

# Be a Mental Health Officer

## in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps



### ➤ About the Commissioned Corps

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps protects, promotes, and advances the health and safety of the Nation. With more than 6,000 officers, the Commissioned Corps is one of the Nation's seven uniformed services and resides in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As the world's foremost public health service, it is composed entirely of officers who have been commissioned on the basis of their health-related training.

Commissioned officers deliver ongoing health promotion and disease prevention programs and are called on to provide onsite clinical and public health expertise in times of national emergencies and disasters. A career in the Commissioned Corps offers unlimited opportunities to serve your country while improving the quality of people's lives and making a real difference in public health.

### ➤ What It Means To Be a Mental Health Officer in the Commissioned Corps

The Commissioned Corps has mental health officers who work throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other Federal government agencies. Mental health positions include:

- Psychiatrist
- Clinical psychologist
- Clinical social worker
- Mental health nurse
- Mental health physician's assistant

The Corps seeks mental health officers to:

- Provide direct mental health care services
- Manage mental health programs for communities
- Carry out Federal public health missions
- Conduct behavioral research
- Respond to local, regional, and national public health disasters and emergencies
- Provide mental health support to Commissioned Corps officers and other Federal responders to national disasters and emergencies
- Promote recovery of communities following national disasters and emergencies

Mental health officers focus on preventing behavioral health disorders and on providing treatment for people with substance abuse and mental health disorders. Besides direct patient care, there are opportunities to become involved in organized community mental health prevention and treatment programs that benefit the overall mental health of a community.

### ➤ Pay

Starting base pay and potential bonuses vary depending on the number of years of training and experience, specialty training received, credentials and certifications, geographic location of duty station, and number of dependents, if any. Base pay increases with promotions and years of service. Tax-free compensation is provided for housing and meals. More information comparing compensation in the Corps to pay in the private sector is available at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).

## › Benefits

As an officer in the Commissioned Corps, you will enjoy a camaraderie and sense of common purpose unlike anything you will experience in the private sector, and Commissioned Corps benefits are generous. They include:

- Health care and dental care at no cost
- Thirty days of paid vacation per year
- Paid sick leave
- Paid maternity leave
- Malpractice insurance coverage
- A retirement plan with benefits eligibility beginning after 20 years of service

**Many additional benefits are listed at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).** Officers in the Commissioned Corps have opportunities for mobility among government agencies and career advancement in diverse work settings. The Corps encourages you to expand your knowledge base and grow professionally so that you can effectively deal with the challenges of improving public health. Tuition and long-term training opportunities may be available.

## › Special Degree and License Requirements

All Commissioned Corps officers must meet several basic qualifications: You must be a U.S. citizen, be less than 44 years of age, and pass a physical examination. Degree and training requirements for mental health officers will vary depending on the area of practice. Mental health officers must be licensed in their respective professional categories. Unlicensed officers will have opportunities to gain clinical experience and pursue a license.

## › Join America's Public Health Team

If you are a mental health professional or student interested in joining the fight for public health, or if you have questions about what we do and how you can make a difference with the Commissioned Corps, we would like to talk to you. For more information, call us at 800-279-1605 or visit our Web site at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).

