

# National COA Activities

January 2018 \*

*Supporting and advancing the interests of the Commissioned Corps and its officers*

Executive Director Jim Currie  
Deputy Executive Director John McElligott  
Government Relations Director Judith Rensberger  
COA Board Chair CAPT Dean Coppola

- 1/2 Attended the Nursing Community's monthly meeting, which focused on obtaining federal support for workforce development programs in nursing that are up for reauthorization.
- 1/10 Joined co-chairs of The Military Coalition (TMC) committees to meet with House Armed Services Committee staff to discuss priorities for 2018.
- 1/12 With TMC Guard/Reserve Committee co-chair, met with staff for Rep. Steven Palazzo.
- 1/16 Met with leaders of the AMSUS Sustaining Members Section, which is made up of private healthcare industry representatives from companies that provide medical and scientific products and services to federal healthcare agencies. Discussed the Sustaining Members quarterly meeting in Dallas, which will be held June 7-8, immediately after the USPHS Symposium. The meeting will include a panel of PHS speakers for a discussion on ethical public-private partnerships between industry and PHS agencies to improve public health issues.
- 1/17 With CAPT Diana Elson, Legislative Affairs Committee Chair, attended the first of two Senate hearings on reauthorization of the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act. RADM Stephen Redd, Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (and COA member), testified.
- 1/19 Drafted a letter to Senate Democratic Leader Schumer supporting Dr. Brett Giroir's nomination to become the Assistant Secretary of Health (ASH) and delivered it to Senator Schumer's office.
- Communicated with staff for Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC) requesting a change in the language of his "Pay Our Troops Act of 2018" (HR 4793) to include the PHS and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Spoke with a reporter for *USA Today* about conditions for PHS officers at the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).
- 1/22 Sent letters to both General Motors and Ford asking that they include PHS officers in their military discount programs. The letters can be found on the COA website:  
<http://www.coausphs.org/advocacy/letters/>
- Spoke with USAA and confirmed that its offer to extend no-cost loans to "military members" in the event of a government shutdown also applied to PHS active duty members of USAA.

1/23 Attended a special two-hour meeting of the Tricare for Kids Coalition. The military health system is moving forward with needed improvements in pediatric care. To keep up the momentum, Coalition reps will meet with Senate Armed Services Committee staff in February.

1/24 Drafted and filed an *Amicus Curiae* brief in the case of appeal of the Arbitration decision of *AFGE [American Federation of Government Employees] v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*, with PHS officer treatment at BOP facilities at the heart of the case. The brief, filed with the Federal Labor Relations Authority in DC, can be found on the COA website:  
<http://www.coausphs.org/media/1745/amicus-brief-c-flra-january-2018-002.pdf>  
The filed brief was also sent to COA members with BOP addresses.

Negotiated a contract with a new auditing firm at a savings of up to \$4000 per year.

Spoke with staff at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) regarding PHS officers' support in building a national Culture of Health after RWJF Executive Vice President Jim Marks presented this vision at the 2017 USPHS Symposium. RWJF is considering highlighting PHS officers and their agencies as positive examples of the program.

1/26 Communicated with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) about the Veteran medallions that the VA provides for attachment to grave markers in private cemeteries. The VA furnishes medallions for the armed forces, but not for the USPHS.

1/27 Spoke at the Anchor & Caduceus formal dinner of the Atlanta Branch of COA.

1/30 Drafted a message to all retired COA members asking them to contact their US Senator and urge their support for a vote on the nomination of Dr. Brett Giroir to become the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH).

1/31 Spoke with the Legislative Assistant for Health in the office of Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and urged support for a nomination vote on Dr. Brett Giroir to become the ASH.

Drafted a letter to HHS Secretary Azar urging the nomination of RADM (Dr.) Anne Schuchat to become Director of CDC. The letter is posted on the COA website:  
<http://www.coausphs.org/media/1744/letter-supporting-radm-dr-anne-schuchat-for-cdc-director-jan-2018.pdf>