



# NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

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## Public Health Center Hosts First-Ever Occupational and Environmental Medicine Fundamentals Course

By NMCPHC Public Affairs

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Department hosted the inaugural OEM Fundamentals course at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., Sept. 11 – 15, 2017.

The five-day course was designed by NMCPHC Occupational Medicine Physicians Dr. Andy Marchiando and Lt. Cmdr. Lynn Flowers and Specialty Leader Capt. Pamela Krahl to teach the fundamentals of OEM to Navy medical providers assigned to Navy Occupational Medicine Clinics (or have an occupational medicine workload) but have not received formal training in occupational medicine.

“We are teaching basic Navy occupational medicine so they know how to prevent and evaluate occupational illness and injury in Navy workers. It can take months to years, if ever, to learn this on the job and we shorten that learning curve so they can practice better medicine starting now,” explained Dr. Marchiando.

Thirty-nine Navy medical providers stationed around the world jumped at the chance to attend the training. Subject matter experts taught topics ranging from occupational injuries and illnesses to medical certification and surveillance exams.

Capt. Todd Wagner, NMCPHC Commanding Officer, kicked off the course. “A lot of folks had to come together to make this course happen,” said Wagner. “I think this is a great opportunity, certainly for the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, to help [the providers] help us and to help Navy Medicine and the Operational Fleet Support do our jobs better.”

According to Lt. Cmdr. Flowers, student response was overwhelmingly positive. A highlight for many students was the clinical case breakout sessions. Small groups of students, facilitated by an OEM physician, went through scenarios commonly seen in the occupational medicine setting. Overwhelmingly, the students felt this was highly beneficial and likely to promote knowledge retention.

“Occupational Medicine shares with Preventive Medicine its concern with populations. It is unique among medical specialties in its consideration of legal requirements,” said Dr. John Muller, NMCPHC OEM physician. “Proficiency is not just essential to meeting Joint Commission and other standards, but is essential to meeting OSHA regulations. Incorrectly or incompletely following occupational medicine protocols can affect not only individual workers, but also populations of workers. Thus, the potential exists for widespread health effects, huge expense



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and significant harm to mission accomplishment if providers are inadequately trained. Course attendance helped to properly train providers.”

Students also gained field experience during a workplace walk-through at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY).

“The OEM Fundamentals course is the resource every general medical officer (GMO) needs to take their medicine to the next level and to understand the ‘what and why’ of the surveillance programs that surround them. The diversity of the specialists...provided connections to resources that I would not have gotten without attending the course,” said Lt. Matthew Case, Flight Surgeon.

As Lt. Cmdr. Veronica Bigornia, Aerospace Medicine resident at Naval Aerospace Medical Institute explained, “This course shifted my mindset from primary care medicine to occupational medicine and the difference in approach. It’s about workers rather than patients. I feel better prepared to do the occupational physical exams correctly.”

For more information about the NMCPHC, visit  
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Pages/Home.aspx>

Read the article on DVIDS: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/251986/public-health-center-hosts-first-ever-occupational-and-environmental-medicine-fundamentals-course>



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170911-N-HN707-062 Capt. Todd Wagner, commanding officer, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC), delivers his opening remarks during the first Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Fundamentals Course hosted by NMCPHC. The five-day course was designed to teach the fundamentals of OEM to Navy medical providers, physician's assistants and nurse practitioners who have been assigned to Navy Occupational Medicine Clinics but may not have received formal training in occupational medicine. NMCPHC is the Navy's go-to resource for subject matter expertise in the fields of industrial hygiene, occupational and environmental health, preventive medicine, health promotion and wellness, epidemiology, health analysis and risk communication. NMCPHC continues to provide instrumental guidance on public health related issues with programs that directly impact U.S. Navy and military personnel at home and around the globe. (U.S. Navy photo by Genevieve Williams/released)