

## Recruiting New Members for COA

### What You Can and Cannot Do

Increasing COA's membership is a top priority goal for the Association's Board of Directors. The Board hopes that all COA members recognize that one obligation of membership is the active recruitment of new members. One question often asked is "What am I allowed to do in encouraging officers to join COA?" Here are some "Do's and Don'ts" about member recruitment. They apply equally to active duty officers and retired officers in supervisory positions over active duty officers.

#### Do

- Let officers know you are a COA member and why.
- Inform officers of membership benefits:
  - Legislative advocacy for Commissioned Corps issues
  - Competitive insurance programs.
  - *Frontline* - COA's informative and award-winning newsletter
  - Car rental discounts through Avis/Budget
  - Reduced registration fee for annual PHS Scientific and Training Symposium
  - Access to PHS Commissioned Officer Foundation scholarship and fellowship educational programs
  - Junior officer (O-3 and below) scholarship to attend annual PHS Scientific and Training Symposium
  - Membership in one (or more) of COA's 90+ local branches throughout the world
  - Opportunities to serve in leadership positions that have impact on the future of the Corps
- Inform officers of COA achievements in securing Commissioned Corps rights and benefits and improvements for the Corps including:
  - Maintaining Corps compensation consistent with the other Uniformed Services
  - Inclusion in Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, including transferability of educational benefits to dependent family members
  - Whistleblower protections for Corps officers
  - Exemption from furlough in the event of a temporary suspension of government appropriations or sequestration budget cuts
  - Inclusion in expanded TRICARE coverage for dependent family members for therapies to treat autism spectrum disorders
  - Elimination of numerical cap on the size of the Regular Corps
  - Authorization for a Ready Reserve component
  - Authorization of the Public Health Science Track – an ROTC-like program that will provide 850 scholarships per year for students of certain health professions who agree to serve in the PHS Commissioned Corps
- Let officers know that COA advocates and actively works for:
  - A Surgeon General appointed from the ranks of career Corps officers
  - An expanded role for the Corps in global health issues
  - And more issues of interest and concern to our members
- Invite officers to local branch meetings
- Invite officers to attend the annual PHS Scientific and Training Symposium
- Invite officers to visit the COA website at [www.coausphs.org](http://www.coausphs.org) to learn more
- Emphasize that COA membership is entirely voluntary

- Inform colleagues about certain COA activities – local branch meetings, annual Symposium, etc, using government resources (email, etc). *Government resources can be used for informational purposes only – not to promote or encourage membership or legislative action.*
- Invite and encourage officers to join COA

**Don't**

- Order a subordinate officer (or any officer for that matter) to join COA, attend COA meetings, etc.
- Imply that COA membership is required for any reason such as promotion, advancement, better working conditions, etc.
- Use government time or resources (email, etc.) to encourage COA membership or to encourage action on legislative issues.

The general rule of thumb here is that it is perfectly acceptable to provide information; and completely unacceptable to use your actual or perceived authority to coerce someone into joining COA.

If in doubt, contact National COA for guidance.