

A Message From the Chief Nurse

Nurses,

This New Year is quickly marching on. We celebrated the 120th birthday of the Commissioned Corps (January 4, 1889). We inaugurated a new president and welcomed a new administration. Nevertheless, we continue with transitions as we stay focused on our mission to serve.

RADM Steven Galson continues as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Health and as the Acting Surgeon General. He leads a strong team that will continue to provide policy and operational leadership to the Commissioned Corps over the next several months until permanent positions are confirmed by the Senate.

Our Surgeon General continues his outreach on prevention of childhood obesity and underage drinking. He hosted 2 very successful media campaigns with the Latino press in California and in Miami to address how health prevention information can reach minority populations. He continues to count on nurses to get prevention messages out to the American people.

Here are some updates to keep you informed.

Policy

The newly enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R.1) secured new funding for nursing. Of the \$500 million allocated for health professions training in the final stimulus package, \$300 million will be awarded to the National Health Service Corps and the remaining \$200 million will be divided between the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) and the Health Professions Training Programs for physician, dentist and allied health profession training (Title VII PHSA). Schools of nursing and nursing students also benefit from Title VII programs, such as the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students and the Faculty Loan Repayment Program.

Assimilation and readiness policies are being reviewed. The status of policy revisions are posted at <http://dcp.psc.gov> <<http://dcp.psc.gov>> . We are working to keep you informed. A subgroup of the Surgeon General's Advisory Council is working on recommendations to improve communications related to Corps policy changes.

Due to the present Regular Corps size authorization that has nearly reached the maximum limit and anticipated number of Regular Corps nominations available next year, the 2009 Regular Corps Assimilation Boards have been temporarily suspended and no new applications are being accepted at this time. Qualified applications that were submitted will remain in the application pool in the event of a future board.

Uniform reminders: Both of the Army sweaters -- the pullover and the cardigan -- are no longer authorized for wear. The Navy Black V-neck sweater (acrylic or wool pullover) with the black leather name tag is authorized for optional wear. The plastic PHS nametag is not authorized for wear on the Navy sweater.

Career Development

In 2008, the nonprofit State of the USA, Inc asked the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the State of the USA Health Indicators to provide guidance on 20 key indicators to be used by policymakers, the media, and the public that would be valuable in assessing health. Taken together, the selected indicators reflect the overall health of the nation and the efficiency and efficacy of U.S. health systems. The complete list of 20 can be found at: <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=12534>

I encourage you (officers and civilians) to participate in the HHS Mentoring Program in order to develop and retain a diverse and high-performing workforce. To learn more about the HHS Mentoring Program and to create an account as a mentor, please click on the following link: <https://mentoring.hhs.gov> <<https://mentoring.hhs.gov/>> . Get involved and become a mentor today!

The 2009 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium will be held in Atlanta, June 1-4. The theme is "Leading a Strong Public Health Workforce for a Healthy America". The theme of the nursing category day is "Generating a sustainable public health workforce". There are great speakers planned for the nursing category day. You are encouraged to register now at <http://www.phscofevents.org/registration.cfm>.

The nursing category will hopefully reach 1500 officers in the very near future, but we still need your help. The Associate Recruiter (AR) program will be restructured into a smaller group with twenty regionally based AR's and 2 overall lead recruiters. Despite the smaller AR program, your involvement as a recruiter will be needed more than ever as each of us bears the responsibility to reach out to create the next generation of nurses to serve the public's health. Have you talked to someone about the Corps today?

Leadership and Outreach

This month I hosted an inaugural meeting at HHS for members of the Federal Nursing Service Council (Chief Nurses from Army, Navy, Air Force, American Red Cross, PHS, and VA) and the professional, regulatory and major educational nursing organizations. Our focus was to share information and to discuss potential areas for collaboration. This was successful in establishing positive relationships and setting the stage for future interactions between federal nursing and the key nursing organizations.

The CPO review board has met and reviewed nominations for the next Chief Nurse. We have several highly qualified candidates. Interviews will be scheduled in March.

This is a reminder that any communication with the press or media needs to be pre-approved by public affairs staff within your agency. If these requests relate to your being a PHS Officer, requests for interviews must be approved through Jennifer Buschick at [\[log in to unmask\]](#) . Requests for approval should include name of Reporter, Organization, Phone #(s), Subject, Deadline, Spokesperson, and a list of specific questions raised by the reporter.

Readiness

Thank you for your continued efforts to achieve Basic Readiness. Our readiness rate is 93.44% -- we are so close to 100%. Officers should check their status at <http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf> <blocked::<http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf>> (OFRD Website).

The Office of Force Readiness and Deployment will be reorganizing the number, size and types of preconfigured response teams. Nurses are needed on all Tier 1 and Tier 2 teams. Supervisor approval is also needed. New team leaders will be identified and new patient advocacy response teams will be formed. More information will be forth coming. Stay tuned.

Upcoming deployment opportunities: Ten nurses will be deployed to support the State of the Union Address.

Also visit the OFRD website <http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/> for CY2009 Deployment Alerts information about opportunities to deploy on the 2009 Continuing Promise mission (April-July) in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Recognition

Congratulations to RADM Ann Knebel, Deputy Director for Preparedness Planning in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response on her promotion to a one star flag officer and to RADM Deborah Parham, Associate Administrator, HIV/AIDS Bureau, HRSA on her promotion to a two star flag officer. We now have 6 nurse rear admirals in the Corps!

Congratulations to CDR Tim Gruber and CDR Elizabeth Osborne, additional USPHS representatives to the Board of Directors of FedNA. FedNA is the ANA constituency for uniformed officers. CDRs serve in the roles of Director and Director at large. (Board of Director membership includes 5 Air Force, 1 Army, 1 Navy, and 3 USPHS nurse officers).

Now is the time to consider nominations for the Professional Advisory Committee nursing awards. This year there are 5 new monetary awards open to all civilian, tribal and Corps nurses. Watch the web site <http://www.phs-nurse.org/index2.htm> for more information to come. Consider a self nomination or one for your colleagues. There is so much good work and talent that deserve recognition!

Comment

While the year is young, we have already been confronted with the challenges of difficult economic times, changes in leadership and administrations, and the demands for access and quality health care. Despite this, I hear consistent accolades for the dedication and service of nurses during these difficult times. You make us all proud and grateful for the heroic work you do each day to keep our Nation healthy and safe. I am confident that nurses will continue this journey through 2009 with the excellence and leadership that Americans expect of us. Thank you for your service.

Carol Romano PhD, RN, FAAN

Assistant Surgeon General

Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS

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