

Charter of the USPHS Veterinary Professional Advisory Committee – November, 2008

I. MISSION

The Veterinary Professional Advisory Committee (Vet PAC) provides advice and consultation to the US Surgeon General on issues relating to the professional practice and the personnel activities, civil service (CS) and commissioned corps (CC), of the veterinary category. The Vet PAC provides similar advisory assistance to the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and, upon request, to the Operating Division (OPDIV) and Staff Division (STAFFDIV) directors within the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and to Agency and/or Program Heads of non-DHHS entities that utilize US Public Health Service (USPHS) personnel.

II. RELATIONSHIP OF THE VET PAC TO THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (USPHS)

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Vet PAC operates in a staff capacity. It does not substitute for line management, or in any way exercise the prerogatives of the respective operating programs. While Vet PAC members are chosen from the respective agencies and organizations which employ USPHS personnel, they neither represent OPDIV/Agency management nor speak for the OPDIV/Agency. They are knowledgeable professionals who represent a cross section of the interests, concerns, and responsibilities of professionals in OPDIVs/Agencies and organizations staffed by PHS personnel.

III. OBJECTIVES

The Vet PAC serves in a resource and advisory capacity to assist in the development, coordination, and evaluation of activities related to the professional discipline it represents in the PHS with the specific objectives of:

1. Identifying and facilitating resolution of issues of concern as they relate to the veterinary category of the USPHS and related civil service veterinary professional disciplines.
2. Assessing PHS personnel needs and assist in meeting these needs through activities in recruitment, training, utilization, and recognition of officers in the Veterinary Category and related civil service professional disciplines.
3. Developing position papers, statistical reports, and/or guidelines where appropriate, in order to advise and comment on matters relating to the personnel issues and professional practice of the Veterinary Category of the USPHS and related civil service professional disciplines.
4. Promoting the recruitment, utilization, development and retention of veterinarians by the PHS and other Government programs.
5. Promoting cooperation and communication among veterinarians and other health professionals in government, academic, corporate, and private service sectors.

6. Promoting all aspects of the veterinary category and related civil service professionals throughout the OPDIVs ,Agencies and Programs of the US government.
7. Providing liaison among professional disciplines within and among PHS components, and providing advice and consultation to the Agency Heads and OPDIVs upon request.

IV. FUNCTIONS

In carrying out its broad mission and objectives, the functions of the Vet PAC shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide general professional advice and recommendations:
 - a. Review and comment on issues referred to the Vet PAC by the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officer, OPDIVs, Agency Heads, and/or Program Heads.
 - b. Deliberate issues; develop findings, and present recommendations to the Surgeon General and/or Chief Professional Officer.
 - c. Provide advice on professional aspects of the veterinary category, i.e. new technologies, regulations, curricula, functional group representation, emerging professional competencies, etc.
 - d. Provide advice on ethical issues and standards of practice relative to veterinary medicine .
 - e. Review and provide recommendations concerning proposed or needed changes to appointment standards and professional requirements including licensure and specialty board certification .
2. Act as a primary resource for veterinary career development:
 - a. Advise on CC and CS practices concerning career development.
 - b. Advise on operating practices concerning the appropriate/optimum use of veterinary personnel designed to best meet PHS needs, OPDIV/Agency personnel billets/FTEs and the needs of the individual.
 - c. Advise on issues related to PHS, Operation Division/Agency promotion practices and, for commissioned officers, assimilation into the Regular Corps for the veterinary profession.
 - d. Formulate criteria for the selection of candidates for training and/or other career development options.
 - e. Identify both continuing and long term intramural/extramural education needs for the veterinary category, and identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs.
 - f. Review applications for long term training, assess appropriateness of requested training in terms of the individual's and the Service's needs, and provide recommendations for the approval/disapproval of such requests.
3. Provide advice and assistance on veterinary staffing issues:
 - a. Assess and project the needs for the veterinary category staffing levels, both CC and CS, throughout the PHS/DHHS.

- b. Provide advice on the goals, objectives, and procedures designed to meet the PHS staffing needs.
 - c. Provide guidance for recruitment to the short term student affiliation programs (COSTEP, summer students, etc.).
 - d. Develop, and/or review and critique, veterinary category-specific PHS recruitment materials, procedures, and programs.
 - e. Help establish networks of current, as well as former, PHS professionals who can assist and facilitate recruitment activities.
 - f. Provide guidance to approved PHS recruiters concerning the recruitment of qualified candidates to the veterinary category and related civil service professional disciplines.
 - g. Assist in the development of orientation materials for newly-hired veterinary category professionals and provide advice/recommendations concerning orientation programs.
4. Communicate and encourage appropriate use of awards/recognition systems:
 - a. Identify, establish, and help administer special professional, veterinary category specific awards.
 - b. Maintain cognizance of the existing CS and CC award programs and opportunities. Promote awareness of non-PHS award programs.
 5. Serve as a communication link and information resource for the category:
 - a. Communicate to the CC/CS veterinary category staff important information concerning professional, ethical, and technical issues.
 - b. Encourage individual membership in, and involvement with, professional organizations and societies in order to promote open communication with non Federal veterinary colleagues.
 - c. Ensure the distribution of minutes and/or other Vet PAC-developed materials to the extent possible and appropriate to CC and CS staff. Ensure the availability of Vet PAC minutes to other PACs and the Office of the Surgeon General through the Vet PAC website.

V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Basic Eligibility Requirements: Members must be full-time CC or CS personnel, and at the time they are nominated and appointed to the Vet PAC meet the eligibility requirements for initial appointment to the veterinary category and Federal personnel systems. An exception may be made, after consultation with the PHS Office of Reserve Affairs, to include one voting member of the Vet PAC who is a member of the USPHS inactive Reserve Corps. Active duty officer nominees must Force Readiness requirements and applicable commissioned corps standards. Nominees cannot have current or pending adverse or disciplinary actions contained in official personnel files. Active duty officers within their 3 year probationary status are eligible for Vet PAC membership
2. Staff from the immediate Office of the Surgeon General and Office of Commissioned Corps Operations may not serve on the Vet PAC as a voting member.

3. Size of the PAC: The Vet PAC shall have no fewer than seven and no more than 20 voting members.
4. Organizational Representation: In order to provide the range of experiences and perspectives necessary for addressing issues before the Vet PAC, every effort must be made to have the broadest representation possible among all OPDIVs and Agencies that are routinely staffed by USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers of the veterinary category.
5. Geographic Considerations: The Vet PAC will have, as voting members, at least three veterinarians whose regular duty station is geographically removed by a distance of 75 or more miles from the Washington Metropolitan Area.
6. Gender and Cultural Diversity Representation: Every effort will be made to assure that the Vet PAC does not consist (1) entirely of men or entirely of women or (2) entirely of one race, as long as no selection is made to the Vet PAC on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or culture.
7. Personnel System: The Vet PAC will not consist entirely of CC or entirely of CS personnel.
8. Professional Seniority: The Vet PAC will have as a voting member a minimum of one individual who at the time of appointment to the PAC is at the Temporary Grade of 0-4 or lower, or has less than 5 years of professional experience.
9. Professional Discipline Composition: The Vet PAC, in so far as possible, should have representatives of the major functional tracks currently represented by CC/CS PHS veterinarians.
10. Ex Officio Members (non-voting): The Chief Professional Officer is an ex-officio member of the Vet PAC [See IX(1)]. The former chair may service 1 additional year as an ex-officio member of the Vet PAC. The Vet PAC may identify other individuals and request that they serve as ex-officio members.
11. Liaison Members (non-voting): The Vet PAC may identify individuals to serve in a liaison capacity to provide information or assist with activities, e.g. staff from the immediate office of the OSG or OCCO.

VI. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. The Vet PAC will identify anticipated vacancies on the Vet PAC and publicize a call to the category and to the PHS OPDIVs (as well as any OPDIV/ agency or program employing PHS veterinarians) for submission of candidates for nomination. Interested candidates or nominators should submit relevant information in support of the nomination to the PAC Chairperson. Once received and compiled, all CC members of the veterinary category and the Vet PAC will vote for Vet PAC membership vacancies. Voting shall be by electronic ballot, with results submitted to the PAC Chairperson for tallying. If the PAC Chairperson is on the ballot, the votes shall be tallied by the CPO. The name(s) of the candidate(s) receiving the most votes from all ballots cast will be forwarded to the Chief Professional Officer for concurrence and consistency with V Membership criteria above.
2. The Veterinary CPO will transmit, over his/her signature, to the nominee's respective agency administration and/or organization director, a letter, which

identifies the nominee(s) from that agency and requests the agency's concurrence or nonconcurrence of the individual's nomination.

The letter from the Veterinary CPO to the Agency/OPDIV official shall inform the agency official of the broad operating principles of the Vet PAC, provide a best estimate of the annual time requirement, and inform the agency of its responsibility to assume costs associated with the prospective member's service on the Vet PAC.

3. The CPO will transmit the agency's response to the Vet PAC for review and comment. The PAC's recommendation concerning its desired membership along with the Agency's response and any comments by the CPO will be transmitted to the Surgeon General, who will make the formal selection.
4. This nomination process shall be conducted so that the final nomination package is available for the Surgeon General's consideration no less than 30 calendar days prior to the start of the operational year.
5. Should the need arise to fill an unexpired term, the same process as used for regular term appointments will be followed, except that the nomination package will be conveyed to the Surgeon General as soon as possible for action.

VII. TERM OF APPOINTMENT

1. The term of appointment for a voting member will be 3 years. Appointments will be staggered so that not all of the members' terms expire during the same operational year. The Vet PAC shall consider 1 January as the beginning of its operational year.
2. Once a member has accumulated a lifetime total of 6 years of service on the Vet PAC, they are not eligible for reappointment. Terms of office may be served consecutively at the discretion of the Vet PAC. Appointments for a second term will be determined in the same manner as initial appointments. Officers with 4 or 5 years of Vet PAC service remain eligible for a single year term as Vet PAC chair.
3. Alternates: Cognizant of the demands of the member's primary work responsibilities and the Vet PAC's need to conduct business, the Vet PAC allows each voting member to appoint, and inform the Chairperson of, a single individual who can serve as his/her alternate. Such alternates shall have voting privileges when serving in the place of a primary member. It is the responsibility of the primary Vet PAC member to keep the alternate fully informed and knowledgeable of the Vet PAC's activities. Any Agency/OPDIV clearance or approval requirements for travel/per diem will have to be handled within the agency by the primary Vet PAC member.
4. Attendance: Any member of the Vet PAC who frequently misses meetings without just cause can, at the discretion of the Vet PAC, be asked to voluntarily resign from the PAC, or the Vet PAC can initiate a request to the Surgeon General, through the CPO, to terminate said membership and so inform the Agency Head.

VIII. OFFICERS

The leadership of the Vet PAC shall be composed of a Chairperson and a Chairperson-elect as described below in this section. The Chairperson and Chairperson-elect will be elected by majority vote of all voting PAC members.

1. Chairperson

(a) Term: The Chairperson will serve for a 1-year term. An individual may serve two 1-year terms as PAC Chairperson during the course of his/her career. These terms do not have to be consecutive. Service as PAC Chairperson counts toward the 6-year career limit for voting PAC membership.

(b) Duties: Preside at meetings, represent the Vet PAC and veterinary category as necessary, and serve as liaison between the Vet PAC and the Office of the Surgeon General and the Veterinary Chief Professional Officer.

2. Chairperson-elect

(a) Term: The Chairperson-elect will be elected for a two-year term. The individual will serve the first year as the Chairperson-elect and the second year as the Chair of the Vet PAC. The year as Chair-elect will not count against the two year limit that an individual may serve as Chair of the committee.

(b) Duties: The Chairperson-elect will assist the Chairperson as necessary and in the absence of the Chairperson will act as the Chair for meetings and other functions as deemed appropriate. They will assume the full role and responsibilities of Chairperson during the second year, with the endorsement of the Vet PAC. If the endorsement of the Committee is not given to the Incoming Chair, an election will be held according to the same criteria for electing the Chair-elect. If during the year, the incumbent Chair-elect can no longer serve as Chair-elect or if the Chair-elect notifies the Vet PAC that he/she cannot serve the following year as Chairperson, the Vet PAC shall elect a new Chair-elect.

IX. CHIEF PROFESSIONAL OFFICER (CPO)

1. Vet PAC Membership: The Chief Professional Officer shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Vet PAC.
2. Relationship with Vet PAC: All output of the Vet PAC, be it correspondence, reports, minutes of its proceedings, or other, must be transmitted through the CPO who, as he/she may deem appropriate, may provide concurring or non-concurring comments but may not stop or unduly delay such transmittals.

X. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. The Vet PAC shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (e.g. bylaws). These shall include, at the minimum, provisions covering the following:
 - a. Operational year: The Vet PAC shall consider 1 January as the beginning of its operational year.
 - b. Frequency of Meetings: Meetings will be held once per quarter at a minimum. Additional meetings can be called by the PAC Chairperson with the advice of the CPO prior to any such meeting.
2. Records and Reporting:
 - a. Minutes of each Vet PAC meeting will be developed and approved by the Vet PAC members.
 - b. Minutes and reports of the Vet PAC will be distributed in accord with item IV. (5) c. FUNCTIONS.
 - c. The Vet PAC must establish a system to maintain a permanent file of the official minutes and reports of the Vet PAC.
3. Executive Secretary: The Executive Secretary must be a member of the veterinary category but is not required to be a voting Vet PAC member. This individual shall be responsible for taking minutes of all official PAC functions, for providing copies of this material for review by the PAC Chairperson and CPO, and for transmission of the material to the appropriate resource for dissemination to the category.
4. Quorum: A quorum consists of at least 50 percent of the Vet PAC's voting membership. An alternate attending in lieu of the member shall be counted in determining the quorum requirement.
5. Voting: Where voting is required or appropriate, other than as stipulated in the charter, a quorum must be present and action will be determined by the simple majority of those voting members present.
6. Committees: Where the Vet PAC elects to establish standing or ad-hoc subcommittees, said membership may include non-Vet PAC members provided that the Chairperson of the committee is a voting member of the Vet PAC.
7. Charter Update and Approval: The Vet PAC will review and, if required, update this charter at least every 3 years. If the Vet PAC subsequently modifies its charter, such modifications require the review and approval of the Surgeon General.

Concurrence:

CAPT Hugh M Mainzer, USPHS Chief Veterinary Officer/ Date
Approved:

RADM Steven Galson, US Surgeon General (Acting) /Date

Updated Wednesday, November 5, 2008