



July 15, 2004

TO: All Commissioned Corps Officers

FROM: United States Surgeon General

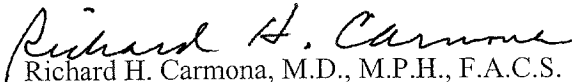
SUBJECT: Corps Readiness

On June 29, 2004, Secretary Thompson sent a memorandum to HHS Operating Division Heads, wherein he stated, "The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps not only supports the day-to-day public health missions of our Department and your Operating Divisions, but it also performs a critical service in addressing the urgent public health needs of our Nation. The events of the last three years have proven this to be true time after time." He also advised the Operating Division Heads that he had directed me to work with each of them to find ways to ensure that our officers attain readiness status. On July 2, 2004, Acting Assistant Secretary for Health, RADM Cristina Beato, signed the new Manual Circular defining the Basic Level of Force Readiness for the Commissioned Corps. This document allows us to rapidly move forward in attaining force readiness for the Commissioned Corps.

Further, the introductory paragraph to the Manual Circular spells out the inter-connectivity between readiness and the two overarching missions of the Corps: 1) to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the Nation, and 2) to meet the urgent and extraordinary public health needs of the American people. It is now time for each and every officer to meet the Basic level of force readiness. In fact, after reviewing the Manual Circular, I think you will agree that every officer can quickly attain this standard, and thus stand ready to support the people of this country in time of need.

The Manual Circular makes reference to the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) throughout the document. The Commissioned Corps Readiness Force has now been subsumed by OFRD. This also delivers the message that no longer is readiness an activity for a subset of the Corps. Rather, the OFRD will oversee readiness and deployment for the Corps as a whole.

The overwhelming support of Secretary Thompson and Acting Assistant Secretary for Health Beato for the Corps, and for readiness in particular, is a unique and powerful opportunity for all of us. I ask that you review the Manual Circular promptly and, for those of you who have not done so, move with all speed toward attaining Basic readiness. I thank you for your service, and for your patriotism, as we prepare our Corps.

  
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