



DENTAL CATEGORY
OF THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
USPHS Dental Category

White Paper

2010 DePAC Billets Appointment Work Group

Members:

CAPT Khoi Nguyen, Chair

CAPT Tanya Robinson

CAPT Sean Kelly

LCDR Christopher Bennett

LCDR Vincent Giardino

LCDR Demetres Williams

Dr. Philip Zinser

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The purpose of the Billets Appointment Workgroup (WG) is to function as the liaison between the Dental Professional Advisory Committee, the Dental Category Chief Professional Officer, and the Chief Dental Officers of each agency. The Billets Appointment Workgroup is responsible for receiving and reviewing all requests for the changes in the rank/grade assignment for the Dental Category billets. Every set of personnel/transfer orders issued has an assigned grade attached that is based upon the position and the responsibilities that it involves. This ranges from 03/Lieutenant through 06/Captain billet grades. All existing billets for dental category officers have an assigned grade which is identified both on the orders received and can also be found in each officer's OPF. The billeting workgroup is tasked to review all requests from any Chief Dental Officer who wants to reassign a grade to a current billet, whether upgrading or downgrading it, and to determine appropriateness of request and fairness of reassignment relative to all agencies.

Prior to the Commissioned Corps' recent transformation process, the billets system generally reflected officer capabilities rather than the requirements and responsibilities demanded of the positions. There were no resources to track and monitor vacancies to match officers to specific positions. Ineffective force management often resulted, due to the lack of such resources (Bailey, 2009). The billets transformation process was initiated to resolve these and other workforce issues. This involved the establishment of the Dental Professional Advisory Committee (DePAC) Billets Appointment WG, which acts as a link between the DePAC and the Dental Category Chief Professional Officers from each agency. The Billets WG's primary role is to receive and review all change requests for rank/grade assignment of all billets (USPHS, 2008). This white paper will provide insight into the billets transformation and the purpose of the Billets WG.

The Commissioned Corps' current billets system did not provide consistent and comprehensive information for all positions encumbered by its officers. Billets were often written and later edited to benefit these officers as their careers progressed. This

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was not an effective or efficient force management tool as job responsibilities were not consistent for similar positions across the agencies. The new billets system will resolve this issue through 1) development of policies and individual billets for every position, 2) incorporate Direct Access, 3) develop an electronic system to monitor and announce billet vacancies, and 4) allow periodic reviews and approvals of new billets (DePAC, 2010). It will also provide comprehensive job information for all positions. Officers will be selected based on experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to fulfill positions. For officers, it will provide increased clarity, responsibilities, expectations, and real-time vacancy monitoring. Agencies are provided with real-time identification of officers best suited for their vacant positions (DePAC, 2010).

Spearheading the billets transformation process is CAPT Byron Bailey. As the Billets Transformation Officer, he coordinated with each category from all agencies to develop standard category billets. Online tutorials were posted on the Commissioned Corps website for officers, supervisors, and reviewing officials in both written and video formats as well as a Q&A section detailing the implementation process. His team developed and coordinated the roll-out schedule of the Billets Collection System (BCS), which is a data collection tool of category-specific standard billet templates for all positions encumbered. The entire process is projected to be completed by the end of 2010 (Bailey, 2009).

As noted, the roll out schedule is category-specific. Officers are notified to initiate the data collection process during their roll-out month and provide information describing requirements for their specific positions. Supervisors will review the data and edit with the officers prior to forwarding the completed templates to reviewing officials for review and editing. Agency liaisons and the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) will then make recommendations before sending to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO) for final approval. Officers in multidisciplinary billets will be able to request a change to a category specific billet with prior approval from their supervisors and reviewing officials (DePAC, 2010).

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The Billets WG plays a crucial role once the BCS is completed because it “functions as the liaison between the DePAC and Dental Category Chief Professional Officers of each category” (USPHS, 2008). Any requests for changes to a different grade/rank to a current billet will be subject to review by the Billets WG to “determine appropriateness of request and fairness of reassignment relative to all agencies” (USPHS, 2008). During the review process, the Billets WG can 1) deny the request for the billet change, 2) return the request to the submitter for revision and additional information, or 3) approve the request and forward it to the PAC for a final vote. Once approved by the DePAC it will be submitted to OCCO for final consideration (USPHS, 2008).

To aid agencies in selecting the most qualified officers for their billets, the Corps has incorporated Direct Access (DA) from the U.S. Coast Guard as their new force management information technology system. DA is a self-service website accessible to both officers and those in management. Officers can monitor and update their profiles, supervisor information, immunizations, view current job postings, and provide pertinent information to include deployment role(s). It provides real-time monitoring of all officers’ certifications/skills for more streamlined strategic workforce analysis and allow for consistent ratings of officer evaluations based on work performance, experience, and abilities and skills. For the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD), having access to this data will optimize their officer selection for immediate disaster responses (Glabach, 2009).

Changes in policies and procedures to the billets system demonstrate a move forward by the Commissioned Corps for its officers. By improving clarity on billet descriptions and application processes, officers are able to seek jobs more suited to meet their skills, career goals, and career paths for promotion. As we look to the future, the Dental Professional Advisory Committee Billets Appointment Work Group will continue to provide bi-directional feedback and a checks-and-balance process to ensure that all billets are appropriately rated for fairness regardless of the agencies in which the officers serve.

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References

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