Our names are LT Sarah Lyrata and LT Joe Douglass. We are active-duty Therapist Category officers in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. We are currently stationed with the Indian Health Service and Federal Bureau of Prisons, respectively.

There are currently a variety of excellent and unique job opportunities within the USPHS Commissioned Corps for physical therapists and DPT students, including clinical rotations and paid student externships. We would like to coordinate a presentation of these opportunities to your Doctor of Physical Therapy students!

**USPHS Commissioned Corps Senior Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP)**

A program that we would specifically like to highlight is the USPHS Commissioned Corps Senior Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP). In the SRCOSTEP, full-time students entering their final year of graduate school or professional training receive compensation and full benefits while in school in exchange for committing to service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps upon graduation.

We included the **SRCOSTEP Factsheet** and **SRCOSTEP Frequently Asked Questions** documents in this attachment. Furthermore, we have included additional information about the USPHS Commissioned Corps including who we are, what we do, where we serve, our mission, benefits, etc.

Please feel free to contact us at slyrata@southcentralfoundation.com or j2douglass@bop.gov if you have any questions about the USPHS Commissioned Corps, the SRCOSTEP, and/or would like to set up a presentation for your students.

**USPHS Resources**

- Application Fact Sheet
- Who We Are Fact Sheet
- USPHS History
- Physical Therapy Fact Sheet
- Ready Reserve Fact Sheet
The USPHS Commissioned Corps is currently recruiting dedicated clinicians and public health professionals. If you are interested in being part of our service, follow the 8 steps below.

1. **Visit the USPHS.GOV**
   Select “Ready to Apply?” to register as a New User for the Applicant Enrollment System (AES).
   
   Before applying, review the Guiding Medical Accession Standards for the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (pdf 309 KB)

2. **Create and Activate Your Account by Selecting “Start Application”**
   Access the AES and follow the steps below:
   a. Activate your account by clicking on the link you will receive from aes@hhs.gov.
   b. Once the account is activated, click on the link to login and enter a username and password.
   c. A message will be sent with a validation token to validate your identity.
   d. Enter the validation token and select “Start New” on the main page.

3. **Start Your Pre-Screen**
   Complete the pre-screen to determine if you meet the eligibility requirements for the type of application you are interested in.
   
   If you meet the eligibility requirements, you will receive an email from aes@hhs.gov with instructions on “next steps”. The exact Next Steps will depend on any waivers needed. If no waivers are needed, you may proceed with submitting the application documents.
   
   If you do not pass the preliminary screening, you will receive a notice confirming your ineligibility. If you have any questions about why you were found ineligible, you may contact cchelpdesk@hhs.gov.
Submit Required Materials
Check your email for a detailed application checklist and submit application materials through the AES. If a waiver is needed, submit the supporting documents.

Once an application has been submitted and all waivers (if needed) have been approved, your application packet will be assigned to a HR Specialist who will prepare a professional board review.

Note: You will receive an email from aes@hhs.gov informing you of every status change in your application (e.g., acceptance of documents, waiver approved, waiver disapproved, assigned to HR Specialist).

Stand Ready to Interview for the Professional Category Board
The Call to Active Duty team will schedule a professional appointment board interview with senior ranking Public Health Service officers. After you have successfully cleared the professional board, your name will be submitted for a nomination.

Complete Remaining Three Commissioning Requirements
The remaining requirements include medical, security, and nomination clearances. Stand ready to receive an email to start the medical clearance process. Please ensure you make completing all steps with clearances a priority.

Seek Employment Opportunities with Federal Agencies
You may begin to seek employment opportunities with Federal agencies if you have not already secured such employment or have not already started to search. You can visit usajobs.gov or contact the Chief Professional Officer within the specific category to obtain a list of vacancies or employment opportunities. An Agency liaison or representative may also contact you to interview for a position that is available at one of the agencies Public Health Service officers are assigned to.

Note: Once you have secured a position, you will receive an email from the Security point of contact to initiate the security clearance process. Please follow all instructions and adhere to all timelines.

Call to Active Duty
If you are offered a position, your hiring agency will communicate an intent to commission you into the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Final requirements are then verified and an offer of commissioning is extended to you by the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Once you accept the offer, official orders are issued to call you to active duty.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the Call Center at 1-888-225-3302 or direct your questions to cchelpdesk@hhs.gov. For specific questions related to an Inter-Service Transfer (IST), please email phs-ist-assist@hhs.gov.

For more information or to start your application, visit usphs.gov.
History
Since 1798, men and women have served on the front lines protecting our nation's public health in what is today known as the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. We trace our origin to the U.S. Marine Hospital Service, implemented to protect against the spread of diseases from sailors who returned from foreign ports, and maintained the health of new immigrants.

Who We Are
The Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service is one of the eight uniformed services, and is the only one dedicated solely to protecting America's public health:

- Led by the Assistant Secretary for Health and U.S. Surgeon General
- Composed of nearly 6,100 full-time, highly qualified public health officers and
- Specialties include: physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, clinical and rehabilitation therapists, dieticians, engineers, environmental health and health service officers, scientists, and veterinarians.

What We Do
Protect, Promote and Advance the Health and Safety of our Nation

- Provide Essential Healthcare Services to underserved and vulnerable populations.

- Deploy for Public Health Emergencies. As the cornerstone of U.S. crisis response, officers deploy to natural disasters, disease outbreaks, global public health emergencies, and serve on humanitarian assistance missions.

- Lead Public Health Programs and Policy Development. Officers leverage their extensive experience, skills, and networks to provide expert leadership within HHS and throughout the federal government.

- Advance Innovation and Science. Clinicians and research scientists work at the forefront of the battles against the COVID-19 response, Ebola, cancer, food safety, HIV, mental health and more.

Visit www.USPHS.gov for more information.
Ready Reserve Corps

The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is a team of more than 6,000 full-time officers dedicated to promoting and advancing public health and disease prevention programs. As one of America’s eight uniformed services, the USPHS Commissioned Corps fills essential public health leadership, clinical and service roles within Federal agencies and programs, including the Indian Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Bureau of Prisons, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. The USPHS Commissioned Corps serves at the direction of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Establishment of the Ready Reserve Corps

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law March 27, 2020, provides both the authority and funding for the establishment of the Ready Reserve Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will accept Ready Reserve Corps applications online beginning in Fall 2020 and will commission its first officers in Spring 2021.

The Ready Reserve Corps will provide trained and ready personnel to fill critical public health needs and will:

- Support the USPHS Commissioned Corps’ capacity to respond to regional, national, and global health emergencies and improve access to health services
- Preserve clinical care positions by maintaining a surge capacity of health professionals available for deployment without jeopardizing the service of clinicians in hard-to-fill roles
- Offer an opportunity to serve for mission-driven clinical and public health professionals who cannot commit to a full-time active duty position in the USPHS Commissioned Corps
- Enable access to highly specialized skill sets that would be impractical in full-time active duty positions

The USPHS Commissioned Corps is looking for service driven individuals who work in public health and clinical settings.

If you are interested in applying, please visit www.USPHS.gov for more information.
Who We Are

The USPHS Commissioned Corps is one of the eight uniformed services and is composed of over 6,000 full-time public health professionals.

What We Do

- Provide essential healthcare services to underserved and vulnerable populations.
- Serve at the forefront of public health emergencies including natural disasters and disease outbreaks.
- Lead public health programs and policy development within the Department of Health and Human Services and throughout the federal government.
- Advance innovation and science to address our nation’s most challenging public health crises, such as COVID-19, Ebola, cancer, food safety, mental health and more.

Where We Work

800 locations, all 50 states and numerous foreign assignments with duty stations in over 20 federal departments or agencies across the nation, Public Health Service officers pursue exciting and fulfilling careers as part of the Regular Corps.

Service Categories

- MEDICAL
- DENTIST
- VETERINARIAN
- NURSE
- THERAPIST
- PHARMACIST
- HEALTH SERVICES
- ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
- DIETICIAN
- ENGINEER
- SCIENTIST

For more information visit www.usphs.gov or call 1-888-225-3302.
U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
Public Health Service Therapist Category

Who Are We?

We are a multidisciplinary category composed of highly skilled and mobile health-care providers from the following professions: audiology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, and speech language pathology. The Therapist Category supports the mission of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation. Our therapist professionals work in various agencies to fight disease, conduct research, and care for patients in undeserved communities across the nation and throughout the world.

Physical therapists (PT) diagnose and treat individuals of all ages and abilities with health conditions, illnesses, or injuries, helping improve their quality of life by maximizing the ability to move and perform functional activities. PTs examine each individual and develop and implement treatment plans to restore function, promote movement, reduce pain, and prevent disability. Additionally, PTs help prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness and wellness programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.

What Do USPHS PTs Do?

- Consultation for acute, sub-acute and chronic musculoskeletal and neurological injuries/conditions
- Gait assessment and training on effective use of assistive devices to prevent falls
- Disposition planning to assure safe return home
- The scope of services includes:
  - Direct access to evaluate and treat without a physician's referral
  - Diabetic foot care
  - Injury Prevention
  - Wound and burn care
  - Hand therapy
  - Health promotion and wellness programs
  - Amputee rehabilitation
  - Cardiopulmonary rehabilitation
  - Pain education
- Expand knowledge through research to improve treatment of physical impairments
- Develop innovations to improve the health care system
- Provide a viable alternative to opioid prescribing

Many USPHS PTs pursue advanced training. Examples of areas of specialization include:

- Orthopedics
- EMG/NCV Testing
- Women’s Health
- Vestibular Rehabilitation
- Pediatrics
- Emergency Medical Response (EMR)

Benefits of providing PT services and employing USPHS PTs

- USPHS PTs are committed to serving where most needed, enabling health care organizations to staff isolated and/or hard-to-fill positions.
- Physical therapy services are a non-opioid alternative to pain management, with a number of claims-based studies pointing to lower opioid utilization among patients referred to PT in the outpatient setting.
- Physical therapy evaluations may avoid unnecessary and expensive diagnostic imaging, especially among patients with low back pain.
- Early PT referral may reduce physician office visits and surgical procedures resulting in cost savings to health care systems.
- For some conditions such as meniscal tears, knee osteoarthritis, rotator cuff tears, spinal stenosis, and degenerative disk disease, treatment by a physical therapist is as effective as surgery (APTA.org).
- Exercises individually tailored by PTs to participants’ capabilities and risks may be the most effective falls prevention intervention. Implementation may reduce medical costs and improve quality of life for older adults.
- Health Care dollars saved: Early access to physical therapy saves about $5,000 in annual health care costs for every patient over the following two years (ptforpain.org).
- Physical Therapy services may also be of direct benefit to physicians by increasing workplace satisfaction and improving overall patient flow.
- Inpatient physical therapy can reduce lengths of stay, lower opioid consumption and reverse functional decline during acute hospital stays.

USPHS Therapists work in autonomous practice environments, where they direct the provision of rehabilitation services based on patient needs. They work in close communication and camaraderie with other medical and health care providers.

More information can be found at the Therapist Professional Advisory Committee (TPAC) website and Facebook.

For more information or to start your application visit usphs.gov
Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP) Overview

In the SRCOSTEP, full-time students entering their final year of graduate school or professional training get paid while in school in exchange for committing to enroll in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps upon graduation. Students receive the basic pay and allowances of an O-1, Ensign, while in the program and are guaranteed a spot in the USPHS Commissioned Corps upon graduation. The service obligation is equal to twice the time.

Eligibility

- Students within one year of receiving a degree in medicine, nursing, advanced nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, psychology, optometry, veterinary medicine, environmental health, engineering, speech-language pathology, audiology, research science, or occupational, physical, or respiratory therapy, dietetics, and a physician assistant program.
- Participants must be enrolled full-time in an academic or professional training program which upon completion will qualify them to receive a commission in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- Participants must also meet certain physical, medical, and security background requirements.

Benefits

- Financial assistance. Up to 12 months of pay equivalent to an Ensign while you finish your coursework (more for those with prior service).
- Job upon graduation. A full-time position as a Public Health Service officer immediately upon graduation.
- Housing. A tax-free allowance for your rent or mortgage calculated based on your rank, duty station, and dependent status.
- Free health care. Coverage through TRICARE.
- The same privileges and benefits given to Public Health Service officers.

Visit www.USPHS.gov for more information.
SRCOSTEP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. What is SRCOSTEP?
An extern program where students gain valuable professional experience and are paid for their work while completing and furthering their health-related professional education.

Q2. Do I have to complete the application process again if I was a previous JRCOSTEP and when is the open application period?
Yes. All the required documents must be current and expire after one year. SRCOSTEP applications are only able to be submitted between June 1st and September 30th for the following years’ program. Final year start dates must be after May 1st of the following year. For example: applicants who apply between June and September 2021 would start the SRCOSTEP in their final year of school after May 2022.

Q3. Which agency will I be assigned to work?
Students that participate in SRCOSTEP work in federal government agencies and programs as active duty Commissioned Corps officers. Applicants are accepted from a variety of fields, including environmental health, pharmacy, engineering, and nursing. Federal government agencies that currently participate in SRCOSTEP include Food and Drug (FDA), Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Prison (BOP), and Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

Q4. What are my chances of being selected for SRCOSTEP and how will I be notified of my selection?
Competitive selection process based on transcripts, GPA, resume, references, security and medical. Student selections are made by our supporting agencies and only selected students will receive emails by December 23rd of the application year. For additional information, please visit: http://www.usphs.gov/students.

Q5. Is there an obligation to join the Commissioned Corps after I complete the SRCOSTEP tour of duty?
There is an obligation commitment of two days paid back for each day as a SRCOSTEP. Typical assignments vary from 18 to 24 months. Gives participant job security upon graduation.

Q6. Do I have to wear a uniform while on duty as a SRCOSTEP?
The hiring agency may require SRCOSTEPs to wear the Commissioned Corps utility uniform.

Q7. Can I choose the Agency and location of where I want to complete my obligation?
It is very unlikely that students can choose the location. Students are matched at duty stations based on their degree, skill qualifications, and the needs of the agency.

Q8. What happens after I graduate SRCOSTEP?
You will work at your assigned location while you study for and receive your needed credentials and continue to fulfill your Commissioned time obligation.

Q9. How much will I be paid and when will I receive my pay?
All SRCOSTEP interns will receive the O-1 pay rate based on the military pay table on the first of each month. The total salary includes base pay rate of a Navy Ensign, O-1 grade, housing allowance, and a food allowance. For additional information, please see https://www.usphs.gov/salary-and-benefits.

Q10. Will I receive health care coverage?
Yes. SRCOSTEPs called to active duty will receive full TRICARE benefits. This includes their dependents.

Q11. What are the job duties of the SRCOSTEP participant?
Successful completion of final year of school. Officers who fail to fulfill the service obligation incurred as a result of PHS supported training shall be obligated to pay PHS twice the amount of total pay received.