

# The Rapid Pulse

March 2003

## Faces and Places

### The Director's Perspective

By Dr. Eugene Migliaccio

**A**s you are all aware, I have been using *The Rapid Pulse* as a vehicle to discuss the core values this Division has established in order to allow us to succeed as an organization. In this month's newsletter, I want to focus on **inclusion**.

In DIHS, inclusion means including everyone in decisions that affect the organization, providing each employee the opportunity to express their voice on important issues, and expecting them to contribute their best thinking for the good of the entire Division. Although it is nearly impossible to seek consensus on every issue, I depend on valuable input to make good decisions. When a problem or issue arises, we consider the facts, evaluate potential impact and risks, and seek the advise of the experts and those who will be affected..

Inclusion also means that we inform you of the various opportunities in the Division, both at the facility level and Division wide. This includes the flight nurse program, environmental health and safety, utilization management, the Balanced Scorecard, etc. Inclusion means you are kept abreast of the opportunities for professional development, such as Continuing Medical Education and other training. It is also serving on various committees, such as the Shared Drive Committee, Performance Improvement Committee, etc.

I believe we have made great strides in the area of inclusion. For example, the all-hands conference calls provide everyone with the opportunity to share the important work that is being done in this Division each day, and address questions or concerns that staff may have.

Moreover, the conference calls have provided us with the opportunity to ensure that everyone receives the same information from one source so that it is not conveyed in a incorrect way. By being more informed, each employee is better prepared to contribute their ideas and best thinking when asked to do so.

Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone. It is up to those in leadership positions within the Division to inform staff of the opportunities available to serve on a variety of committees, thus providing a service to this Division outside their regular duties. And all employees have the obligation to be contributing members to DIHS, putting forth their best thinking and ideas for the benefit of the entire organization.

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### FAREWELL

**Aguadilla, PR:**  
LCDR William Ruiz-Colon

**El Centro, CA:**  
LTJG Rosa Peralta

**Managed Care Coordinator Program:**  
CAPT Joe Fink  
CAPT Don Gabbert



## News You Can Use

**Congratulations to CAPT Marylouise Ganaway for being featured on the cover of the February 17, 2003 issue of the *Advance for Nurses* magazine.**

**The cover story focuses on the vital role of nurses in the Public Health Service.**

## Why Uniformed Service is Important

By CAPT Gerard M. Farrell (RET)

Curious. That is the best way to describe my reaction to M.A. J. McKenna's article in the Sunday, Dec. 15, 2002 issue of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, "CDC DISEASE DETECTIVES: Public health corps wages personal battles." The article produced a somewhat stronger response from Public Health Service Commissioned Officers who called and emailed my office, national headquarters of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) of the U.S. Public Health Service. Our association represents almost 7000 active duty, reserve and retired PHS officers—presumably including some of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers whose views are represented in the article.

Curious because while Ms. McKenna's piece was excellent journalism highlighting the difficulty and sacrifice experienced by EIS officers in their critical work, the focus on some officers' misgivings about uniforms truly baffled me. The connection between important work and dislike of uniform seemed to short out, at least to me.

Nonetheless, COA is disappointed these dedicated professionals whose service is often exceptional – and always critical – do not understand the importance of uniforms for PHS officers.

Why do organizations adopt uniforms? What purpose do uniforms serve? How do uniforms apply to the dedicated health professionals of the PHS Commissioned Corps? The answers, or at least broad hints, actually are right there, embedded in Ms. McKenna's article. Unfortunately, it seems the EIS officers fail to see the forest because all those trees keep spoiling the view.

Uniforms are prescribed to promote

uniformity. They serve to establish organizational identity, common cause and unity of purpose. Perhaps most importantly, uniforms demonstrate the subordination of oneself to a greater good – in this case the national defense of our public health and well-being.

These are the same reasons the other six uniformed services wear them – and police officers, and firefighters, and yes even, as pointed out in the article, corporations, and physicians in hospitals. Are not white lab coats and surgical scrubs uniforms?

The conditions under which PHS/EIS officers serve – frequent and unplanned family separations, dangerous working conditions, and the like are shared by their colleagues in the other uniformed services. The most significant departure is that the Armed Forces use different weapons to confront their enemies. PHS officers are armed with stethoscopes, hypodermics, pharmaceuticals, etc. Regardless of how equipped, defending the homeland against the threat of bioterrorism in our new war, PHS officers are every bit as much on the frontlines as their military comrades-in-arms.

The (mostly new) officers described in Ms. McKenna's article have a lot to learn about why they wear a uniform, not to mention the direction the PHS Commissioned Corps is headed under the dynamic leadership of the new Surgeon General, VADM Richard Carmona.

There are few of the gratuitously self-deprecating "yellow berets" left on active duty. They are in that "dustbin of history" as far as the Corps is concerned. Today's Corps has increasing numbers of young officers who transfer their commissions from the Armed Forces. Why? Because they are committed to a career of service to their country – and they prefer to serve in an organization where health professionals are the "line" and not the "staff." The frontlines of the war against disease and disaster are where these professionals want to be. And they are proud to be in the PHS uniform.

Admiral Carmona is determined to transform the Commissioned Corps into a service more closely aligned with the culture of leadership and professionalism inherent in the other uniformed services. Improved professional train-

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## Did You Know?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has comprehensive information available online for nurses in its smallpox vaccination and adverse events training manual.

The information includes step-by-step instructions and photos.

[www.bt.cdc.gov/training/smallpoxvaccine/reactions](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/training/smallpoxvaccine/reactions)

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ing and standards of accountability and discipline go hand-in-hand with improved fitness and uniform standards.

The Surgeon General has a clear vision of what the future Corps needs to look like if they are to be effective health warriors defending against the threat of bioterrorism and other weapons of mass destruction.

The young EIS officers – and I salute them for their service - will likely gain the experience, and with it the wisdom they now seem to lack. Many officers have told me of their individual epiphanies regarding the uniform following their deployment in response to the terror attacks in the fall of 2001. Their experience at Ground Zero in New York , or with postal workers exposed to anthrax, and working around the clock shoulder to shoulder with other uniformed professionals helped them understand why uniforms are important.

Uniforms are powerful symbols. In the current crises facing our Nation, the uniformed services – the PHS Commissioned Corps very much included – are all on the frontlines of national defense. The uniform provides an identity to a Nation concerned about where to find answers. The uniform is a potent and outward characterization of an inner commitment to the principles of uniformed service: honor, country, courage, competence, dedication, service and leadership. Uniforms represent professionalism, continuity and confidence.

There is no reason for officers being uncomfortable in uniform unless they are uncomfortable with those principles – and that is truly hard to imagine and frightening to contemplate.

#### **Editor's Note:**

This article was originally published in the February 2003 issue of *Frontline*, the official newsletter of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA). With their permission, we have reproduced this article for *The Rapid Pulse*.

CAPT Gerard M. Farrell [US. Navy, (Retired)], is Executive Director of COA.

### Straight From The Heart

By LCDR Linda Jo Belsito

This month let's talk about the most important muscle in your body. Your heart. Cardio-respiratory fitness has been the centerpiece of physical fitness and cardiovascular health for as long as I can remember. As PHS Officers we are required to be fit for duty, and also to pass the CCRF physical fitness exam.

Cardio-respiratory fitness increases body-fat utilization, maximal oxygen consumption, and helps modify the risks of obesity, hypertension, and high blood cholesterol. An increased aerobic fitness level will define the status of the heart muscle, its blood vessels, and the circulatory system it serves. Cardiovascular fitness serves as the foundation for other fitness programs. Conditioning and health of the heart will benefit all other sports activities. Those who have adequate cardio-respiratory fitness have more stamina, less fatigue and fewer risks for injuries.

Like any exercise program, have a medical check up first. Start your program with an exercise that interests you, such as walking, jogging, aerobic dancing, cycling, and swimming. Next decide how many times a week and how long. Remember lower intensity workouts are easier to do on a daily basis; higher intensity workouts will require more recovery time. The American Academy of Sports Medicine recommends three to five days a week for most aerobic programs. Those with average function, three times a week on alternate days. If you are a beginner 36- 48 hrs of rest between workouts will allow adequate rest to prevent injury, joint stress recovery, and prevent early overuse. This is especially true for those who are overweight.

The conditioning period may vary from 20-60 minutes, excluding the warm up and cool down. Again this depends on your level of fitness and the intensity of

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**Have an idea or suggestion for a future issue of the newsletter?**

**Don't delay! The deadline for all submissions is the 20th of each month.**

**Please email your content to shalana.millard@usdoj.gov**

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the workout. The guidelines for monitoring your intensity can be done by calculating maximal heart rate. The formula used has been  $220 - \text{your age}$  for maximal heart rate then, multiply this by 70-85% x 1.15. You are going to start with moderation and remember that these are just guidelines. All of us are at different levels of cardio-respiratory fitness but if you start slowly you will achieve your goals.

Remember there are phases to this conditioning process. The initial stage usually takes four to six weeks, the improvement stage usually eight to 20 weeks, and then the maintenance conditioning stage, which is where we all strive to be to reach our target functional capacity or primary goals. This is usually reached after six months but can take as long as a year, depending on your goals.



According to our friend the groundhog we have six more weeks till spring. Don't wait till it's time to shed those layers of winter clothes. Take the first step and you will feel better. A healthy lifestyle is a daily commitment. Take one day at a time, and be realistic with your goals.

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### Health Eating, Healthy You

By LCDR Kirsten Warwar

~~Each March the American Dietetic Association~~ runs a month long nutrition education campaign called National Nutrition Month. This program is designed to focus the public's attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing good eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme is "Health Eating, Healthy You." This campaign reinforces the

importance of nutrition as a key component of health, along with physical activity.

Healthy eating helps you get the most out of life. A healthy lifestyle is the key to feeling great, performing your best at work and play, and looking your best. It all starts with a healthy eating plan, as well as matching your food choices to your lifestyle and individual energy and nutrient requirements. Make sure that you choose enough to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Actively pursue variety. Try new fruits and vegetables. Explore new recipes that incorporate new tastes like Indian, Thai, Korean, and Middle Eastern cuisine. Eating a wide variety of foods not only promotes optimal nutrition, it provides the pleasurable aspects of eating.

Make moderation your goal – you decide how much and how often to achieve your healthy weight. Healthy eating means consuming about six to eight ounces of lean protein, five to eight servings of fruits and vegetables and high fiber carbohydrates to meet your energy needs, two to three servings of low-fat dairy products, with liquid fats added sparingly. Look at the big picture: what you eat over several days – not just one day or one meal.

Develop a personal fitness plan that complements your lifestyle. The key is to find a variety of activities you enjoy. You don't have to belong to a gym or own expensive equipment. Analyze your daily and weekly routine. Decide what time of day you are most likely to be at your best to exercise. Determine how much time and how often you feel you can commit to exercising. Make personal appointments. Write them on your daily planner if you need to or identify an exercise partner.

Being healthy is vital to life. Just as you spend many hours committed to your job, so should you spend the time that it takes to be committed to a healthy lifestyle. It can only enhance your quality of life. Get started today!