

COA/COF NEWSLETTER FRONTLINE

VOLUME 63, ISSUE 6

AUGUST 2025

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RADM Brandon Taylor and ENS Annabelle Bailey cutting the cake at USU's Celebration of the 227th USPHS Birthday. Photo Credit: Tom Balfour

ASSISTANT SURGEON GENERAL DELIVERS POWERFUL REFLECTIONS AT USU'S CELEBRATION OF THE 227TH U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE BIRTHDAY

REAR ADMIRAL BRANDON TAYLOR HONORS THE CRITICAL ROLE OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

by Sharon Holland, Acting Vice President for External Affairs (PAO)/Director, Alumni Affairs, Uniformed Services University (Republished from USU News)

The Uniformed Services University (USU) marked the 227th birthday of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) on July 16 with a celebration featuring keynote remarks from Rear Admiral Brandon L. Taylor, Assistant Surgeon General, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, and Director of

See **BIRTHDAY** page 26



IN THIS ISSUE

- Providing Childcare Support to Families
- Why HOSA Matters
- Showing More of that Esprit de Corps
- Honoring A Legacy: USPHS Flag Raised for CAPT Dr. David Templin
- 2025 RDML Mishoe Diversity "Believe" Scholarship Recipients
- Vermont Includes USPHS in Military Pension Tax Break
- Dr. Al Romanosky Honored
- Photo Contest Winners
- HOSA International Leadership Conference
- 2025 Family Member Scholarship Recipients
- Resources to Support Manuscript Preparation

COA MEMBER BENEFITS

CAPITOL HILL REPRESENTATION

Efforts on Capitol Hill continually support all Commissioned Corps officers – active, former, reserve, and retired

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

COA Local Branches provide venues for meeting fellow officers and a forum for the discussion of issues within the Commissioned Corps

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter reports on monthly activities and items of interest of COA and the USPHS Commissioned Corps

RIBBON

Authorized to be worn on the USPHS uniform by members in good standing when attending COA functions

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Low-cost insurance programs that may continue as long as your membership in COA remains current

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Multiple opportunities for junior and senior officers to serve in leadership roles at the Local Branch or National level

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Deep member discount and generous opportunities for waived fees to take the Certified in Public Health (CPH) exam



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Fresh Look for Frontline — and a Renewed Call for Action

Since 1942, the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA) has been publishing a newsletter. Its first name, *The Service Officer*, lasted until either 1947 or 1948, dates that cannot be confirmed as we are missing two years of newsletters from our archives. In 1949, the name of the newsletter changed several times, first to *News Items*, then *COA News Bulletin*, and finally, *COA Bulletin*, all prepared using a manual typewriter and reproduced on a mimeograph machine. It was not until March of 1997 that the *COA Bulletin* was renamed *COA Frontline*, partially done to avoid confusion between the *COA Bulletin* and the *Commissioned Corps Bulletin*, a Commissioned Corps Headquarters communication. Confused yet?

Fast forward to 2025, *Frontline* is still going strong, with many issues 32-36 pages in length. Since its beginnings in 1944, these newsletters have served as a vital source of information and connection for members of the Commissioned Officers Association and the broader U.S. Public Health Service community. It remains a familiar and trusted newsletter, but we decided it needed a quick refresh. Why? As communication patterns change and lives become busier, we know that readers prefer shorter and more succinct stories. And we also want to give equal time to the great work being done by the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF).

See **EXECUTIVE** page 20

PROVIDING CHILDCARE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS SERVICE MEMBERS

by LCDR Uyen B. Chu, LT Victoria Parra, CAPT Pattama Ulrich, LT Evan Williams, LT Jesse Samluk
COA Legislative Affairs Committee

Affordable and accessible childcare affects readiness and retention of active-duty service members. Difficulty in obtaining childcare creates conflicts between parental obligations and mission responsibilities, and the lack of childcare may result in attrition from active-duty status. The availability of Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (DCFSA) to service members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHSCC) earlier this year is an important first step in ensuring family readiness for our Service.¹ However, there is more that needs to be done to advocate for parity in childcare support for the USPHSCC. This article is intended to provide background information behind the childcare parity legislative and advocacy goal for the Commissioned Officers Association (COA).

Childcare has become increasingly less affordable nationwide. Childcare expenses often exceed other categories of family spending in many parts of the country, including average annual mortgage payments, rent payments and in-state university tuition.² Many families pay for care for multiple children, making compounding childcare expenses even more burdensome.

See **LEGISLATIVE** page 28



LCDR Darion Smith connecting with a future dentist at the HOSA-Future Health Professionals 49th International Leadership Conference exhibit booth.

WHY HOSA MATTERS: ENGAGING, INSPIRING, AND RECRUITING TOMORROW'S PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS) OFFICERS

by LCDR Darion Smith

As a dental hygiene health services officer (HSO), I had the privilege of serving as a judge for the dental science competitions at the student led Georgia and Alabama HOSA Future Health Professionals State Leadership Conferences (SLC). I was inspired to participate through a U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps and HOSA workgroup dedicated to strengthening our relationship with HOSA. Led by officers like CAPT David Lau, CAPT Skip Payne, and CAPT (ret.) Rob Tosatto, this group
See **HOSA** page 21



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HAPPY NEW COA YEAR!

by CAPT Kurt Kesteloot, Chair, Board of Directors,
Commissioned Officers Association



Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

I am deeply honored to serve as your Board Chair through June of next year. Thank you to CDR Katie Jacques who did an amazing job as your past board chair. As I reflect on over 17 years of membership within the Commissioned Officers Association (COA), I am reminded of the incredible community we have fostered together. The connections forged at local events—whether it be raising the colors to honor our service, participating in volunteer efforts, or simply enjoying meals and conversations with colleagues—have created lasting memories and friendships that I deeply cherish. I sincerely hope that COA continues to provide you with similar experiences that enrich both your professional and personal lives.

COA remains committed to offering valuable support and opportunities for all officers in the United States Public Health Service. Your feedback is crucial to our mission, and I encourage you to share any ideas or suggestions that could enhance our programs and services. For a list of benefits that COA currently offers, please look here: [Membership](#). Please don't hesitate to reach out with any new ideas or affirmation of current directions. As your Board Chair, I will be meeting with national leaders early September and on Veterans Day, and I welcome any questions or concerns you believe should be addressed to advocate for the betterment of our Corps. Your insights

are invaluable in ensuring that our voices are heard at the highest levels.

I also want to take a moment to discuss an important topic that affects many of us: promotions. As I write this message, I sincerely hope that the promotion list has been released. If they have not yet been posted, please rest assured that the COA is actively collaborating with the Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) and national leadership to help expedite the process. CCHQ is working diligently to get a confirmed promotion list, and historical data indicates that confirmation dates have ranged from early June to months later. Your dedication to your service is highly valued, and I trust that the forthcoming incentive and special pays will serve as an acknowledgment of your hard work and commitment.

For further information regarding incentive pays, see CCI 633.01 Amended 21 March 2025. These benefits are designed to support you as you navigate your important roles within the Public Health Service, acknowledging the sacrifices and contributions you make to our communities and to public health on a national scale. I hope that many were also able to join the USPHS Commissioned Corps Employee Welfare and Recreation Association (EWRA) event on July 12, 2025. Whether you were at the large event in D.C. or at home with your family and friends wearing a new EWRA shirt, I hope you know the Corps and COA

See **BOARD** page 19



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

STEADINESS IN A TIME OF CHANGE

By: RDML (Ret.) Steven Solomon, MD, FACP, FIDSA
President, COF Board of Trustees

Much of our current public health system was created in the latter part of the 19th Century and first half of the 20th Century. The development of state and local health departments and a gradually increasing role for the federal government in public health and healthcare grew as scientific progress confirmed that prevention of the spread of disease and protection of the public from external threats were possible through specific interventions. Moreover, health protection and health security were deemed an essential government function, as much as defense against foreign adversaries, maintenance of law and order, and protection of commerce.

The one constant in an ever-changing national landscape of public health over two and quarter centuries has been the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and the officers of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The creation, in 1798, of a federally-run system to provide medical care for persons (“sick or disabled seamen”) who were far from home with no family, no community support and no resources to seek care, established the idea of government’s necessary role in health care. That such a system could also serve to help prevent the spread of contagious diseases emerged over time, establishing the federal role in disease prevention. These responsibilities, along with

so many others necessitated by the complexity of modern society, remain a crucial part of the mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

This history is well-known to Frontline readers but is worth repeating at a time of rapid change in the federal organizations and structures responsible for healthcare and public health in the United States. While public health is a broadly collaborative endeavor, many of public health’s most important functions can only be performed by governments ([cdc.gov/public-health-gateway/php/about/](https://www.cdc.gov/public-health-gateway/php/about/)). Exactly how the ongoing changes in federal health agencies will impact the government’s role in protecting the public is unclear at this time.

Changes at the federal level will fairly rapidly impact state and local health agencies. As one example, the Government Accountability Office, in a report earlier this year (GAO-25-107002), noted with concern a shortage of public health workers across the US. GAO reported that state, local, and tribal health departments across the U.S. would need to add 80,000 people to their workforce to adequately provide needed public health services in their jurisdictions. GAO highlighted the role of agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services--particularly HRSA, IHS, CDC, SAMHSA, and ASPR—in maintaining programs to help alleviate those shortages. Those programs included funding, educational scholarships and

See **TRUSTEES** page 6

SHOWING MORE OF THAT ESPRIT DE CORPS – PLANNING A PROMOTION CEREMONY IN TWO WEEKS

by LT Brianna Johns, Pharm D, MBA

On June 4, 2025, the Indian Health Service (IHS) Crow Service Unit (CSU) Pharmacy Department formally celebrated the promotion of two distinguished Public Health Service officers. LT Kelsey Kroon was promoted to LCDR, joined by her husband, David, and her parents, Ron and Darla. CDR James “Garrett” Sims was promoted to CAPT, joined by his father, John Sims, a retired Navy veteran, and his wife, Katie Sims.

Promotion ceremonies honor officer achievements and inspire pride across the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. They reflect the dedication, long hours, and leadership that officers commit to the USPHS Commissioned Corps mission. These events also highlight the innovative contributions officers make at their Service Units and beyond, motivating junior officers to consider new ways to serve.

Formal ceremonies often take months to plan, with elements like a committee, color guard, venue selection, and decorations. However, per promotion ceremony guidance, promotion ceremonies can be “much less formal depending on the dignitaries involved, available



The Crow Service Unit Pharmacy Department promotion ceremony on June 4, 2025, honoring recently promoted USPHS Pharmacy Officers. From left to right: CAPT James “Garrett” Sims, CDR Daniel “Nathan” Hamil, Dr. Amber Walksoverice, Crow Service Unit Pharmacy Director (A), LCDR Kelsey Kroon, and LT Brianna Johns.

resources, location and the number of officers being promoted.” Informal ceremonies can be planned in as little as 1-2 weeks, and the CSU Pharmacy Department accepted the challenge.

LCDR Alicia Palazzolo, Commissioned Corps Liaison, was instrumental in guiding planning efforts, providing

See **ESPRIT** page 20

FROM **TRUSTEES** page 5

loan repayments, direct assignment of personnel, and technical assistance, among other support activities. Changes in those agencies and those programs could thus have significant downstream effects.

The way in which public health in the United States is organized, managed, funded, and practiced is undergoing rapid change and accelerated evolution. During this period, there will be a particular value in maintaining and vigorously supporting the one component of our national public health infrastructure that has

served America the longest and remains true both to its founding origins and the most immediate needs of the American public today. The U.S. Public Health Service has been the consistent defender of America’s health security for over two centuries. This history of stability and accomplishment demonstrates that the USPHS should serve as a central component of federal role in disease prevention and health promotion and as foundational element in the continued advancement of public health in our nation.

HONORING A LEGACY: USPHS FLAG RAISED FOR CAPT DR. DAVID TEMPLIN



Junior officers work together to raise the flag as family, staff, and community members look on during the memorial for CAPT Dr. David Templin.

by LT Kobe Thammavongsa, BSN, RN

On June 20, 2025, beneath a clear summer sky, the American flag was raised at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in a solemn tribute to retired USPHS CAPT David Templin—a ceremony marking the first known memorial of its kind on ANMC grounds. For those of us in uniform, it was more than a ceremony—it was a moment of connection, reflection, and reverence.

Templin dedicated more than five decades of his life to ANMC, including thirty years of active service as a USPHS Commissioned Corps officer. Following his retirement from the Corps, he continued his commitment to Alaska Native and American Indian communities as a civilian provider. Though most of

us had not yet entered the Corps during his service, we gathered as a new generation of officers to honor the impact he made.

The color guard included LT Erika Thammavongsa, LT Corbyn Navas, LT Ryan Tubon, LT Anthony Martin, and LT Kobe Thammavongsa, with LT Elena Navas and LCDR Kate Manyoky serving as alternates. The team rehearsed each detail with precision and care, determined to uphold the dignity of the moment.

The flag raised once belonged to Templin himself and now flies as a symbol of his enduring legacy. The ceremony brought together his family, ANMC executives, USPHS officers, and community members to pay tribute.

See **FLAG** page 23

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AT THE HOSA-FUTURE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS 49TH INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

by LCDR Nakisha Brown, MHA, RDN, COR II

Imagine walking into a ballroom filled with an entire production similar to a grand concert, filled with an audience of over 14,000 attendees, including 12,000 middle and high school student competitors eager to pursue careers in healthcare. The energy was electric as I entered, hearing students and healthcare professionals cheering with excitement at making it to the HOSA-Future Health Professionals 49th International Leadership Conference (ILC), held in Nashville, Tennessee, in June 2025. These students had prepared all year for this moment, achieving the distinction of being the top competitors at their state conferences earning the opportunity to compete in healthcare-focused competitive events, alongside exceptionally talented students from around the world. In addition to the competition, participants also had the chance to win college scholarships, with over \$3 million awarded to aspiring healthcare leaders.

As I entered the exhibit hall to start my day at the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commis-

See **CONFERENCE** page 29

VERMONT INCLUDES USPHS IN MILITARY PENSION TAX BREAK

By CDR Joseph Frost, MPH, RDN, FAND

On June 25, 2025, Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed a tax credit package that is projected to provide \$13.5 million in breaks for military retirees among others. The law will exempt military pensions and military survivor benefits for households with adjusted gross incomes under \$125,000, and a partial exemption for those making less than \$175,000¹. Governor Scott stated “A military retirement income tax exemption is something I, and many others, have long advocated for. To all the members of our military, past, and present, thank you for your service to our country. We live in freedom because of the sacrifices you’ve made to protect that.”² Thanks to advocacy efforts by COA and its members, the value of the Public Health Service was recognized by Vermont legislators and the term “military” in the original proposal was changed to

“uniformed services” in the final bill, thus ensuring the benefits applied to PHS retirees.

As a long-time reader of *Frontline*, I was all too well aware of the conundrum our service finds itself in: national and state legislation is passed with the term, “military” thus not definitively including the PHS leaving us with the much more difficult task of explaining our parity to our sister services and explaining why our service should be included in an amendment. Yet, for years I passively watched as the Vermont legislation debated but did not advance these tax exemptions. Perhaps it was being one year closer to my own retirement or because the bill was reported to be gaining more traction this year, but I was finally compelled to dip my toes into the unfamiliar role advocating for the PHS.

See **PENSION** page 9

CALL FOR **FRONTLINE** ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS



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The COA Communications and Public Relations Frontline Subcommittee is excited to offer a pre-submission review service for *Frontline* articles! The team will carefully review your article for grammar, format, content and alignment with [Frontline Publication Guidelines](#) and U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps [Brand Guidelines](#).

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1. Email your article by the 1st of the month to coa.frontline.sc@gmail.com for a comprehensive review. The team will provide feedback within one week.
2. Make revisions as appropriate based on recommendations and comments provided by the COA CPRC Frontline Subcommittee.
3. Submit your final article by the 15th of the month to Frontline@coausphs.org for consideration in the upcoming *Frontline* issue.



For questions or for a list of suggested *Frontline* topics, please email coa.frontline.sc@gmail.com.

DR. AL ROMANOSKY HONORED WITH SURGEON GENERAL MEDALLION

by CAPT Leo Angelo Gumapas, CAPT Nina Mezu Nwaba, CDR Iman Martin, CDR Andrew Yang, and CDR Maria Agresta-Workman

On June 8, 2025, officers from the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps gathered at the Gary L. Kaufman Funeral Home at Meadowridge Memorial Park in Elkridge, MD, to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Albert Romanosky. During the ceremony, officers presented the Surgeon General's Medallion, to Dr. Romanosky's wife, Mrs. Janice Romanosky, in recognition of his exceptional mentorship and unwavering support of USPHS officers, particularly in advancing national opioid overdose response preparedness.

Romanosky served as the Medical Director and State Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at the Mary-

FROM **PENSION** page 8

Feeling compelled to proactively impact state legislation and knowing how to go about achieving that impact are two entirely different things. Fortunately, I reached out to COA for assistance and the response was immediate, thorough, and impactful. COA provided me with language defining our service that had been successful in other states passing similar legislation and connected me with CAPT (Ret.) Alan Echt who had previously initiated advocacy work nationwide, including Vermont, and is a wealth of information on the topic; as well as with COA retirees living in Vermont. Armed with these resources, I reached out to my local legislators and eventually to the sponsors of the bill in both chambers of the Vermont Legislature with one simple request: change "military" to "uniformed services." In the letter, I explained the dif-



Presentation of the Surgeon General's Medallion on June 8, 2025, at the Gary L. Kaufman Funeral Home at Meadowridge Memorial Park in Elkridge, MD. CDR Maria Agresta-Workman, CDR Andrew Yang, CAPT Leo Angelo Gumapas, Mrs. Janice Romanosky, CAPT Nina Nwaba, and CDR Iman Martin.

ferent between the terms and explained the history and significance of our service. I went on to outline my deployments and ties to Vermont.

It was rewarding when my Vermont representative recently informed me that the bill passed and included the uniformed services terminology. While the income parameters may impact applicability to many retirees in Vermont based on their unique circumstances, I'm proud that the Vermont Legislature understood our case and included us in the bill. Your voice, supported by COA, can make a difference.

See **ROMANSKY** page 14

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References

- <https://vtdigger.org/2025/06/25/gov-phil-scott-signs-13-5-million-tax-credit-package-benefiting-low-income-workers-families-retirees-and-veterans/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/GovPhilScott/photos/today-i-signed-s51-into-law-which-includes-tax-breaks-for-workers-families-and-s/1262074048622367/>

COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS: WRITE YOUR PHS STORY WITH A PHOTO

by LCDR Christopher Dao, PharmD, BCACP and LCDR Letisha Secret, MSN, BSN, Co-Chair, Special Projects Subcommittee

The photo contest highlights U.S. Public Health Service Officers (active and retired) engaging in activities that promote and protect the health of the nation at home and abroad. The goal of the contest is to raise awareness of the great work that our officers perform every day.

Each year, the Commissioned Officers Association invites its members to submit photos of the moments captured on the front lines to raise awareness of officers' exceptional work. In the 4th annual photo contest, the 2024 photo submissions ranged from deployments, community service, COA branch events, resiliency, and self-care.

Our first-place winner, LCDR Theresa Castellanos captures USPHS officers working together to set up dental stations at the Remote Area Medical (RAM) event in Anchorage, AK, on April 19, 2024. A total of 33 officers contributed to the direct care of 410 patients by providing free vision, medical, and dental care.

Many of those served were from vulnerable populations who otherwise could not afford medical care.

1st
Place



Shown clockwise from top right: LT Tiffany Marable, LCDR Jennifer Harlos, LT Kaitlin Moriarty, and CDR Madalene Mandap set up dental stations at the Remote Area Medical event in Anchorage, AK.

Our second-place winner, captures LT Kobe Thammavongsa, taking part in a simulated mass casualty event in Kodiak, AK, showcasing vital skills to the local community for handling emergency situations. In this moment, LT Thammavongsa applies a tourniquet to a patient following a simulated Alaska bush plane crash, emphasizing the critical role of preparedness in mass casualty events, following the processes taught in Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC).

Our third-place winner, submitted by CDR Jill Gelviro captures a team of USPHS officers heading toward a U.S. Air Force aircraft in Kodiak, AK.

Let's keep those cameras rolling as we recognize last year's recipients! It's that time of year to tell our story with the 2025 Photo Contest! As you go about your everyday work or local branch activities, capture your unique, touching and inspiring moments as you protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation. Congratulations to the 2024 winners!

Get your photos ready and stay on the lookout for more announcements of the 2025 Photo Contest call for submissions!

**2nd
Place**



LT Kobe Thammavongsa applies a tourniquet to a patient following a simulated Alaska bush plane crash. Photo credit: U.S Air National Guard 162nd Wing

**3rd
Place**



A team of USPHS officers heading toward a U.S. Air Force aircraft in Kodiak, AK.



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USPHS officers networking with future health professionals at the HOSA International Leadership Conference.

MOTIVATION SPARKED AFTER ENGAGING AND JUDGING UPCOMING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AT THE HOSA INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

by CDR Christine Corser, PharmD, MS and LT Pearl Ozuruigbo, PharmD

Thousands of health-focused individuals gathered in Nashville, Tennessee, for the HOSA International Leadership Conference in June 2025. This included HOSA Future Health Professionals students, delegates, current health professionals, educators, and university staff. The conference featured student competitions, educational seminars and workshops, business meetings, an immensely staffed exhibit hall, and numerous celebratory events. Attendees benefited from meaningful in-person collaboration and dynamic networking opportunities in a vibrant environment.

A major highlight of the conference was the series of competitive events. Students who made it to this stage in Nashville were cream of the crop—winning their regional and state competitions to earn the opportunity to compete at the international level. U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers supported several regional and state-level competitions, as well as the ILC’s competitive events, including pre-judging activities leading up to the conference.

The ILC competitions spanned a diverse range of topics—from events on health policy, interviewing skills, pharmacy science, biomedical debate, and

FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2025 FAMILY MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

by CAPT Annette Beadle (Ret.), USN, MSN, RN, Grants Manager

The PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF) recently awarded a total of \$37,000 to thirty-seven high school seniors, undergraduate, and graduate students as part of its annual scholarship program. Recipients are the spouse, biological, step, or adopted child or grandchild of a current member of the of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA).

Scholarship recipients are selected based on their academic merit, school/community activities, honors/awards, and career aspirations. The thirty-seven awardees with their field of study and school of higher learning are listed below. The COA member associated with each student is listed in parentheses.

- Alexander Atkinson: Physical Therapy, Northern Arizona University (CAPT Rowdy Atkinson)
- Elisi Baggett: Biology, Georgia Tech (CAPT Henry Baggett)
- Selah Baggett: Psychology, Georgia Institute of Technology (CAPT Henry Baggett)
- Audrey Boatright: Dentistry, Oklahoma University (CDR Alicia Boatright)
- Ian Chiang: Nursing, University of Pennsylvania (CDR Stephanie Chiang)
- Kiley Crownholm: Economics and Law,

See **SCHOLARSHIPS** page 27

FROM **ROMANSKY** page 9

(ASPR) and the national Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), the program was launched as a pilot initiative to trail Maryland MRC volunteers and later expanded to serve national preparedness efforts.

Under Romanosky's leadership, OP&R became an authorized training entity that met the Maryland Code of Regulations requirements for ORP instruction. He fostered a close partnership with USPHS Commissioned Corps officers, especially those at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to support a shared mission. From 2018 to 2023, the ORP conducted 16 Training-of-Trainers (ToT) events, certifying 244 PHSCC officers and 64 civilians as ORP instructors. These certified instructors subsequently led 196 training events across 42 cities in 16 states, educating 10,543 individuals, including 8,598 civilians and 1,945 PHSCC officers, on naloxone administration.

Romanosky's impact extended beyond training. He collaborated with Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE), an Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) chartered advisory group, to develop an OSG-approved naloxone administration lesson plan on January 9, 2021. He continued to update the curriculum to reflect evolving science, data, and new overdose reversal technologies-ensuring that the content remained current and actionable.

His passion for the mission and admiration for USPHS Commissioned Corps officers were unmistakable. He often spoke about how much he cherished working



CAPT Nina Nwaba and Dr. Al Romanosky at the Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response in Hanover, MD on December 22, 2023.

alongside Commissioned Corps officers, commending their dedication, intellect, and commitment to improving public health.

The United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is profoundly grateful for Dr. Romanosky's service and leadership in enhancing opioid overdose response preparedness nationwide. His legacy will endure through the lives saved, the officers trained, and the communities empowered by his efforts.

many others. There were ninety-seven competitive events at this year's ILC! Events varied in format, with some designed for teams, others requiring individual presentations, and several focused on real-time performance and critical thinking. Students impressed with their depth of knowledge, professionalism, and innovative problem-solving across numerous fields of health and science.

One standout competitive event, sponsored by the Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF), was the Public Health Display competition. This year's topic— "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation" had multiple parts: teams of students published a short video submission on the topic that prompted interest and attention to attend a presentation on the topic, these students then gave the full presentation to an audience of their community members, and lastly the team presented an encore of the presentation given to their community for formal judging. The caliber of work and creativity in highlighting this important public health topic and ways to combat this issue was astonishing. One of the judges stated that he "cried through all the presentations and called and texted his friends and family between presentations to let them know that they are not alone."

To support the workshops aspect of the conference, LT Madeline Wright and CDR Corser facilitated two sessions focused on tobacco cessation. During these sessions, attendees were introduced to evidence-based strategies for assessing tobacco use and connecting individuals with appropriate support services. Participants then applied their newly acquired skills through structured mock scenarios. Many of these aspiring healthcare professionals are expected



LT Madeline Wright enthusiastically connects with workshop attendee to practice counseling skills.

to use these skills in their communities—both at outreach events and throughout their academic training—and eventually in clinical practice. The enthusiasm and dedication these students demonstrated, not only in supporting individuals who use tobacco but also in advocating for public policy change, was truly inspiring.

As we look ahead to next year's HOSA ILC conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, from June 17-20, 2026, we encourage more officers to join us in supporting this impactful event and inspiring the future leaders of health and public service, so save the date on your calendars now!



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After years of battling for leave pay at retirement, the PHS claimed an officer owed money to the federal government so he turned to our firm for help. We were able to secure a point of contact and through persistent advocacy, our client was awarded over \$15,000 in back pay with interest, bringing a long-awaited resolution.

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RESOURCES TO SUPPORT MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS

by LCDR Jamla Rizek, DNPc, MBA, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, NHDP-BC, NRP

Public Health Reports (PHR) is the official journal of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. It provides a critical platform to disseminate evidence-based research and commentary on public health practice, policy, and impact. As Public Health Service officers, submitting to PHR advances public health science and elevates the visibility of our service and its operational contributions. To support officers through the writing and publication process, the National Institutes of Health (NIH)/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Digital Library offers a comprehensive suite of tools and services to streamline manuscript preparation, ensure scholarly rigor, and facilitate successful submission.

Literature Searching and Alerts

Public Health Service officers can access expert-assisted literature searching through the NIH/HHS Digital Library. Librarians are available to help construct comprehensive search strategies across databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Embase. Officers can also set up alerts on emerging topics to stay updated with newly published research that aligns with their manuscript focus.

Manuscript Editing and Review

Professional editing services are available to ensure clarity, structure, and adherence to PHR's formatting and stylistic guidelines. These services are particularly useful in strengthening academic tone, aligning with Chicago Manual of Style conventions, and minimizing errors that can delay peer review. Officers are encouraged to engage with editorial support early in the writing process.

EndNote and Citation Management

The Digital Library provides access to EndNote, a citation management tool that simplifies reference organization, insertion, and formatting. Officers can use EndNote to maintain bibliographies in Chicago style or any format required by journals. Training is also available on how to use EndNote effectively during manuscript development.

Plagiarism Detection Software

The NIH/HHS Digital Library offers access to plagiarism detection tools to promote originality and academic integrity. Officers can upload final manuscripts for a thorough similarity check before submission to ensure appropriate citations and avoid inadvertent duplication.

Document Delivery Services

Officers can request full-text articles through the document delivery service if they are unavailable in the NIH/HHS collection. This allows authors to access critical background literature, even from subscription-only or paywalled journals, to support a well-rounded evidence base.

Open Access and Copyright Guidance

Publishing in open-access journals or fulfilling federal open-access mandates can be complex. Officers can consult with the library for up-to-date guidance on open-access publishing requirements and copyright transfer agreements.

Research and Writing Training

Officers at all career stages can benefit from the Digital Library's on-demand training modules. These include tutorials on writing abstracts, developing a

See **MANUSCRIPT** page 19

COF ANNOUNCES 2025 RDML MISHOE DIVERSITY “BELIEVE” SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

by CAPT Annette Beadle (Ret.), USN, MSN, RN, Grants Manager

Established in 2020 by RDML (Ret.) Helena O. Mishoe, PhD, MPH, this scholarship program seeks to foster the career dreams of high school seniors from underrepresented populations who are interested in the health sciences and research or any health-related discipline.

Students are evaluated based on their school and community involvement, demonstrated leadership and resilience as well as their essay response to a favorite quote from a former student of Rear Admiral Mishoe: “Hope emerges, and the future begins for one person only when there is another who believes in the beauty of their dreams.”

The two awardees with their field of study and school of higher learning are listed below. Each student’s sponsor is in parentheses.



RECIPIENT BRYAN WILSON (LCDR BRYAN WILSON)

Bryan states that the quote, “Hope emerges, and the future begins for one person only when another believes in the beauty of their dreams”

truly speaks to me. My journey to where I am is greatly influenced by mentors and role models who believed in me and motivated me to keep going. When my father became an officer for the USPHS, he greatly inspired me to choose a career in service. I aspire to pay it forward by providing guidance and motivation for others to discover their capabilities and reach their goals.” Bryan is a recent homeschool graduate

and he will be attending Palm Beach Atlantic University this fall with a focus on Public Health.



RECIPIENT AUDREY BOATRIGHT (CDR ALICIA BOATRIGHT)

Audrey says she is a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation, and she wants to use her college degree to give

back to her tribe. She states that the quote, “Hope emerges and the future begins for one person only when there is another who believes in the beauty of their dreams,” speaks deeply to me. I know what it feels like to be overlooked, and I also know the power of someone believing in you. That belief can be the difference between giving up and going all in. For me, hope was born from those who stood by me and encouraged me to keep going, even when the odds were stacked against me. This quote reminds me that I have the ability to be that source of hope for someone else, whether it’s a future patient, a younger student, or someone who simply needs to know they’re not alone.” Audrey is a graduate of Byng High School in Ada, OK and will be attending the University of Oklahoma to become a dental hygienist.

Donations to this program are from RDML Mishoe and various fundraising activities. The Foundation wishes to thank RDML Mishoe and anyone who donated as well as the volunteer reviewers. More information about the COF RDML Mishoe Diversity “Believe” Scholarships can be found at: <https://www.phscof.org/scholarships-grants-and-funding-requests/mishoe-believe-scholarship/>

COF AWARDS FOUR 2025 RADM MICHAEL FELLOWSHIPS

by CAPT Annette Beadle (Ret.), USN, MSN, RN, Grants Manager

The PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF) will provide funding for four officers to attend the University of Maryland School of Public Health Certificate Program as recipients of the RADM Michael Fellowship. The program covers tuition and fees associated with obtaining a continuing education certificate and is valued at approximately \$12,000 per student. The Fellows selected to start in the Fall of 2025 include LCDR Cindy Pallack, LCDR Dana Williams, LCDR Catherine Olguin, and LT Gladys Birech.

The Foundation established this program in 2009 to honor the late Rear Admiral Jerrold M. Michael. He was an engineer officer who had a lifelong passion for improved public health education. The devotion RADM Michael had for both the USPHS Commissioned Corps and academia is legendary. RADM Michael was Dean of the University of Hawaii (UH) School of Public Health from 1972 to 1992. He continued as Professor of Public Health until 1995. He later served as Professor Emeritus at UH and as an Adjunct Professor of Global Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University.



RECIPIENT LCDR CINDY PALLACK

LCDR Cindy Pallack, Project Management/Program Analyst, MS, MPS, RDH, wrote in her application for the Certificate in Global Health program that she wants *“to lead in the global health security field by tackling high-profile public health emergencies that impact the most vulnerable populations around the globe.”* LCDR

Pallack is currently assigned to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Orlando VA Medical Center, Orlando, FL, as a Program Analyst.



RECIPIENT LCDR DANA WILLIAMS

LCDR Dana Williams, Environmental Health Officer, MPH, REHS, wrote in her application for the Certificate in Global Health program that she has *“always had a passion for global health”* and is committed to using her expertise as an Environmental Health Officer *“to improve the health of disadvantaged populations.”* She is

currently assigned to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Washington, DC, as a Senior Advisor for Program Implementation and Coordination with the EPA’s Office of Children’s Health Protection.

FROM **MANUSCRIPT** page 17

strong introduction and discussion, and creating publication-quality tables, charts, and figures. These resources are particularly useful for officers submitting to PHR for the first time.

Conclusion

Submitting to Public Health Reports is both a professional development milestone and a way to contribute meaningfully to national public health discourse. Officers are encouraged to take full advantage of the NIH/HHS Digital Library’s services, from literature searches to final editing-to produce high-impact, publication-ready manuscripts. The support infrastructure is robust, accessible, and tailored to help Public Health Service officers amplify the USPHS Commissioned Corps mission to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of the nation.

FROM **BOARD** page 4

are here to support you.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your service, commitment, and the professionalism you exhibit every day. Together, as a unified body, we can continue to strengthen our organization, uplift one another, and champion the health of our nation. Let us carry forward the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation that makes our Corps and the Commissioned Officers Association a truly exceptional community.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

FROM **ESPRIT** page 6
ceremony examples, drafting a script, and coordinating invitations to leadership and local officers. CSU Pharmacy staff played key roles: CDR Daniel “Nathan” Hamil served as the Senior Officer, and LT Brianna Johns was Master of Ceremonies and sang the National Anthem. A local amphitheater hosted the ceremony; the IHS Billings Area Office supplied flags and a podium; a local church loaned chairs. Friends and family set up the space, ran the sound system, decorated, and provided refreshments, creating a heartfelt and memorable event.

While traditional ceremonies may include color guards and high-ranking guest speakers, this one focused on the essentials: a welcome,

anthem, promotions, oath of office, and closing remarks. Amid decorations in the USPHS Commissioned Corps’ hallmark blue and gold and thoughtful execution, the CSU team demonstrated professionalism and dedication. Its brevity allowed guests of all ages to enjoy the celebration and personally congratulate the honorees.

Special guests included CAPT Greg Ault, Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, representing Acting Billings Area Director Asha Petoskey. The ceremony even attracted curious neighbors, offering a rare community glimpse into the traditions and values of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Notably, CAPT Sims

and CAPT Ault shared that this was the first promotion ceremony in the Billings Area in eight years—an incredible accomplishment for the CSU team.

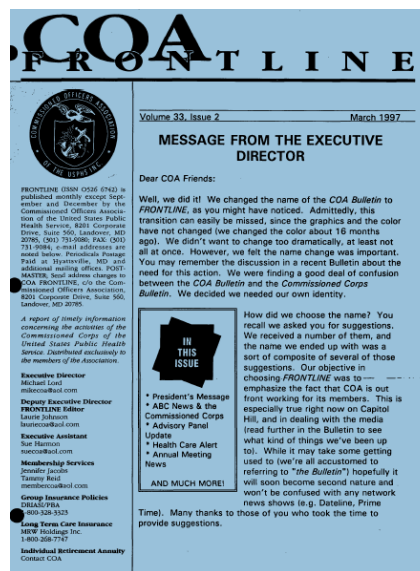
Promotions mark the culmination of hard work, but they’re also a reminder of the vital role family and friends play in each officer’s journey. As seen on June 4, it’s their support that helps officers persevere and continue to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation.

Congratulations to CAPT Sims and LCDR Kroon, and thank you to the CSU Pharmacy Department for upholding a proud and meaningful tradition. In officio salutis!

FROM **EXECUTIVE** page 2

Today, we are excited to unveil a new and refreshed format for Frontline that better reflects who we are and where we are going. Our goal is to present a modern, crisp, and clean publication that effectively shares timely updates, spotlights officer achievements, and highlights the impactful work of both COA and COF. Over the coming months, we will continue to fine-tune the layout and content based on feedback, but we hope you enjoy this updated design and find it even more engaging and useful.

Now, moving on to an issue of critical importance: the 2025 permanent promotion list has yet to be signed by the White House. In previous years, temporary promotions—au-



Volume 33, Issue 2, March 1997 front page of the rebranded newsletter “COA Frontline.”

thorized by the Assistant Secretary for Health—allowed the promotion list to be finalized by June 30 of each year. However, with the elimination of temporary promotions, officers must

now wait until the President officially signs the list, a process that is unpredictable. While some years the permanent promotion list would be signed by the White House in July, and other years it has dragged into the fall or even winter.

This delay in release of the promotion list is deeply disappointing to the many deserving officers who have worked tirelessly to earn these promotions. COA continues to strongly advocate up the chain for the importance of timely recognition. On August 6, COA sent a letter to President Trump urging him to expedite the signing of the promotion list. If you missed the letter it can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/promoltrWH>.

See **EXECUTIVE** page 21

FROM **HOSA** page 3

laid the foundation for meaningful engagement with students pursuing health care careers.

This experience led to my participation in the 2025 HOSA International Leadership Conference (ILC) in Nashville, Tennessee, where top state competitors advanced to the international stage. I joined over 170 exhibitors in representing the USPHS Commissioned Corps at our exhibit booth supported by the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF).

Over three days at the ILC, I engaged with more than 250 students, their families, and HOSA advisors. The excitement and curiosity these students expressed about the USPHS Commissioned Corps was both humbling and energizing. Many were familiar with the armed forces branches in attendance but were learning about the USPHS Commissioned Corps for the first time. Connecting with these future health-care professionals and potential future PHS officers from across the country and around the world was a career highlight!

The conference experiences also made me reflect: where was HOSA when I was younger and why didn't I know about it? The opportunities these students have through HOSA are invaluable, and it was rewarding to introduce them to a career path in USPHS Commissioned dedicated to protecting, promoting, and advancing the nation's health.

It was especially meaningful to serve alongside dedicated PHS officers like CDR Christine Corser, LCDR Nakisha Brown, LT Pearl Ozuruigbo, and LT Maddie Wright, as well as the workgroup leadership. Together, we partnered in staffing the Commissioned Corps



LCDRs Darion Smith and Nakisha Brown at the HOSA-Future Health Professionals 49th International Leadership Conference exhibit booth.

exhibit booth, judging competitions, presenting at workshops, and other supported event activities. With competitive events in commissionable fields such as nursing, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and public health, our combined efforts ensured a visible USPHS Commissioned Corps presence alongside other uniformed services and healthcare organizations.

This experience reaffirmed the importance of early and sustained engagement with HOSA. By connecting with students before they enter college, we can raise awareness of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and inspire future public health professionals. My vision moving forward is to increase awareness among PHS officers about the value of partnering with HOSA and to continue fostering opportunities that benefit both organizations. Together, we can strengthen our ranks and positively impact public health for years to come.

FROM **EXECUTIVE** page 20

We also call on you, our members, to TAKE ACTION. Using your personal electronic devices, please consider sending a respectful message to the [White House](#), encouraging prompt attention to this matter. Your voice

can make a difference.

We remain hopeful that good news is on the horizon—and as always, we will keep you informed every step of the way.

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2025 RETIREMENT SEMINAR

SESSION 1: OCTOBER 14, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

- Retirement and the USPHS Process
- TRICARE into Retirement

SESSION 2: OCTOBER 21, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

- Survivor Benefit Program and TSP Pre-Separation Brief
- How to Prepare and File your Veteran's Disability Claims

SESSION 3: OCTOBER 28, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

- Prudential Pathways-Transitioning Successfully into Retirement
- VA Burial Eligibility and Benefits

SESSION 4: NOVEMBER 4, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

- FEDVIP-FedPoint
- Panel Discussion with recently retired USPHS officers

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tinyurl.com/2025retirementseminar

COST:
\$0 for COA members and nonmembers

PARTNERS



FROM **FLAG** page 7

This event served as a powerful reminder that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Amid the demands of clinical duties, outreach, and leadership, honoring Templin grounded us in our shared history. It reminded us that our service is not only about what we do today—but about the legacy we leave behind.

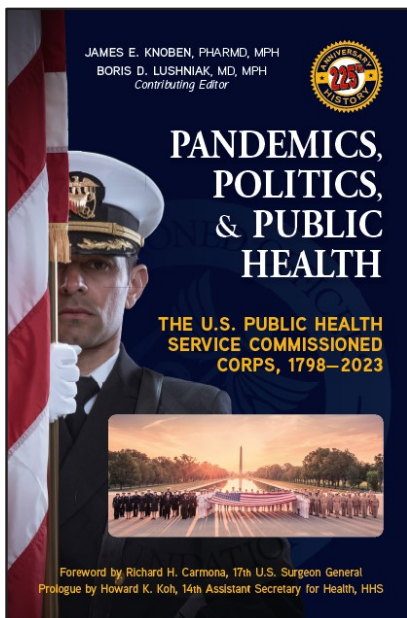
Longevity in public health, as Templin showed us, is not measured merely in years—but in the compassion we offer, the communities we uplift, and the people we inspire. His life's work reminds us that service is not about time in uniform, but the legacy we leave behind. May we honor his memory by carrying that purpose forward in every patient we serve and every step we take as officers.

A new generation of U.S. Public Health Service officers salutes the American flag—once belonging to CAPT Dr. David Templin—is raised at the Alaska Native Medical Center in his honor on June 20, 2025.



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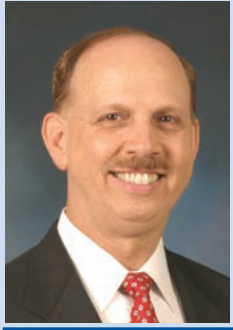
“An exhaustive description of the U.S. public health journey over two centuries, ...this volume tells the complex and dynamic story of public health through the lens of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.”
– Dr. Howard K. Koh, 14th Assistant Secretary for Health, HHS

“Very impressive! I used to say that the greatest book never written was the history of the Corps. Can't say that now.”
– RADM Richard F. Barror, Chief Professional Officer (Ret.)

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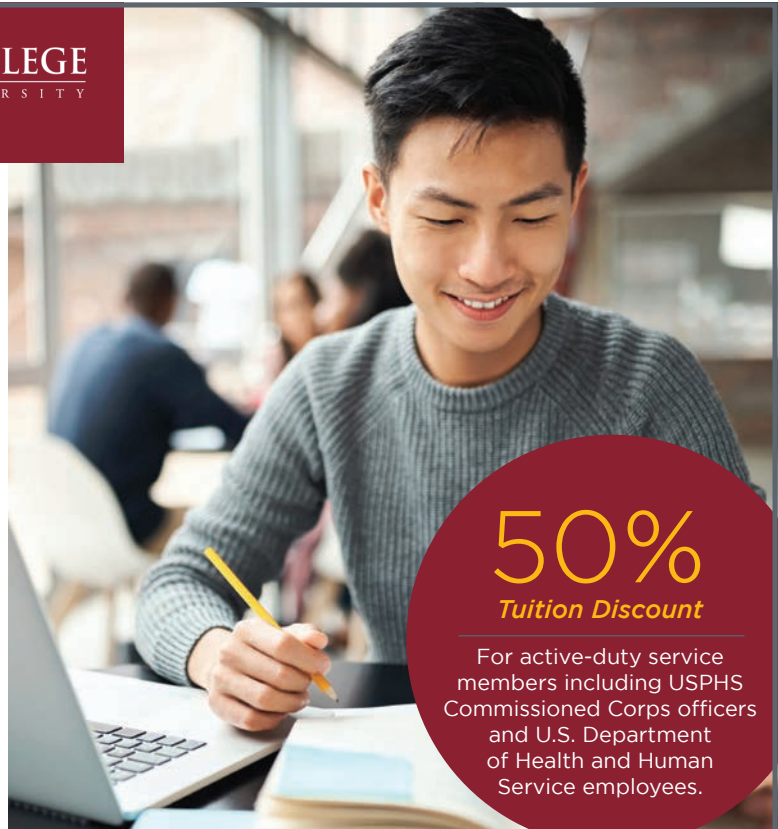
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RECIPIENT LCDR CATHERINE OLGUIN



LCDR Catherine Olguin, MS, BSN, RN, wrote in her application for the Certificate in Global Health program that it *“will greatly improve my responder abilities for natural disasters, infectious*

disease and addressing other health disparities.” She is currently assigned to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Kansas City, MO, as a Regional Medical Countermeasures Advisor.



RECIPIENT LT GLADYS BIRECH

LT Gladys Birech, MSN-
PH, RN, CCHP wrote in her application for the Certificate in Global Health program that it

“will allow me to develop a broader perspective on health inequalities and their root causes, understand global health policies and interventions to drive sustainable change, gain insights into public health strategies applicable in resource-limited settings, and expand my ability to advocate for policies that enhance health equity for marginalized communities.” She is currently assigned to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, El Paso, TX, as a Clinical Nurse Intermediate.

The Foundation congratulates all four officers for their interest in seeking continuing education to improve the health of the communities they serve. It would also like to thank the donors who made this program possible and the volunteers who reviewed the fellowship applications. For more information, please visit: <https://www.phscof.org/scholarships-grants-and-funding-requests/radm-michael-fellowship/>

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS AT FPC ALDERSON



CDR Katrina Redman at the Correctional Support Team's second annual Staff Wellness Fair at FPC Alderson on June 26th.

by CDR Katrina Redman, MT, SPOC, M.Div., BCC

On June 26, the Correctional Support Team (CST) at FPC Alderson held its second annual Staff Wellness Fair. The team recruited and hosted local wellness organizations such as the Greenbrier Valley Aquatic Center, Encouraging Words Counseling, Greenbrier Valley Medical Center, and others. I serve as a Staff Chaplain and the CST Team Chaplain for FPC Alderson. I offered staff an opportunity to engage and consider their spiritual wellness at my table. I was joined by Chaplain J. Curtis from the VA Beckley Health Care System. Staff were offered free spiritual journals, books, stickers, spiritual conversation cards, various holy texts, and a religious symbols quiz to test their knowledge. The quiz proved to be challenging for staff, who admitted that they frequently encounter religious tattoos that they do not recognize. The non-denominational spiritual conversation cards were also a hit. These cards offer quotes from spiritual leaders of diverse belief systems, and they ask thought provoking questions such as “How do you define hope?” The Pokémon stickers and retirement planning books were also favorite items.

I have been serving at FPC Alderson since December of 2023. There is a great deal of programming offered by the Chapel to the inmates as well. As the Choir Director, I have led the team in taking the Chapel Choir out into the community on two trips with a third planned for the end of the year. I teach inclusive re-entry classes with spiritual contexts, assist in the administration of religious accommodations for all belief systems on campus, perform spiritual counseling, and preach. This year, I also coordinated with our Mental Health team to develop and run a Bereavement Support Group to meet the needs of inmates who were struggling with traumatic grief.

FROM **BIRTHDAY** page 1
the Office of Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion, Department
of Health and Human Services.

In his stirring address, Taylor honored the rich legacy and enduring mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, reminding the audience that their service is rooted in a deep and abiding commitment to public health.

“Today is not just about marking time—it’s about honoring the values, the courage, and the unwavering commitment that define who we are,” he said.

Taylor encouraged attendees to reflect on their personal call to service and the spark that inspired them to join the Corps. “Think about the first time you put on this uniform,” he urged. “That sense of purpose—that spark of service—is why we’re here. It’s what binds us together across agencies, disciplines, time zones, Services, and generations.”

He recounted the humble origins of the USPHS, founded in 1798 to care for sick and disabled sailors, and traced its evolution into a modern, mission-ready uniformed service

that responds to crises around the globe.

“We are the only uniformed service whose primary weapon is science, whose battlefield is disease, and whose mission is health and public health,” Taylor emphasized. “Whether responding to a flood in Kentucky, deploying to a refugee camp in Guatemala, or assisting with overdose response in Ohio—we are there. We show up. And we serve.”

Taylor shared his own journey to the Corps, including his early misperception that a uniformed recruiter was from the Navy. “As an Army brat, I didn’t particularly want to serve in the military,” he recalled, laughing. But learning about the mission and the unique opportunities for pharmacists in the USPHS changed his mind. “I was smitten,” he said.

Throughout his remarks, Taylor highlighted the Corps’ core values—leadership, service, integrity, and excellence—and underscored the importance of earning trust and integrating deeply into communities. Quoting his longtime friend and USPHS colleague Rear Adm. Chris Bina, he said, “Our success depends

on how well we integrate—not just across disciplines, but into communities, into systems, and into moments where trust must be earned.”

Taylor also reminded the audience of the power of public health to impact entire populations, echoing former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop’s words: “Health care is vital to all of us some of the time, but public health is vital to all of us all of the time.”

In closing, Taylor offered a powerful call to service: “This uniform tells a story. It tells a mother in a disaster shelter that her child will receive care. It tells a tribal elder that clean water is coming. It tells a returning veteran that someone sees their pain and stands ready to help... We believe that when our country is hurting, we show up with strength, with skill, and with compassion.”

As USU faculty, staff, and students joined in the celebration, Rear Adm. Taylor left them with a reminder of their shared mission and a message of pride: “Stand tall. Serve proud. Carry the light. Carry on.”

- University of Oregon (CDR (ret) Jason Crownholm)
- Angelina Egbe: Medicine, Northwestern University (CDR Wanda Egbe)
- Addison Eldridge: Nursing, University of Montana (CAPT Christina Eldridge)
- Ethan Fergel: Chemical Engineering, U.S. Military Academy West Point (LCDR Brenda Steiger)
- Richard Flaitz: Dentistry, University of Buffalo (CAPT (ret) Gregory Flaitz)
- Alena Gonzalez: Medicine, Boise State University (CDR Marilou Gonzalez)
- Simone Gonzalez: Medicine, Boise State University (CDR Marilou Gonzalez)
- Bria Hong: Public Health, University of Maryland (LCDR Cindy Chee)
- Olivia Hankinson: Public Health and Nutrition, University of North Carolina (CAPT (ret) John Hankinson)
- Tivani Hull: Psychology, Bowie State University (CDR Kimberly Hull)
- Mason Huynh: Medicine, University of Maryland (CAPT Van Tran)
- Charlotte Jiggins: Healthcare Administration, Rutgers University (CAPT Timothy Jiggins)
- James Jolly: Veterinary Medicine, Berry College (CDR Julian Jolly)
- Inioluwa Kuteyi: Dentistry, Ohio University Athens (LCDR Oluwaseun Foluke)
- Isabelle Loecker: Nursing, South Dakota State University (LCDR Brenda Steiger)
- Riley Magill: Economics, Vassar College (CDR Stephanie Magill)
- Kelsi Martin-Yeboah: Kinesiology, Howard University (CDR Garrett Martin-Yeboah)
- Emily McLaughlin: Medicine, The College of William & Mary (CAPT Aaron Middlekauff)
- Abigail Post: Physical Therapy, Marquette University (CAPT (ret) Jennifer Post)
- Emma Post: Physical Therapy, Marquette University (CAPT (ret) Jennifer Post)
- Paige Reed: Hearing and Speech Sciences, University of Maryland (LCDR Jennifer Shepherd)
- Daniel Richardson: Physical Therapy, Northern Arizona University (CAPT Jeffrey Richardson)
- Ava Roe: Social Work, Brigham Young University (CAPT Robert Roe)
- Jordan Roe: Nursing, California Baptist University (CAPT Robert Roe)
- Ethan Rodgers: Computer Science, Georgia Institute of Technology (CAPT Loren Rodgers)
- Oladeji Solola: Computer Science, Purdue University (CAPT Adams Solola)
- Kelsea Sprague: Masters in Social Work, University of Maryland (CAPT Laura Pincock)
- Alexander Waite: Environmental Science, Ohio University (LCDR Rodney Waite)
- Bryan Wilson: Public Health, Palm Beach Atlantic University (LCDR Bryan Wilson)
- Nathaniel Wu: Biology and Dentistry, Stony Brook University (CAPT Chi-Ann Wu)
- Holly Zepeda: Medicine, University of California San Diego (CDR Josephine Zepeda)
- Greta Zimmerman: Veterinary Medicine, Texas Christian University (CAPT Kevin Zimmerman)

Family Member Scholarships have been awarded since 2006. Donations to this program are from active-duty and retired members, local COA branches, and others. The Foundation wishes to thank them as well as the volunteer reviewers. More information about the COF Family Member Scholarships can be found at: <https://www.phscof.org/scholarships-grants-and-funding-requests/family-member-scholarships/>

FROM **LEGISLATIVE** page 3

According to a recent census calculation, 29% of U.S. families with children under the age of six have two or more children in this age group.³ The average annual cost by U.S. region of childcare per household for two children in 2024 was \$23,566 (South), \$27,479 (Midwest), \$29,528 (West), and \$34,656 (Northeast).

The DoD has argued that childcare benefits help support recruiting, retention, and readiness efforts. To support military families, the DoD funds and operates its own child development programs that included accredited, installation-based, government-run, full-time pre-school and school-aged care in its Child Development Centers (CDCs), and subsidized care in Family Care Centers (FCCs). CDCs are available to active-duty families of the Army, Air Force, Space Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and members of the Coast Guard.⁴ The US Coast Guards also operates its own on-base childcare services similar to that of the DoD.⁵

The CDC childcare fee structure is intended to be significantly lower than equivalent private childcare centers in the local economy. Using the 2023 national median family income in the northeast as an example (\$110,500),⁶ the full-time childcare fee for one child in the CDC for this income bracket (\$102,501 - \$115,000.99) is \$143 per week (\$7,436 per year) in high-cost regions. Full-time childcare fees are capped at \$224 per week/

child for any military family income level. Therefore, the maximum annual childcare cost per child for a military family is \$11,648, and for two children would be \$23,296 when using a military CDC. This is approximately 23% less than the 2024 national average for childcare cost in high-cost regions (\$23,296 vs. \$34,656).

For families that are unable to place their dependents at a CDCs, each respective DoD service also provides childcare fee assistance through Childcare Aware of America to offset the cost of using private childcare centers. Fee assistance is paid directly to the community childcare provider and is based on total family income as calculated for the CDCs. Families using the DoD fee assistance program are responsible for childcare fees equivalent to what they would pay for the CDC, and the difference in the private childcare cost would be subsidized by their respective service up to a pre-determined cap. In 2024, the cap for fee assistance for one child was \$1,800 per month.⁶ Using the same example above, if a military family in the same income bracket sends a child to a private daycare center, the family would only be responsible for \$11,648 per year in childcare cost even if the private daycare costs \$1,800/month or \$21,600 per year.

The military childcare program, authorized by Title 10 USC (the DoD

Services) and Title 14 USC (US Coast Guard), the term “members of the armed forces” or “members of the US Coast Guard” instead of “uniformed services” is used, and therefore the USPHSCC is not eligible for these services. USPHSCC officers may utilize the DoD CDCs for childcare, however these services are only available on a space available basis and comes at a higher cost.⁷ Children occupying space available spots may potentially be taken off to accommodate those with higher priority. USPHSCC families do not have access to military childcare fee assistance.

Title 42 USC which governs Public Health and Welfare is limited in scope and does not contain provisions for family support programs for USPHSCC. Furthermore, Title 40 USC (Public Buildings, Property, and Works) only permits executive agencies to use appropriated amounts that are otherwise available for salaries and expenses to provide childcare in a federal or leased facility, or through contract for civilian employees of the agency. The term “civilian employees” excludes members of the uniformed services. Thus, USPHSCC families do not have unrestricted access to childcare funding coded in Title 10 and Title 40 USC.

Like the Armed Forces, USPHSCC officers have unique childcare needs due to their unusual work sched-

See **LEGISLATIVE** page 30

FROM **CONFERENCE** page 7
sioned Corps recruitment booth, I was amazed by the hundreds of exhibitors present. The atmosphere was unique, filled with major healthcare industry leaders, HOSA state advisors, healthcare professionals, HOSA students, parents, and representatives from universities and colleges. Our booth was among six of the eight United States Uniformed Services exhibitors, and we managed to capture over 250 contacts in just three days.

We began to build relationships with many state HOSA advisors and representatives from major universities and colleges, aiming to create ongoing opportunities to share information about serving within the USPHS. Additionally, we engaged with international attendees from Canada, China, and American Samoa.

It was truly fascinating to witness and engage with so many young people who, at an early age, are focused on advancing the health

industry. They were eager to learn about the various healthcare pathways available within the USPHS. I even had the opportunity to converse with a high school student scholarship recipient with a strong passion for cooking, as well as an interest in pursuing a career in public health policy. He was still undecided, wanting to explore a career path that would allow him to combine both of his passions. As we spoke in more depth about my journey as a USPHS Dietitian Officer and opportunities within the USPHS, he began to consider the possibility of becoming a Registered Dietitian. He is now exploring how he can integrate culinary arts with his dedication to serving public health.

As a HOSA alumnus, I never imagined this organization would grow to become as expansive as it is today, providing countless opportunities for students to pursue their passions and develop future healthcare leaders. Reflecting on my journey, I realized that HOSA sparked my interest in healthcare



LCDR Nakisha Brown at the HOSA-Future Health Professionals 49th International Leadership Conference at the USPHS recruitment exhibit booth.

and set me on the path to serve as a healthcare leader, proudly representing my country as a USPHS Commissioned Corps Dietitian officer. I consider it an honor to serve at the HOSA International Leadership Conference, and I look forward to continuing to attend future events.

FROM **LEGISLATIVE** page 28

ules, deployments, and geographic relocations. Data from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) indicates that in FY23 there were 1,224 USPHSCC officers who had dependent children ages five and under, and approximately 31.5% of these service members had two dependent children ages five and under.⁸ These USPHSCC officers would benefit from the unrestricted availability of childcare programs that are provided to Title 10 and Title 14 service members.

To ensure equitable support for all uniformed service members, childcare benefits provided under Titles 10 and 14 must be extended to include USPHS Commissioned Corps families. Achieving parity will strengthen family readiness and enhance recruitment, retention, and overall mission effectiveness.

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The COA Frontline (ISSN 10937161) is published monthly except a combined issue in January/February and June/July by the Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Service, 8201 Corporate Drive, Suite 615, Landover, MD 20785, (301) 731-9080; Fax: (301) 731-9084; Periodicals Postage Paid at Hyattsville, MD and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PO Box 189, Cheltenham, MD 20623. A report of timely information concerning activities of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. Distributed exclusively to Association Members.



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