**COA Updates for the TPAC – October 2020**

**Respectfully submitted by: CDR Katie Jacques – COA Board of Directors/Vice Chair Communications and Public Relations/TPAC Therapist Representative**

**National COA Activities – Daily Updates**

**October 2020**

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

*COA advocates for Commissioned Corps officers on every level: parity with our sister services, inclusion in annual authorization acts, education, and scholarships. COA directly supports and advocates for all officers. If you are not a member, consider joining and maintaining membership as this is an organization that directly benefits the Corps.*

Executive Director

Deputy Executive Director Jacqueline Rychnovsky

Government Relations Director Judith Rensberger

COA Board Chair RADM Brandon Taylor

COA Board Chair-Elect CDR Kelly Valente

COA Executive Treasurer CDR Kristy Purdy

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| **ACTIVITIES BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** | |
| 8/4/2020 | COA signed on to a letter of the Toxic Exposures in the American Military (TEAM) Coalition, a non-partisan consortium of more than 30 veterans, military service organizations and experts, to express support for certain toxic exposure-related provisions of the House and Senate-passed versions of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. |
| 8/4/2020 | Jacque corresponded with Charles Kieffer, Staff Director the Senate Appropriations Committee, concerning expiring leave for active duty PHS officers. |
| 8/5/2020 | COA engaged the consulting services of Taylor Strategies, Inc. to assist with the expiring leave issue facing PHS officers on September 30, 2020. |
| 8/10/2020 | COA had a meeting with Courtney Fellows from Senator James Lankford's office (R-OK) re: possible support for the expiring leave issue facing PHS officers. |
| 8/11/2020 | Jacque and Donna joined RADM Taylor in a call with the Outreach Committee re: a membership drive and expiring memberships. |
| 8/12/2020 | Jacque had a call with Bettilou Taylor (Taylor Strategies) and Laura Friedel and Jeff Reczek, Senate LHHS Subcommittee Majority Staff, regarding the expiring leave issue for PHS  officers. |

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| 8/24/2020 | | Jacque attended VA Secretary Shulkin’s briefing to the Veteran Services Organizations (VSO’s). Items discussed included mail order prescription delivery for veterans. Over 7M deliveries a month and most arrive in 3 days. If there are delays, they will pivot to other mail delivery services. VA is continuing to hire many new healthcare personnel at lightning speed. The VA is storing up PPE and stand ready for the fall season. 91.5K VA claims processed this year, hit FY20 goal 6 weeks early but there are 100K hearings  pending. Virtual hearings are encouraged. | |
| 8/24/2020 | | COA had a call with Bettilou Taylor (Taylor Strategies) and Kelly Brown, Minority Senate LHHS Subcommittee staff regarding the proposed language to extend expiring leave for  PHS officers. | |
| 8/24/2020 | | COA had a call with Karen Watkins, Senior Director, Strategic Accounts, National Federal Team, Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems Inc., Ron Walters, Corporate Account Executive, Government at Cook Medical, and John DiMaggio, COF Board of  Trustees, re: the AMSUS Sustaining Partners annual meeting on 8/28/2020. | |
| 8/25/2020 | | Jacque attended the Veterans Advisory Panel meeting with Rep. Madeline Dean (D-PA- 04). As one of 8 members of Rep. Dean’s newly formed panel, issues facing Veterans were discussed. Rep. Dean was briefed on the expiring leave issue facing active duty  officers. | |
| 8/26/2020 | | Jacque had a meeting with Bettilou Taylor, Taylor Strategies, and Kimberly Espinosa and Kristen Shatynski who represent the minority and majority interests of the House Energy  & Commerce Committee (Authorizers) re: the expiring leave issue. | |
| 8/26/2020 | | Jacque attended meetings with the Teachers Resource Guide subcommittee of the Veterans Day Planning Committee and provided numerous edits to the 2020 Teachers Resource Guide in pre-production, including changes of language from “Armed Services” and “military” to “Uniformed Services.” Additionally, the COF Dependent Scholarships were added to the scholarships page. This guide serves as a resource for teachers to use nationwide while preparing Veterans Day educational events in elementary, middle and  high schools. | |
| 8/28/2020 | | Jacque attended a Service MIC3 Breakout planning meeting. The MIC3 is the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission which deals with the challenges of military children and their frequent relocations. It allows for uniform treatment as military children transfer between school districts in member states. | |
| 8/28/2020 | | Jacque and RADM Steve Solomon, COF Trustee President, attended the AMSUS Sustaining Member annual meeting to brief them on the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Items discussed were which federal agencies PHS officers support, the role of the ASH and SG relative to their responsibilities within the HHS and PHS, ethical partnerships with industry, PHS officers role in defining standard of practice and care, the Ready Reserve  Corps, differences between COA and COF, and the status of the 2021 annual Symposium. | |
| **ACTIVITIES BY DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS** | | | |
| 8/04/2020 | | COA participated in the monthly meeting of the Nursing Community Coalition. The Coalition voted to write congressional leadership to inform them of the nursing profession's priorities regarding COVID-19. Chief among these is improving efforts to protect frontline nurses from catching the disease themselves. | |
| 8/05/2020 | | As co-chair of the Military Coalition's Health Care Committee, Judy helped determine the Military Coalition's response to the Defense Health Agency's failure to explain or respond to beneficiaries' concerns about rising health care costs. The resulting report appeared in  member organization's newsletters, including COA's *Frontline*. | |
| 8/27/2020 | | Judy participated in the regular meeting of the Military Coalition's Health Care Committee. She provided committee leadership with a copy of COA's one-pager about the loss-of-leave issue facing Commissioned Corps officers who deploy repeatedly in  response to COVID-19. | |
| 8/27/2020 | | As a member of the Military Coalition's Health Care Committee, Judy participated in a preliminary briefing on the next generation of Tricare contract negotiations. | |
| 8/28/2020 | | On behalf of COA, Judy expressed our organizational support for emergency funding for the Indian Health Service and tribal health programs. The money would be used to address the devastating effects that COVID-19 has had on tribes. COA is a member of the coalition that advocates on behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives. It is called AI/AN Partners. Its efforts are focused on the U.S. Senate, which appears to be retreating  from an earlier plan to fund tribal health programs. | |