developed the training materials that we used here at the CDC, "If you can use Afrin nasal spray, you can administer naloxone."

OBITUARY

Bill Jenkins

Former officer Bill Jenkins passed away on February 17 in Charleston, SC. He was 73. One of the first black commissioned officers of the USPHS, Dr. Jenkins was an epidemiologist who raised concerns about the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study, researched how AIDS affected black men, oversaw the government's Participants Health Benefits Program, and helped to establish the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care at Tuskegee University.

LEGISLATIVE from page 2

tried to help is too small to answer that question. That is why we are throwing it out to all COA members. If you are or ever have been a whistleblower, or have considered becoming one, then we would like to hear from you. Please e-mail me at jrensberger@coausphs.org and write WHISTLEBLOWING in the subject line. Tell us about your experience, positive or negative. COA policy is that such information is confidential unless you tell us, in writing, that we can share it.



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2019 BCOAG Annual Awards Call for Nominations Deadline: Friday, March 15, 2019

WHAT: The Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) is seeking nominations for the George I. Lythcott Award, Hildrus A. Poindexter Award, Retired PHS Officers Recognition Award, and John C. Eason Responder of the Year Award. These awards recognize, and honor contributions made by individuals who have had a substantial impact on the mission of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), other federal government agencies as well as community health care organizations.

DETAILS: Self-nominations are accepted. Current BCOAG voting members are not eligible for these awards. Nomination forms are available on the Awards Committee website at <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/bcoag/awards.aspx>

George I. Lythcott Award - Recognizes a junior officer (Grades O-2, O-3, or O-4) who has demonstrated a genuine sense of public service and leadership initiative, and whose contributions helped to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our Nation. Junior officers with a minimum of 3 years of service in the Corps are eligible for this award.

Hildrus A. Poindexter Award - Recognizes a PHS Commissioned Corps officer or civil service employee for outstanding contributions toward enhancing the health of minority communities in the United States and/or abroad. PHS officers and civil service employees with a minimum of 7 years of service are eligible for this award.

Retired PHS Officer Recognition Award - Recognizes a retired African American PHS Commissioned Corps officer for exemplary service to the PHS Commissioned Corps and the Nation. Retired officers that served a minimum of 10 years on active duty with the PHS are eligible for this award.

CAPT John C. Eason Responder of the Year Award – Recognizes the accomplishments of an active member of a BCOAG committee who has made outstanding contributions to the PHS by responding to critical public health events either domestically or internationally. This award is open to all ranks.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: COB Friday, March 15, 2019.

POC: Please submit nominations to bcoagawards@gmail.com. For questions; please contact LT Folaremi Adeyemo at Folaremi.adeyemo@fda.hhs.gov. Subject line of email: "Annual Awards".

Please note: All relevant accomplishments from the date the nominee was called to active duty or began Federal service can be used to meet the award criteria. With out exception, nominees must meet all criteria by the nomination deadline.

Minor Receives COA/COF Brutsche Award

Retired CAPT James R. Minor was recognized with the 2018 COA/COF Brutsche Award for his tireless coordination with and lobbying of the various industries that come to the COF Symposium. His efforts have resulted in booth space sell-outs. Not only has the Commissioned Officers Foundation sold out the booth space, but now there is competition to reserve space at the Symposium. CAPT Minor has been the force that has resulted in this major achievement, which has helped stabilize the Symposium financially.

CDR Heather Brake, Chair of the COA Board of Directors, said, "CAPT Minor is an inspiration to all of us. He tirelessly works to promote the Commissioned Corps and has made great strides in improving participation in the Symposium exhibit hall. This award is a token of our continued appreciation for everything he has done."

The Robert Brutsche Award is named after Rear Admiral Robert Brutsche, a driving force behind the growth and strength of COA. The award is given to a COA member who has exhibited exceptional commitment to the COA Board of Directors or COF Board of Trustees by leadership on projects and/or sustained contributions through committee work, liaison with outside organizations, special initiatives, and exemplary work with COA Local Branches.

See the complete list of recipients at <http://www.coausphs.org/awards/robert-brutsche-award/>

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The Tucson Commissioned Officers Association brings food, donations and Christmas cheer to the Lot on 22nd

by LCDR Peter Golden

On December 23, 2018, the Tucson Commissioned Officers Association (TCOA) donated and served food at the "Lot on 22nd". The Lot on 22nd offers meals, donated clothing, and other items to the local homeless population in Tucson, AZ. It is one of many services for the homeless population of Tucson. The website, tucsonhope.org reported that in 2015 there were 2,957 homeless people living in Arizona, and the Tucson/Pima Coalition to end Homelessness (TPCH) reports that on January 26, 2016, there were 1,762 homeless people in Pima County, where Tucson is located. This constitutes the highest concentration of homeless persons in the state.

The Lot is just that... a vacant lot with a storage container on it. It is sandwiched between a dollar store and an apartment complex, with a gigantic car dealership taking up the block across the street. There are no lights on the lot except for what street lights and the neighboring buildings. A lack of lighting (and the cooler temps and shorter days in the winter) make getting the meal served in a timely manner important, but not mandatory. Despite its inconspicuous appearance, twice a week the Lot transforms into a bustling depot for the homeless and less-fortunate residents of lower Tucson. The storage container opens, and volunteers (including many of the homeless who arrive early for the dinner) begin to unload tables and chairs and donations and the lot begins to come alive as people congregate. On any given night, the Lot serves dinner to 30 to 70 people. The meals are all provided by local volunteers. Two hours later, all that's left is a dark, dusty lot. If you didn't see it happen, you wouldn't believe it was true!

My first TCOA-sponsored volunteer activity at the Lot was in October of 2018. The food was provided by the TCOA, but it was a local charity organized by a local 6th grader, the "Kids Kindness Project," that served the food. It was truly a delight



to see a group of enthusiastic and playful sixth graders line-up and start serving food to 40-50 people. My respect for and gratitude toward these young people is without bounds. Their efforts, positive attitudes, and respect for all was an inspiration.

When I arrived again on the 23rd of December, it was apparent that this was going to be a true holiday celebration. There was a line of tables along the edge of the lot set up with gifts donated and staffed by local organizations, and Santa and his elves were present for the large number of kids who show up for the meal with their families. There was a game of catch going on in the middle of the lot, and there were kids running everywhere, adding to the chaotic scene as tables and chairs were brought out and food began to arrive. A Latino man and his young son wandered in off the street and joined the party at my urging. They left looking full and happy, with bags of gifts and containers of leftovers. The meal included two hams and three turkeys donated by the TCOA. TCOA volunteers also cooked other items to go along with multiple macaroni and cheese trays and other

pasta dishes, a variety of stuffings, two tables of desserts, and much more. The Kids Kindness Project was present again, helping with food service and sampling the cookies.

Six officers from the TCOA and their family members helped serve food to 60-70 people on the 23rd. The TCOA also coordinated two clothing and toiletry drives for the Lot, and I made two separate deliveries of four to five trash bags full of coats, blankets, clothing, and toiletries collected from workers at the San Xavier Health clinic located on the Tohono O'odham reservation. Volunteering with the TCOA at the Lot brought the meaning of the holidays home for me this year. As I arrived back at my own home, where a stocked refrigerator and warm beds for myself and my family were waiting, I was starkly reminded of all my blessings. I was proud that the TCOA was present to help bring some holiday cheer and a warm meal to our neighbors here in Tucson, and I thankful for the opportunity to give back to our community. The TCOA plans to continue volunteering with the Lot on 22nd throughout the year, as the need arises.

HOMELESS from page 3

During the MLK Day of Service event, SoCal volunteers spent the morning interacting with PATH's Volunteer Coordinator and the program residents at the office in downtown San Diego. Volunteers prepared and distributed over 150 nutritious bagged meals to residents. Additionally, volunteers cleaned and neatly organized the PATH thrift store, which provides clothing and basic household items to residents to help with their transition into housing or for employment opportunities. The volunteers' work in the thrift store meant PATH staffers could more easily assist residents with locating necessities and provide care.

The collaboration between USPHS SoCal members and PATH was quite successful. SoCal Branch members and PATH staff are looking forward to many more volunteer opportunities in the future.

References

The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2018-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.

People Helping the Homeless. <https://www.epath.org/>



Volunteers stuff sandwich bags at People Assisting the Homeless (PATH).



Sorting clothing in the PATH thrift store.

Very Important Information for Retirees and Beneficiaries

by RADM (ret.) Dick Bertin

The Coast Guard recently revised their great publication: "Information for Survivors of USCG, USCGR, NOAA, and PHS Retirees". It can be found at <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/CG-1/PPC/RAS/SurvivorGuide.pdf>

This "Survivor's Guide" is filled with very valuable information and should ideally be read by all retirees and their close family

members well BEFORE it is needed. This link or a hard copy should then be filed with all insurance, will, and other related information for quick access at time of the retiree's death.

The Guide addresses many topics that sometimes unfortunately mystify family members including how to file an initial report of death and how final retirement

pension payments are treated. It also covers survivor annuities (if the member was participating) and a huge array of other potential Federal benefits including VA and other military benefits, those related to burial, survivor's health care and ID cards. Points of contact for additional information are provided, along with an extensive Frequently Asked Questions section.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR from page 1

personnel had gone to heroic lengths to ensure that Commissioned Corps officers were paid during the recent government shutdown. He told us that these individuals had literally worked every day to get the payroll done, and he told us that as a result of their efforts, not a single Commissioned Corps officer had experienced a pay lapse or delay. We very much appreciate the hard work that went into making payrolls happen on time.

COA is grateful for the efforts of ADM Giroir, VADM Adams, and these unnamed headquarters personnel, as everyone counts on getting their pay on time. As I write this column we have just dodged a potential second government shutdown, and it appears that we are okay for the remaining months of the fiscal year. Had the temporary, twenty-one day agreement to re-open the federal government not been arranged and agreed-to by the President and Congressional leaders, it is entirely possible that PHS officers would have faced the prospect of missing a paycheck. We are thankful that it did not happen.

Now that the current crisis has diminished, it is unlikely, in my opinion, that Congress and the President will agree on legislation to ensure that another government shutdown does not occur on 1 October, when the new fiscal year begins. It is almost axiomatic in Washington that there is a great hue and cry to "do something" while a crisis is taking place, then the emergency passes and the problem is kicked down the road until something similar happens in the future. That is what appears to have happened with the recent shutdown, thereby ensuring that we will experience another one next year or the year after or the year after that. Divided government, with Republicans in control of one or more parts of the government and Democrats in control of another part almost guarantee that this will occur. So, be ready and be prepared, as best you can. That's enough about potential pay lapses—for now, at least.

I was privileged the weekend of 9 February to travel to Atlanta and attend the Atlanta COA dining out. The Atlanta branch of COA is one of the largest and most active of our branches, and this was the fourth year in a row I have been invited to attend the dinner. The leadership of the branch were kind enough to allow me to say a few words prior to the main address from ADM Giroir, so I took the occasion to reminisce about the past year and what all had happened with COA during that time.

I spoke of the Special Pay issue and of COA's conducting a member survey and sharing the results with ADM Giroir and VADM Adams. I spoke of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposal to cut the Commissioned Corps by thirty-eight percent and just how absurd that proposal is. If you don't remember its details, OMB suggested in June 2018, as part of its 140-page list of government reorganization proposals, that the Commissioned Corps would be made more efficient if it were cut from 6500 officers to 4000 officers. (The proposal can be found on the COA website at <http://www.coausphs.org/media/1881/omb-proposal-to-cut-the-commissioned-corps-june-2018.pdf>). The justification cited by OMB was a 1996 Government Accountability Office study (found on the COA website at <http://www.coausphs.org/media/1917/gao-report-1996-about-the-commissioned-corps.pdf>) that was rejected by the Department of Health and Human Services when it was released twenty-two years ago. As we said when OMB came out with its nutty idea, the thought that anyone would base a serious budget or management decision on a decades-old study is ludicrous. The Congressional Research Service, the non-partisan organization that Congress depends upon for analysis of legislative proposals, concluded that the called-for reduction in the Commissioned Corps would require Congressional approval. COA has taken its case for you to offices on Capitol Hill and has met with nothing but praise for and support of the Commissioned Corps. We believe that any attempt by OMB to cut the Corps would meet with substantial Congressional opposition.

Finally, I discussed the Smithsonian's design of a National Native American Veterans Memorial that would omit any recognition of veterans of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Smithsonian leadership is being preternaturally stubborn in its unwillingness to include the PHS and NOAA logos in its memorial design. We at COA are working hand-in-hand with Native Americans in the Commissioned Corps and are determined to persuade the Smithsonian to change the design.

These are the dark days of winter in the DC area, as they are across the country. (Those of you in Florida and Hawaii can ignore my words). Spring is coming, and we will soon gather in Minneapolis for another iteration of the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. If you haven't reserved your spot yet, you should go to the COA website and do so at <https://www.phscof.org/symposium.html>. Minneapolis in the spring will be wonderful, and we look forward to seeing you there.

C. Everett Koop Panel

Thursday, May 9

Local, state, and industry leaders will share examples of Better Health Through Better Partnerships. We'll try to connect investment in community health and economic prosperity. Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner, City of Minneapolis Health Department, and Courtney Jordan Baechler, Assistant Commissioner, Health Improvement, Minnesota Department of Health, will be joined by a speaker from the Medtronic Foundation.



Courtney Jordan Baechler

Gretchen Musicant

PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation

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We Welcome New Members of COA, February 1 to 28, 2019

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LT Jonathan Gayechuway
CDR Richard Luce, Jr.

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LCDR Jennifer J. Clements

DIETICIAN from page 1

diseases by diet. From our humble PHS beginnings of establishing and maintaining dietetics standards in PHS hospitals, to today's more diverse areas of research, food service administration, health facility inspections, regulatory oversight, and more, dietitians continue to live up to the mission to "protect, promote and advance the safety of the Nation's health."

Today, approximately 100 Commissioned Corps dietitians serve in various agencies, including: Federal Bureau of Prisons, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Department of Defense, Food and Drug Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, Indian Health Service, National Institutes of Health, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Dietitian roles include research, clinical nutrition, food service administration, program planning and evaluation, health facility inspections, regulatory oversight, and public health nutrition. Each day dietitians can face new challenges ranging from managing nutrition and health education programs to improving local, national, and global nutrition, or offering support to fellow officers in meeting the new weight standards.

Dietitians have served on the front lines of many public health emergencies, including the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks, Haiti Earthquake, the Ebola crisis, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Maria, and other natural disasters and unforeseen incidents. Dietitian officers serve in multiple roles providing medical nutrition therapy, patient case management, and oversight of food safety and food contracts.

"During Hurricane Maria relief, we provided food, water and nutrition supplements to meet the nutritional needs of patients," said LT Brenda Riojas. "Based on limited resources, supplements had to be rearranged to meet the needs of elderly patients, some requiring enteral nutrition support. While using my ability to speak Spanish, it was extremely rewarding to assist with providing food, water and other basic needs."

In addition to clinical roles, dietitian officers may also serve in a non-clinical role such as public information officer,



LCDR Katrina Piercy, physical activity and nutrition advisor at the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

administration, logistics and planning, or discharge planning and case management.

As science continues to validate the importance of food and nutrition in relation to health, dietitians will continue to play an even greater role in the continuing history of the profession in the USPHS. This past year, LCDR Katrina Piercy, physical activity and nutrition advisor at the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, served as the lead writer for the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. The Guidelines, released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides evidence-based recommendations for adults and youth ages three through seventeen years of age to safely obtain the physical activity they need to stay healthy, and information on how physical activity can help promote

health and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

"Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to feel better now, reduce risk for disease, and improve their overall health," said LCDR Katrina Piercy. "The Guidelines and the Move Your Way Campaign provide the information and tools to encourage all Americans to move and sit less each day."

Dietitian officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps work to advance nutrition-related science and seek to make a difference in underserved and disadvantaged communities, places where improved nutrition can improve health and quality of life. PHS dietitians proudly serving under the flag of the USPHS have made, and will continue to make, major contributions to the health of the nation.

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