

A Message From the Chief Nurse

Nurses,

It has been a busy summer with much activity politically and in health administration. Here are some updates to keep you informed.

Our new Assistant Secretary for Health is Howard Koh, MD., MPH. He most recently served as Associate Dean and Program Director at the Harvard School of Public Health and as Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

RADM Nicole Lurie was confirmed as our new Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. She most recently served as co-director of the RAND Corporation Center for Domestic and International Health Security, senior natural scientist and professor of policy analysis at the RAND Corporation.

On July 13, President Obama announced Regina Benjamin, MD., MBA as the new Surgeon General nominee. Dr. Benjamin graduated from the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta in 1982 and is best known for starting the Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic in Alabama and rebuilding the clinic after it was destroyed twice. We await her Senate confirmation. We look forward to working with the new leadership staff in the administration to improve the nation's health.

Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, MD., MPH. on June 9, 2009 issued *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes*. The Call to Action examines the mechanisms of housing components that can affect health and initiates a national dialogue about the importance of healthy homes. For more healthy homes information, please visit www.surgeongeneral.gov. The Acting Surgeon General continues our national outreach for the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity.

Policy

The main page of the CCMIS web site (<http://dcp.psc.gov>) has a new design to enhance the branding of the Corps. Stay tuned as we continue to provide additional updates

Several uniform policy changes ([PPM 08-020] and [CC26.3.1]) go into effect August 1, 2009 including the discontinuation of the salt and pepper uniform and the black garrison cap.

We are continuing to reengineer and strengthen the current Associate Recruiter Program. Policy developments are ongoing so implementation will be delayed a few months. Updates will be provided through the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (<http://dcp.psc.gov>) and the Nursing Professional Advisory Committee Listserv on a regular basis.

Readiness

We continue our global humanitarian training missions and expect additional collaborations and partnerships in the future.

The nurse category basic readiness status is getting closer to 100%--we need less than 7% of officers to complete their requirements. Continue to encourage your peers and verify your own status to keep it current. Remember we are in hurricane season! The NPAC Readiness and Response subcommittee members are available to assist you in meeting this goal.

Field training for structured rapid deployment team members and for other officers will commence in August for five weekly sessions. We expect to train over 2000 individuals. The training will be at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia in austere environmental conditions to simulate a real deployment. We applaud the OFRD staff for their aggressive work in preparing and coordinating these activities.

Career development

The 2009 Assimilation Boards will be held late September. Applications must be postmarked no later than 31 August 2009. You are encouraged to apply early. Late applications will be applied to the 2010 Boards. Although officers with at least two years of service are eligible to apply, applications from these officers will not go before a board review until the officer completes 3 years of service as of 31 March of the Assimilation Year. Officers should refer to CCI 342.01, and POM 09-001 http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/POM09_001.pdf for information regarding the Regular Corps Assimilation Program.

The Charles J. Reddy Leadership Conference will be held October 19-21, 2009 in Arlington, VA. This conference provides leadership training for junior officers at or below the O-3 rank and is sponsored by the Army Nurse Corps. Look for a call for nominations on the list serve this month. There is no registration fee but supervisor approval and agency support for travel is needed. More to come!

On June 11, 2009 the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice voted to unanimously adopt the revised version of [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#). The revised Core Competencies address changes in the practice of public health for mid level providers and reflects the input received from more than 600 public health professionals. They can be found at the Public Health Foundation website <http://www.phf.org/link/core-061109.htm>. Next steps will include developing core competencies for entry level professionals and tools to assist with core competencies use.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is now accepting applications for enrollment in the new Post-9/11 GI Bill for officers on active duty on or after September 11, 2001, and who served at least 90 days on active duty after that date. This includes members who enrolled in earlier programs such as the Post-Vietnam Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) and the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) as well as members who declined enrollment in those programs. To enroll for FREE or to get more comprehensive

information go to the VA website at www.va.gov and follow the links for “Benefits” to the Education webpage and read more information about the

Leadership & Outreach

I was able to attend a moderated discussion on June 12 on Nursing Workforce Solutions for 21st Century Health Care sponsored by *Health Affairs* and the Center to Champion Nursing in America; a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. An update on issues and evidence related to nursing workforce and health care quality was presented. Proceedings are published in *Health Affairs Web Exclusives* June 12, 2009.

I made a presentation to the Nurse Leaders in Native Care Conference in Phoenix June 17, 2009 and had the opportunity to visit with nurses at the Phoenix Indian Medical Center. The work and professionalism of these nurses was impressive and I am sure reflects the excellence that exists wherever nurses serve. I was also humbled to be honored with an Apache Native blessing during the conference award ceremony.

I had the opportunity to speak at the Joint Medical Executive Skills Institute Capstone Symposium in Washington, D.C. to share information about the USPHS with the leadership in the other uniformed services. I encourage all of you to reach out and continue to spread the word about the Commissioned Corps—who we are and what we do.

In June, I was invited to speak with our future nurses from the National Student Nurses Association. Over 3,000 students were excited to hear about opportunities for nurses in public health. Remember that we all share the responsibility for creating our next generation of nurses so continue and expand your own recruitment efforts.

Recognition

CAPT Maurice Sheen, a PHS Nurse Officer at FDA was awarded the Army Bronze Star for his actions under fire as well as his work with Pashtoon refugees, non-government organizations, and the State Department while in Afghanistan from 2008-9. We could not be prouder of his actions!

The following awards were presented at the June 2009 US Public Health Service Scientific and Training Symposium. Congratulations to all these nurses.

PHS Responder and Nurse Responder of the Year: CDR Kimberly Elenberg, OFRD

PHS Junior Officer of the Year: LCDR Amy Parker, CDC

Mable May Wagner Award for Clinical Practice Excellence: CDR Donna Brown, IHS

Lucille Woodville Memorial Award for Maternal Child Excellence: CAPT Victoria Anderson, NIH

CARRUTH WAGNER NURSING AWARDS:

Innovative Collaboration Award: CDR Theresa Dyess, IHS

Nurse of the Year Award: **CAPT Beverly Dandridge, DHS**
Clinical Nursing Support Award: **LCDR Darlene C. Brown, BOP**
Advanced Practice Award: **CDR Mark Martineau, IHS**
Nursing Leadership Award: **CDR Sue Larkin, FDA**

Comment

We continue through the summer months with the recognition that the work of our mission does not take a vacation. In your selfless sacrifices, search for quiet moments of respite to refuel your energy and your spirit so you can continue to lead our fight for a healthier nation. Thank you, nurses, for all you do!

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Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS

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