

SEPTEMBER 2024 | ATLANTA COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



Hope everyone had a restful labor day weekend

The Signal is here to raise up the voices of our members and the community. We want to hear from you.

If you have a specific topic that you would like to research, a passion that you would like to highlight, and etc. reach out to ACOACommunications@gmail.com

Inspiration Corner

"It's kind of fun to do the impossible." — Walt Disney



Communications Leads:

LCDR Michtta Jean-Louis
LCDR Charles Edge

Editors:

CAPT David Hunter
CDR Sylvera Demas
CDR Colleen Scott
LCDR Ginny Bowen
CDR Andrea Cote
LCDR Eboni Galloway
LCDR Charles "CJ" Helm
LT Arlene Page

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

In Officio Salutis

President's Corner

Atlanta officers,

It was such a joy to connect with friends and meet new people at the ACOA Membership Picnic this May. We hope to continue to offer this event and other great social events in the future to connect and engage with ACOA members.

The Commissioned Officers Association membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th – check out the Membership Guide in this edition of the Signal for instructions to renew both COA and ACOA membership.

In the past few months, the ACOA executive committee has worked to review our operating budget over the past two years. Based on increasing costs and budgetary considerations, the membership cost for ACOA will increase to \$25 for 2024-2025. We believe this will enable ACOA to continue to offer great in-person events - like the Membership Picnic and other services that benefit our membership- still within a reasonable cost to officers.

As we transition to a new executive committee starting in September 2024, expect to continue to hear about social events, professional development opportunities, community service opportunities, and uniform sales through the ACOA listserv in the coming months.

Thank you for all that you do!

CDR Marie Johnston



Table of Contents

President's Corner.....	2
Executive Committee.....	3
Communications Committee.....	4
Uniform Store Committee.....	5
Events Planning Committee.....	6
Professional Development Committee.....	7
Membership Committee.....	7
Community Service Committee.....	8
Membership Submissions.....	9
Call for Articles.....	13

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

ACOA Executive Committee

2024-2025

President

CDR Kristin LaBar
AtlantaCOA@gmail.com

Past-President

CDR Marie Johnston
AtlantaCOA@gmail.com

Vice-President

LCDR Cashmere Miller
AtlantaCOA@gmail.com

Treasurer

CDR Brek Steele
ACOATreasurer@gmail.com

Secretary

LT Jamiko Cooper
AtlantaCOA@gmail.com

Events Planning

LT Alexis Roberts
LCDR Leigh-Ellyn Preston
ACOAEventsPlanning@gmail.com

Community Service

LCDR Marie Cetoute
LT Shifawu Odunsi
ACOACommunityService@gmail.com

Professional Development

CDR Ben Silk
LCDR Shamyria Ortiz
ACOAProfessionalDevelopment@gmail.com

Membership

LCDR Chiazor Eziakor
LCDR Sunshine Jones-Chaney
ACOAMembership@gmail.com

Communications

CDR Robert Garcia
LT Tiffany Addison
ACOACommunications@gmail.com

Uniform & Pride Stores

LCDR Marisa Hast

SEPTEMBER 2024 (DELAYED) | ATLANTA COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Communications Committee

The Signal is back! The ACOA Communications Committee leads of 2023-2024, LCDR Michtta Jean-Louis and LCDR Charles Edge, revitalized and relaunched ACOA's signature publication in the past year. The Communications Committee is committed to providing articles of interest to officers, highlighting ACOA activities and membership spotlights, and we want to hear from you!

Send in articles for ACOA activities, photos, and even story ideas to ACOACommunications@gmail.com.

All articles must be authored by ACOA members, and any officers highlighted by name must also be current ACOA members. If you're not already a member of ACOA, this is a great opportunity to sign-up now!

The Communications Committee and its team of editors and writers also submit select articles from The Signal to the monthly national COA publication, The Frontline. ACOA members interested in writing an article for The Frontline should reach out to ACOACommunications@gmail.com.

In addition to publishing The Signal and submitting articles to The Frontline, the Communications Committee also maintains the ACOA website throughout the year. Be sure to visit the site to learn more about upcoming events, opportunities to volunteer and participate in ACOA activities, and purchase USPHS merchandise from the ACOA Pride Store or donate lightly used uniform components to the ACOA uniform store.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://atlantacoa.com/the-signal>

Uniform Store Committee

Did you know ACOA has a Uniform Store? Did you know the ACOA Uniform Store offers used uniforms at 50% off of Navy NEX prices? If you're in need of new or gently worn uniform components, visit one of our pop-up events to get the uniform items you need at discounted prices. ACOA hosts quarterly pop-ups for officers to shop our inventory.

Retired? Promoted? If you have uniform and/or rank devices that you no longer wear or need, the ACOA Uniform Store accepts donations! Donations must be within regulation and in serviceable condition. You can also exchange your donation for the same item(s) in other sizes/ranks in the inventory.

Contact Us:

Women's Uniform Store - ACOAWomensUniforms@gmail.com

Men's Uniform Store - ACOAMensUniforms@gmail.com

Events Planning Committee

The Events Planning Committee manages the process of official ACOA in-person events from inception to implementation. This committee is co-chaired by two Members-at-Large.

In May 2024, the Events Planning Committee worked with the Membership Committee to organize and host the first ACOA Membership Picnic since 2019! It was a beautiful day, with plenty of food, good company, and the rain managed to hold off... until we got together for a photo!

The Events Planning Committee oversaw the planning of the 2024 Atlanta-area USPHS Promotion Ceremony in August in partnership with the CDC Commissioned Officers Liaison Office. Congratulations to the promoted officers!

If you would like to get involved in planning future events, contact LT Alexis Roberts and LCDR Leigh-Ellyn Preston at ACOAEventsPlanning@gmail.com.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development (PD) Committee provides guidance to officers on proper uniform wear, personal grooming standards, career development, officer evaluation, promotion, professional training and education, leadership development and mentoring, understanding USPHS policies, and other relevant topics.

Thus far, the PD committee has planned the following events for 2023-2024:

- Officer Portrait Sessions
- Clinical Practice Hours Lunch & Learn
- Lunch & Learn with the Producer of the USPHS Documentary
- Proper Uniform Wear Lunch & Learn

The PD committee hopes to engage as many Atlanta-area officers as possible with these and other professional development events.

For more information, please reach out to acoaprofessionaldevelopment@gmail.com to get involved.

Membership Committee

The goal of the Membership Committee is to increase and maintain active membership for Atlanta PHS Officers in the Atlanta Commissioned Officers Association (ACOA). This can be achieved through highly visible events, membership recruitment drives, reinstatement of inactive members, and member recruitment through word of mouth. In addition to Commissioned Officers Association (COA) dues, local annual dues are required to maintain an active membership with ACOA. From the list of active members that is maintained by the committee, members will be contacted with reminders to renew their membership commitment, at least two months before it expires. This will give officers a chance for renewal before their membership lapses. The committee will follow up with friendly, bi-weekly reminders if the dues are not received so that officers don't inadvertently forget to maintain their membership.

The Membership Committee is also responsible for planning various events throughout the year to educate, engage and involve officers. We are responsible for maintaining a log of participants for the events that the ACOA conducts. In addition, we are responsible for sending out the annual thank you letters to ACOA committee members after verifying via the event logs that document the members' involvement. For more information, please contact ACOAMembership@gmail.com.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Community Service Committee

Did you know that helping others is one way to increase the “happy” hormones in your body? Being active with your local COA chapter and helping your community in the process is a great way to release these hormones. Not only will you have the opportunity to make a difference within your community but you also have the opportunity to do something fun and exciting!

Are you looking to get involved in your local community? Would you like fellowship with other PHS officers? Well, look no further! ACOA's Community Service Committee provides regularly scheduled community service activities.

Community Service leads of 2023-2024, LT Sergio Rodriguez and LT Koffi Amegadje, re-established the community service subcommittee to support planning of additional events.

For more information or to get involved in the subcommittee, contact ACOACommunityService@gmail.com



Atlanta Commissioned Officers Association (ACOA) Membership Guide

Benefits of ACOA Membership

Every year ACOA sponsors events that provide members a variety of professional development, community service, and networking activities. As a member of the ACOA local branch, you also have access to [membership benefits](#) for the national Commissioned Officers Association (COA).

Benefits of ACOA membership include:

- Discounted PHS Pride Merchandise
- Used Uniform Store
- Anchor & Caduceus Dinner
- Community Service Events (e.g., USO, Habitat for Humanity)
- Professional Development Lunch & Learns on topics such as readiness, uniforms, & promotions
- Athletic events
- Quarterly publication of our newsletter, The Signal

How to get involved with ACOA:

- Email atlantacoa@gmail.com to be added to the ACOA Listserv
- [Join the ACOA Facebook Group Today!](#)
- Write an article for the Signal.
 - The Signal is for members, by members, and is published on a quarterly basis.
 - Email acoacommunications@gmail.com to submit articles and/or provide topic suggestions.
- Volunteer with the ACOA Community Service Committee.
 - To find out about upcoming opportunities please email acoacommunityservice@gmail.com

How to join ACOA:

1. An officer must be a member of the national Commissioned Officers Association (COA). The COA membership year starts July 1st and ends June 30th though you can join at any time. Dues are based on rank and newly commissioned officers are eligible for complimentary membership in COA.

Join COA Today! Visit www.coausphs.org.

2. Join Atlanta COA: When joining or renewing your National COA membership, you have the option to add Atlanta (ACOA) as your local branch. Annual dues are \$25 in addition to the National COA dues.

If you have already joined or renewed your National COA membership for the year and would like to add the Atlanta branch (ACOA), email coamembership@coausphs.org to be added.

If you have questions about ACOA or about how to become a member, please contact the ACOA Membership Committee at ACOAMembership@gmail.com

How can Atlanta PHS Officers participate in PACE?

by: LCDR Charles Edge

Created in 2013, Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE), is a chartered advisory group of the Office of the Surgeon General which leverages the expertise of Commissioned Corps officers to provide education about the benefits of prevention in their local communities. PACE grew out of their 2012 development of a strategy to standardize community outreach efforts resulting from their assessment of officer outreach activities at the time. By the next year, the nascent PACE program had become a resource and support network that officers around the country could use to provide health education and promote healthy lifestyles in their local communities. In 2018, PACE became the newest chartered organization in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

The Surgeon General Education Teams (SGETs), a component of PACE, were established to deliver evidence-based, public health related educational lessons focused on OSG priorities to local communities. SGETs are comprised of active duty USPHS Commissioned Corps officers throughout the ten (10) Health and Human Services (HHS) Regional Areas.

PACE Region 4 coordinators are LCDR Chiazor Eziakor and LT Dana Thompson. Since June 2023, there have been thirteen events. Region 4 PACE events. These events have taken place at back to school events, senior centers, and schools discussing important public health topics such as healthy eating, proper handwashing, healthy dental habits, fall prevention, and mental health. PACE events have the potential to impact thousands of students and adults and can provide important public health information to those in attendance.

Past events held at the Department of Veteran Affairs in May and during the USPHS Science Symposium in June 2024 by R4 PACE. There was a blood drive and a food sorting event at the 2024 USPHS Symposium in Jacksonville, FL, June 22-27.

All USPHS Officers are encouraged to participate. If you are interested, please send an email to PACE_REGION4@LIST.NIH.GOV. PACE events are great ways to get out into the community and discuss important public health topics. We look forward to seeing you at the next PACE event.

SEPTEMBER 2024 (DELAYED) | ATLANTA COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Perks of being an officer

by: CDR Marie E Johnston

There are a lot of things to love about being a PHS officer – getting discounts just sweetens the deal! I wanted to share a few of my favorite perks used in 2024.

Atlanta is full of great things to do – including many that offer a military discount to PHS officers! As of February 2024, [Zoo Atlanta](#) was the only place in the United States that housed pandas. Zoo Atlanta also offers free admission to PHS officers!

Many ski resorts or ski passes offer discounts to active duty officers. The weather may be warm now, but I am dreaming of the mountains and excited to hit the slopes in a few months!

What are some of your favorite perks?



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

SEPTEMBER 2024 (DELAYED) | ATLANTA COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

ARE YOU IN NEED OF BLS/CPR TRAINING?

by: LT Jamiko Cooper

*WELL, ACOA HAS YOU COVERED WITH A
FREE BLS/CPR HANDS ON TRAINING CLASS!*

If you are interested, please follow the steps below:

Step 1: Complete the Interest Form by visiting the [ACOA BLS INTEREST FORM](#)

Step 2: If interested, complete the online portion **BEFORE** attending the BLS/CPR hands on training by visiting [Red Cross Login](#)

Step 3: Once you receive the certificate of completion, email your certificate to LT Jamiko Cooper (jamiko.cooper@hhs.gov)

Step 4: Attend the HANDS ON BLS/CPR Class that will be scheduled at a later date at Dobbins ARB, GA - 94 ASTS

If you have any questions, please contact LT Jamiko Cooper (jamiko.cooper@hhs.gov)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call for Articles

The Signal and FRONTLINE Publication Guidelines for COA Members

CRITERIA:

Frontline is a publication for and about COA members and COF donors. It is National COA policy that all officers mentioned in articles, authors of articles and “photo courtesy of “ individuals must be current COA members or COF donors; it is imperative that this be confirmed prior to submitting an article to COA; requests for exceptions to this policy should be addressed to COA/F’s Executive Director.

FORMAT:

- Submit as an email attachment
- Word format using Calibri, font size 10 (no exceptions)
- Title of article: Century Gothic, font size 14, italic and bold
- Body of article: Calibri, 10 point font
- Review articles for spelling, grammar, sentence flow and variety, truth in numbers, and etc.
- Limit articles to 1,000 words or less
- Include your rank, name, and credentials (if you have them)
- Email or preferred contact information
- Clearance approval by OP/DIVI (if applicable)

Each submitter will receive an email confirming receipt of the article; this is not an acceptance of your article.

PHOTOS:

Submission of photos is encouraged; action photos are preferred. All photos accompanying submissions must be in jpeg file format and attached to the same email submission (*please do not embed photo in word document*); provide a suggested caption, if a caption is desired. Caption sizes should be limited and are subject to editing by COA.

Send all article submissions to ACOACommunications@gmail.com