

USPHS Chief Nurse Officer's Newsletter  
March 2010

Dear PHS Civilian, Tribal, and Commissioned Corps Nurses,

Good day to all the nurses. Well, in the D.C. area we have dug out from the Blizzard of 2010, a record breaking snow storm that really paralyzed us (beat the 1898 record). I would like to personally thank the nurses that took the extra steps and continued to care for our patients/programs during this "whiteout". I do realize this is an everyday occurrence for many of you in the North and Alaska. I fondly remember the days in Duluth, Minnesota working on the Fond du lac Indian Reservation. Also, I am aware that there have been extraordinary storms across the South this year. Thank you for your service everyday! Well, spring is on its way and we have much to be grateful.

**Surgeon General, VADM Regina Benjamin, Commissioning and Change of Command Ceremony was held on January 11, 2010 in the Ronald Reagan Building. There was cause for much celebration and pride in our Surgeon General and the United States Public Health Service.**

**The flag officers and Chief Professional Officers of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps convened for a retreat on January 12, 2010.** The SG discussed her priorities and goals. As you may know, the Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation, dated 2010, has been released.

First Lady, Ms. Michelle Obama, the US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius and the Surgeon General, have announced plans to help America lead healthier lives through better nutrition, regular physical activity, and by encouraging communities to support healthy choices. They have launched the "Let's Move" Campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. As nurses, we have much to contribute to this effort.

**Office of the Surgeon General (SG):**

An announcement went out on Feb 3, 2010 that the SG is seeking to name a permanent Deputy SG to assist in articulating the best public health information to the Nation, and to assist in overseeing the operations of the Commissioned Corps. Until a permanent Deputy SG is named, the following are the assignments in the SG office:

RADM David Rutstein has been named Acting Deputy SG  
RADM Bob Williams will be fully engaged as the Chief of Staff  
CAPT Carol Romano will resume her full-time duties as Director of the Office of Reserve Affairs  
CAPT Dan Beck, Deputy Director of OFRD will oversee the OFRD

**Happy Birthday to Former Deputy Surgeon General and Chief Nurse Officer (CNO), RADM Faye Abdellah!** In 1981, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop named Dr. Abdellah Deputy Surgeon General, making her the first nurse and first woman to hold the position. RADM Abdellah honorably served this nation as the Deputy Surgeon General from 1981-1989 and as the third CNO from October 1, 1970 through October 31, 1987. She will be celebrating her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on March 13<sup>th</sup>. We know she would be thrilled to hear from you. Below is the address, if you would like to send her a card.

Doctor Faye Glenn Abdellah  
Arleigh Burke Pavilion  
1739 Kirby road, Suite 104

McLean, VA 22101

### **Readiness & Preparedness:**

#### **Haiti:**

I want to personally thank the PHS nurses who recently deployed to Haiti to assist with the earthquake relief efforts. The USPHS Commissioned Corps deployed approximately 20 nurses to assist either as translators to Haiti, on the USS Battan, IRCT Team, EMG Augmentation Team, Homestead ARB Evacuee Medical Team, Miami Evacuee Medical Team, or the SOC. Other PHS nurses have also participated in the Haiti relief efforts directly through their agencies. Their professional contributions are valued and have made a significant difference in the lives of people that have experienced such an inconceivable tragedy.

I also wanted to thank the supervisors and co-workers of these deployed nurses for allowing them to deploy and covering for them during their absence.

**The next Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) Basic Readiness Status review is scheduled to be conducted on March 31, 2010.** As a reminder, your Readiness is critical to accomplishing PHS's mission as evidenced by this recent deployment to Haiti. An OFRD's Basis Readiness Status review was conducted on December 31, 2009. Nurses were 94.36% Basic Ready. Our goal is to reach 100%. Every quarter OFRD announces the top 5 professional categories – nursing has never been on this list. My immediate goal is for the nursing category to make the list and be one of the top 5 categories. I encourage all of you to work to maintain your own Basic Readiness qualification status and to help out your colleagues as well. If you are not Basic Ready, please become qualified. Members of the NPAC can assist you.

You have also probably received emails from OFRD with details about upcoming Commissioned Corps domestic field and experiential training events. This year, OFRD plans to conduct and oversee domestic medical readiness and training exercises in both rural and urban settings. Please review the email you received for training dates for your designated team.

#### **Direct Access:**

Please use this link for FAQs about Direct Access

[http://www.usphs.gov/transformation/self\\_service.aspx](http://www.usphs.gov/transformation/self_service.aspx)

Please use this link to view your user guide for Direct Access -

<http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/phs/PHSSelfServiceProcedureGuide.pdf>

**A PHS Nurses All-Hands Meeting was held January 26, 2010.** The agenda mostly covered a Chief Nurse Officer update and a presentation on the New Commissioned Corps Billet Collection System by CAPT Byron Bailey. Over 276 phone lines were utilized by nurses calling in and approximately 80 nurses were able to attend in person. For those nurses that were unable to break away and participate in this call, we were successful in video conferencing the meeting. As you can imagine, the file is very large and we are exploring ways to post the video.

#### **Clinical Nursing Billets Revision:**

Transformation of the Commissioned Corps billets system continues to make positive progress. It is anticipated that the launch of the Billet Collection System (BCS), which will initiate the process to develop new billets for all positions currently encumbered by Corps Officers, will begin in early 2010. The Nurse category will be one of the first professional categories to begin this process. The tentative launch date for the Nurse Category participation is March/April 2010. All Nurse Officers are strongly encouraged to prepare themselves for this activity by completing the short BCS tutorial (video or text) which can be found at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Billets\\_Tutorial.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Billets_Tutorial.aspx).

Frequently asked questions, in support of billets transformation, can be found at <http://usphs.gov/transformation/billet.aspx>.

**The Federal Service Nursing Council (FSNC)** met on February 3, 2010. This Council is composed of the Chief Nurse Officers from the US Public Health Service, the US Air Force, US Army, US Navy, US Department of Veterans Affairs, and the American Red Cross. The mission is to “bring together its collective leadership and experience to advance and strengthen professional nursing practice among federal agencies and the American Red Cross”. The vision statement is “United to Address Tomorrow’s Health Care Challenges Today”. They recently convened for their yearly exchange between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Nurses Association, National Center for State Boards of Nursing, and the National League of Nurses.

LCDR Jason Humbert has assisted on FSNC with former PHS Chief Nurse Officer RADM Carol Romano and currently with RADM Kerry Nesseler. He has been very dedicated, resourceful and wonderful to work with. Lcdr Humbert is now stepping down from this position and I want to thank him personally for all he has done during his tenure. As a result of his departure, **a nurse who will serve as an assistant to the PHS CNO will be selected.** Qualifications and job duties include: a uniformed grade of O3 or O4; knowledge of military protocol; ability to attend meetings with the PHS CNO in Bethesda, MD, every other month on the first Wednesday of the month; preparation of agendas and; assisting as needed. Interested applicants will need permission from their supervisor and are asked to forward a current CV and cover letter to RADM Nesseler at [KNesseler@hrsa.gov](mailto:KNesseler@hrsa.gov) by COB March 31, 2010.

Regarding the **Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation: Initiative on the Future of Nursing at the Institute of Medicine (IOM)**, one additional forum was held February 22, 2010 in Houston, TX entitled: Forum on the Future of Nursing: Education. The archived webcast is available at [www.thefutureofnursing.org](http://www.thefutureofnursing.org) or [http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=44748&orig\\_url=/](http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=44748&orig_url=/)

#### **Upcoming Meetings:**

The **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Nursing Recognition Day** will be held on this year on Friday May 7<sup>th</sup> on the NIH campus at Lister Hill Auditorium. The deadline for registration is April 30, 2010. Information on this was sent out on the PHS Nursing List Serve in February.

Reminder - the next **USPHS Scientific Training Symposium: “Public Health 2010: The Road Ahead” is scheduled for May 24-27, 2010 in San Diego, California.** We will soon be announcing scholarship funding to cover registration costs for Junior Officers grades O1-O3. Please plan on attending this wonderful symposium. The Nurse Category Day is shaping up to be very educational and exciting.

#### **Leadership and Outreach:**

On February 23, 2010, I participated in the World Health Organization’s Global Leadership Collaborative (GLC). The mission of the GLC is to develop effective partnerships between chief nursing and midwifery officers internationally, and coordinate approaches to strengthening the capacity of nursing and midwifery officers to lead the nursing and midwifery profession in improving population health in an equitable and sustainable manner.

I am looking forward to attending and speaking at the Indian Health Service (IHS) National Combined Councils (NCC) meeting in Phoenix, Arizona being held March 21-26, 2010. The NCC is a meeting of about 200-300 IHS clinical leaders. All the clinical councils meet such as the councils for nursing, oral health, clinical directors, chief medical officers, nutrition and others.

I am also looking forward to speaking at Chicago’s Loyola University’s, Niehoff’s School of Nursing on March 26, 2010. I will be giving a speech on “Public Health Priorities and Nursing Today”.

**OCCFM:**

LCDR Kyle Lyons will serve as the Nurse Category representative in Office of Commissioned Force Management (OCCFM). As the OCCFM Representative, LCDR Lyons will share information about force management activities to Commissioned Corps Officers and serve as a communication link and information resource to Commissioned Officers by attending Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings to hear concerns/issues which should be addressed by OCCFM. OCCFM establishes time lines, performance standards, and measurements for the evaluation of the operations/management of the Corps, works closely with the Office of the Surgeon General to facilitate operations/implementation of policies and programs, and develops/oversees information technology and systems to support management functions. A big "thank you" to LCDR Lyons for serving the nurse category and PHS in this capacity.

**FYI: Call for Public Comment – Nursing: Scope & Standards of Practice**

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is seeking comments on the following revised publication: ***Nursing: Scope & Standards of Practice, Second Edition***

If you are interested in participating in this review, download the document and submit your comments online by 5:00 pm EST, March 12, 2010. If you go to the American Nurses Association website at: <http://nursingworld.org/> and go to the Nursing Insider, Latest News for Nurses on this page, you will see a link to go to for public comment on this revised publication.

All the best,

Kerry