

## Chapter 50

# ROLE OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AS HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND CAREER MANAGER

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## Introduction

The physician assistant (PA) assigned to the Human Resources Command (HRC), located in Fort Knox, Kentucky, is responsible for supporting Army PA personnel readiness requirements worldwide, including career management, professional development, and coaching for all active duty Army PAs (area of concentration 65D). The career manager coordinates with the assistant to the chief of the Medical Specialist (SP) Corps (the PA consultant), the Corps Specific Branch Proponent Office, the US Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), the Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP) manager, the IPAP program director, the reserve component SP Corps career manager, and Forces Command and Medical Command leadership in the assignment and career management process.

## Unit Structure

HRC is the functional proponent for military personnel management (except for the judge advocate general and the Chaplain Corps), and a direct reporting unit to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (G-1). The organization is composed of the following departments<sup>1</sup>:

- Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate: manages active and reserve soldiers with career guidance and support.
- Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD): provides active and reserve officers with career guidance and support. OPMD's Health Services Division manages the careers of Army Medical Department (AMEDD) officers in all corps.
- Adjutant General Directorate: manages soldier records, promotion boards, evaluation processing, personnel actions and entitlement programs, regulation updates, and veterans' support.
- Personnel Information Systems Directorate: provides information technology support to command functions and staff elements such as operations, resource management, the chief information officer, the surgeon, the inspector general, and the judge advocate.
- Reserve Personnel Management Directorate: established in October 2019 to increase efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of Army Reserve personnel actions. The directorate consists of four primary divisions: personnel management departments for both enlisted soldiers and officers, Army Reserve health services management, and operational readiness support.<sup>2</sup>

HRC also supports the director of the Army National Guard and the chief of the Army Reserve in the management of the Selected Reserve (units under the Army Reserve Command). The HRC commander is in charge of the Individual Ready Reserve, the Standby Reserve, and the Retired Reserve. The HRC Health Services Division, within OPMD, manages the careers of AMEDD officers in the Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Veterinary Corps, Nurse Corps, Medical Service Corps, and the PAs' branch, the SP Corps.

## **Supervision**

This position is either rated by the SP Corps branch operations officer and senior-rated by the SP Corps branch chief, or rated by the SP Corps branch chief and senior-rated by the HRC chief of the Health Services Division. The Health Services Division chief may be an officer of any AMEDD branch.

## **Roles and Duties**

The HRC career manager assists officers with shaping their career progress and professional development. Officers are assigned based on their knowledge, skills, and behaviors according to priorities identified by the Army chief of staff and guided by the Active Component Manning Guidance<sup>3</sup> and by specific guidance for the AMEDD from the Army surgeon general. Placement of officers in support of different lines of effort depends on their knowledge, skills, and behavior via the Army Talent Alignment Process (<https://talent.army.mil/atap/>).

Career management involves communication, assistance in professional military education, promotion boards, evaluations, and career plan development. These efforts are guided by anticipating requirements based on projected priorities for the Army, identifying broadening opportunities, feedback from the SP Corps 65D consultant, and the Health Services Division's Readiness and Strength branch.<sup>4</sup> The career manager may assist officers in updating officer record briefs and the Army military human resource record for board preparation and for submitting requests for training, including professional military education, long-term health education and training (LTHET), and Army Training and Requirements Resource System (ATTRS) courses. Additionally, there are broadening opportunities (those that round out an officer's experience by exposure), such as 65X (corps area of concentration) and 05A (AMEDD area of concentration) immaterial positions. A message is released annually on HRC's website<sup>5</sup> listing the broadening opportunities offered for the next fiscal year. A complete listing of broadening opportunities can also be found on HRC's website.<sup>6</sup>

PAs may also participate in training with industry, a work experience program within particular institutions, typically within organizations that align with the AMEDD mission. Through the LTHET program, 65Ds may attend training with the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, or the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. Other opportunities include training with the RAND Corporation,<sup>7</sup> a 3-month fellowship with Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, and strategic fellowships.<sup>8</sup> For more information about eligibility and requirements for strategic fellowships and civilian institution education, refer to Army Regulations 621-7<sup>9</sup> and 621-1.<sup>10</sup>

It is key for the career manager to identify and capitalize on individual and collective talent. The officer must predict requirements by monitoring authorization documents and projected losses and gains. AMEDD holds a biannual planning conference to validate manning proposals based on unit requirements and officers in the personnel inventory, called the AMEDD Distribution Plan (ADP). The ADP informs the requirements phase of HRC's formalized distribution processes, which also occur twice per year (the ADP focuses on requirements while the Army Talent Alignment Process focuses on staffing the requirement with the right officer).

Administrative duties include assisting officers with administrative processes, in accordance with AMEDD and Army personnel guidance and policy, such as retirements, separations, stabilization requests, compassionate reassignments, joint domicile issues, the Married Army Couples Program, deletions or deferments of existing assignment instructions, and foreign service tour extensions and curtailments. In coordination with the USAREC IPAP program manager, the career manager guides assignments for IPAP graduates. PAs educated at nonmilitary schools are assigned in coordination with the USAREC program manager for SP Corps.

## **Desired Skills and Attributes**

- Extensive experience as a PA and AMEDD officer.
- Rank of major.
- Intermediate Level Education graduate preferred.
- Must be an excellent role model with the desire to mentor others.
- Must have an interest in people and be able to encourage and assist others.
- Good oratory, communication, and resiliency skills.
- Strong work ethic.
- Solid writing techniques.
- Be prepared to take on additional duties such as Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention victim advocate or casualty notification/casualty affairs officer.

## **Training**

Training required for the HRC career manager includes familiarity with several human resources data systems:

- **OPMD Toolkit:** An application with a suite of functions to support personnel management, including the Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 (AIM2) and the Total Army Personnel Management Information System (TOPMIS). The toolkit also provides access to personnel status, records, inventory, authorizations, requests for orders, and special actions review, such as retirements, separations, high school senior stabilization (preventing reassignment for a month after a child's graduation), the Exceptional Family Member and Married Army Couples programs, compassionate reassignments, continuing overseas tours, and foreign service tour extensions and curtailment.
- **TOPMIS:** part of the OPMD Toolkit, used to maintain and update officer records and manage requests for orders;
- **iPERMS:** Used to maintain Army military human resource records.
- **Medical Operating Data System (MODS):** Used to review distributable personnel inventory projections and advise the 65D consultant on inventory allocation in support of the ADP.
- **Force Management Support Agency (FMSweb):** Used to document Army unit requirements and authorizations for personnel and equipment.
- **Army Selection Board System (ASBS):** Used to collect and build officer board files for board processes.
- **Soldier Management System (SMS):** A web-based collection of data, applications, and tools to assist career managers and other human resource personnel in supporting active duty, reserve, and National Guard soldiers, veterans, retirees, family members, and other stakeholders.

## **Key Factors**

This position is typically a 3-year tour and is coded for a 65D O-4 (major) with no additional skills identifier requirement. Group briefings, face-to-face counseling, and interviews are the best way to interact with PAs in the field; however, fiscal constraints may restrict travel

to make these contacts. Correspondence via AIM2 is the preferred method for communication and distribution of information. This position is primarily nonclinical, but professional PA credentials must be maintained. Credentialing requirements can be supported by the local medical treatment facility, Ireland Army Health Clinic.

## **Lessons Learned**

This assignment is unique in the field of opportunities for Army PAs. An officer in this role has an opportunity to improve the SP Corps and provide Army-wide informed guidance, counseling, and mentorship. Understanding how the Army runs, and all the factors involved in the assignment of an officer, is an invaluable asset, and this experience affords strategic knowledge and experience essential to shaping the future of the SP Corps. The assignment is demanding, and organization and time management skills are critical. Prior adjutant general branch or personnel experience, such as area of concentration 70F (health services human resources), is beneficial. PAs in this position must be familiar with and able to interpret regulatory guidance for topics such as the Married Army Couples and Exceptional Family Membership programs, and permanent change of station policy.

## **Tips for Success**

Intermediate Level Education helps prepare officers for this assignment, in particular its Force Management course module. The career manager must balance multiple responsibilities, and must not limit themselves to career management only; family, personal fitness, medical, and clinical readiness are also matters paramount to the position. The career manager must get to know all subject matter experts in the organization, and be able to recruit them for guidance and support. They must seek additional training, such as Lean Six Sigma and ATRRS personnel courses. Excellent communication skills are required when making hard assignment decisions. Learning the systems quickly and applying decisions consistently and equitably is essential to success.

## Conclusion

The HRC PA career manager position exists to balance the needs of the Army with the needs and desires of the PA population; helping others manage their career to get the most professional and personal benefit from Army opportunities is a rewarding experience. Army PAs deserve a highly motivated and dedicated career manager looking out for their best interests while they achieve Army objectives. To that end, this is a job for an astute PA who listens to others, is a forward thinker, and is prepared to make a difference for nearly 1,000 PAs at any given time.

## References

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10. Department of the Army. *Advanced Education Programs and Requirements for Military Personnel*. HQDA; December 11, 2019. Army Regulation 621-1. Accessed September 8, 2020. [https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB\\_ID=1003686](https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1003686)



## Other Pertinent Army Regulations and Pamphlets

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<b>Publication Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
AR 15-185	31 Mar 2006	<i>Army Board for Correction of Military Records</i>
AR 135-175	30 Mar 2020	<i>Separation of Officers</i>
AR 600-8	9 Jul 2019	<i>Military Human Resources Management</i>
AR 600-8-22	5 Mar 2019	<i>Military Awards</i>
AR 600-8-24	8 Feb 2020	<i>Officer Transfers and Discharges</i>
AR 600-8-29	25 Feb 2005	<i>Officer Promotions</i>
AR 600-8-104	7 Apr 2014	<i>Army Military Human Resources Records Management</i>
AR 600-8-105	22 Mar 2019	<i>Military Orders</i>
AR 614-30	22 Dec 2016	<i>Overseas Service</i>
AR 623-3	14 Jun 2019	<i>Evaluation Reporting System</i>
DA Pam 623-3	27 Sep 2019	<i>Evaluation Reporting System</i>

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