



Colleagues:

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It's been a little over three weeks since my ceremonial Commissioning and Change of Command Ceremony. I'm so honored by all the congratulatory statements I received from people and organizations across the country and am grateful to the many individuals that worked so hard to make the ceremony a success. I'm proud to be the Nation's 18<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General and I'm equally proud to be one of you, an officer of the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The collective work you do and the manner in which you do it exemplify the ideals we all cherish, namely leadership, service, excellence and integrity.

Our work to, promote and protect the health of the Nation assumes even greater significance during this unprecedented time of opportunity for health professionals engaged in public service. As national efforts to improve access to affordable, quality, healthcare continues, policies and practices affecting populations throughout the nation are being re-examined and re-defined. This process is common whenever a new administration assumes the reins of government, and it provides an opportunity for us to do the same.

In this regard, I must identify a permanent Deputy Surgeon General to assist me in articulating the best public health information to the Nation, and to assist me in overseeing the operations of the Commissioned Corps. Soon, I will be assembling a panel of individuals to conduct a search for a permanent Deputy Surgeon General. The panel will field applicants for this important position and make recommendations to me regarding appropriate candidates. Once the panel is assembled, I will more fully convey the details of this process to the entire Corps.

In preparation for the selection of a Deputy Surgeon General, I have asked individuals within the Immediate Office of the Surgeon General to resume the official duties of the billets they encumber. This will enable an open and transparent process for the selection of a Deputy Surgeon General and ensure the efficient operation of the Office of the Surgeon General during this time of transition.

RADM Robert Williams, who has provided exemplary service as Acting Deputy Surgeon General for over two years, will now be fully engaged as my Chief of Staff. CAPT Carol Romano, who has been steadfast in handling multiple jobs including Acting Chief of Staff, will resume her full-time duties as Director of the Office of Reserve Affairs. These two senior officers exemplify the selfless service for which our Corps is known and I am truly grateful they will continue to be valuable resources to me and the entire Commissioned Corps.

In the meantime, and until I select a permanent Deputy Surgeon General, RADM David Rutstein will serve as the Acting Deputy Surgeon General. CAPT Dan Beck, the Deputy Director of the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) will oversee the OFRD.

I hope all of you will enthusiastically support all these officers as they continue to serve the Corps, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Nation.

Sincerely,

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VADM, USPHS  
Surgeon General