



Assistant Secretary for Health
Office of Public Health and Science
Washington D.C. 20201

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TO: Commissioned Officers of the U.S. Public Health Service

FROM: Assistant Secretary for Health

SUBJECT: Decisions Regarding the Uniform Policy of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service - INFORMATION

ISSUE

I am pleased to announce I have made the following decisions regarding the USPHS Commissioned Corps Uniform and Grooming Standards. A Working Integrated Project Team (WIPT) was formed in order to address numerous issues regarding the proper wear of the uniform of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. Based on recommendations from the WIPT and my senior leadership, I have made the following decisions regarding the uniform policy for the Commissioned Corps.

INFORMATION

These decisions are currently being developed into policies by the Office of Commissioned Corps Force Management. In addition, the Acting Surgeon General has established a Uniform Transition Working Group that will diligently use the next month to organize and develop the plan to ease the transition from the current uniform policies to the new uniform policies.

Uniform and Grooming standards decisions and estimated timeline for implementation:

1. Daily uniform wear will be required of all officers on extended active duty, with the exception of COSTEPs – estimated timeline for implementation 12 months.
2. Adopt the Navy official uniform policy and regulations in regards to wear and appearance of the Navy Working Uniform – estimated timeline for implementation 18 months.
3. Align USPHS uniform regulations with Navy regulations – estimated timeline for implementation, varies depending on aspect, approximately 18 months.
4. Seek legislation to authorize increase in uniform allowance to match that received by members of the Armed Forces (\$400) – estimated timeline for implementation, to be determined by Assistant Secretary for Legislation.

Page 2. USPHS Uniform and Grooming Standards

5. Authorize the wear and display of all ribbons and medals earned by an officer in the Corps, another uniformed service, and in other federal departments (as appropriate). Modify the wear of “association” ribbons policy to match regulations of the Navy – estimated timeline for implementation, 6 months.
6. Authorize the wear and display of skill, qualification or identification badges earned in the Corps or another Service (with some exceptions) – estimated timeline for implementation, 6 months.
7. Maintain current policy authorizing the wear of U.S. Air Force Flight Surgeon or Flight Nurse Wings for graduates of the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine Course – estimated timeline for implementation, immediate.
8. Authorize the change in color of Corps skill badges to gold – estimated timeline for implementation, depending on manufacturer, 12 months.
9. Align USPHS personal appearance and grooming standards with those of the Navy, specifically to remove the PHS authorization for wear of the beard except for those with medical waiver – estimated timeline for implementation, 4 months
10. Assign the Surgeon General as the sole Local Uniform Authority – estimated timeline for process development, 2 months.
11. Develop policy for disciplinary actions for disregard of uniform policies, and improper or unauthorized wear of uniform or uniform accoutrement – estimated timeline for implementation, 6 months.
12. Establish Uniform Advisory Committee – estimated timeline, 3 months.
13. Authorize the routine wear of BDUs once per week, subject to LUA determination, with exceptions for particular circumstances (e.g., meetings, ceremonies) – estimated timeline for implementation, 2 months.
14. Discontinue the use of the Service Blue uniform as an authorized USPHS uniform – estimated timeline for implementation, 18 months.
15. Disapprove the development of a category specific identification badge on service or other uniforms – estimated timeline for implementation, immediate.

I appreciate the efforts of the Uniform Working Integrated Project Team and the many others who participated in the development of, and review and comment on, the background materials and recommendations that led to the decisions noted above. I believe these decisions will firmly establish the USPHS Commissioned Corps as a proud and visible Uniformed Service.



John O. Agwunobi
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