

ROA urges support for U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps

The Fiscal Responsibility Act eliminated funding for the USPHS RRC last June. The Reserve Organization of America is fighting to restore it.

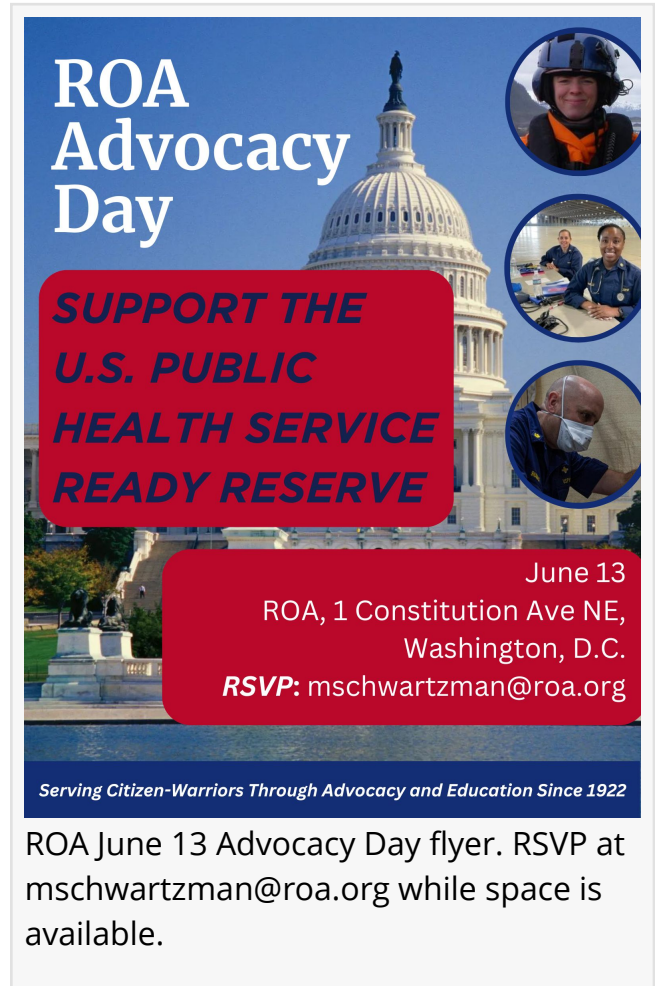
WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, May 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 15, ROA's executive director, retired Army major general Jeffrey E. Phillips, wrote the secretary and deputy secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services urging support for the U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps.

The USPHS RRC was created with ROA's support by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act in 2020. It is part of a larger modernization effort to ensure Total Force medical readiness and public health preparedness.

The CARES Act successfully established a preliminary framework for the proper and effective usage of the USPHS RRC. It did not, however, provide a codified structure and access to the proper "tools" for recruiting and retaining qualified talent.

As a result, the USPHS RRC has yet to realize its desired end-strength or full capability. This is presumably why funding for the USPHS RRC was eliminated last June by the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

ROA has since heard that USPHS RRC officers have been informed that all drills, trainings, and deployments have been cancelled until at least this upcoming October. ROA has also heard that HHS is currently considering dissolving the USPHS RRC despite advocating for it in its FY 2025 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees.



The flyer features a background image of the U.S. Capitol building. On the right side, there are three circular inset photos: the top one shows a person in a military helmet, the middle one shows two people in a meeting, and the bottom one shows a person in a medical mask. The text on the flyer includes:

**ROA
Advocacy
Day**

**SUPPORT THE
U.S. PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICE
READY RESERVE**

June 13
ROA, 1 Constitution Ave NE,
Washington, D.C.
RSVP: mschwartzman@roa.org

Serving Citizen-Warriors Through Advocacy and Education Since 1922

ROA June 13 Advocacy Day flyer. RSVP at mschwartzman@roa.org while space is available.

When ROA first learned that USPHS RRC funding was eliminated, it spearheaded a campaign to secure the introduction of legislation that authorized operational funds and provided benefits parity with the other uniformed services.

Introduced by Sen. Tammy Duckworth (IL) last July, [S.2297](#), the Parity for Public Health Service Ready Reserve Act, is the most significant benefits parity package for the USPHS RRC in history.

Even though the 118th Congress has not yet answered ROA's call to provide the USPHS RRC with what is needed to maximize its support of national security, it has proven its effectiveness.

The USPHS has, for example, augmented U.S. Army commands short health care professionals because of demands during the recent war. The USPHS RRC augmented the National Guard Bureau's medical teams by delivering essential medical and public health expertise during crises, and it delivered no-cost healthcare to vulnerable populations through the Department of Defense's innovative readiness training.

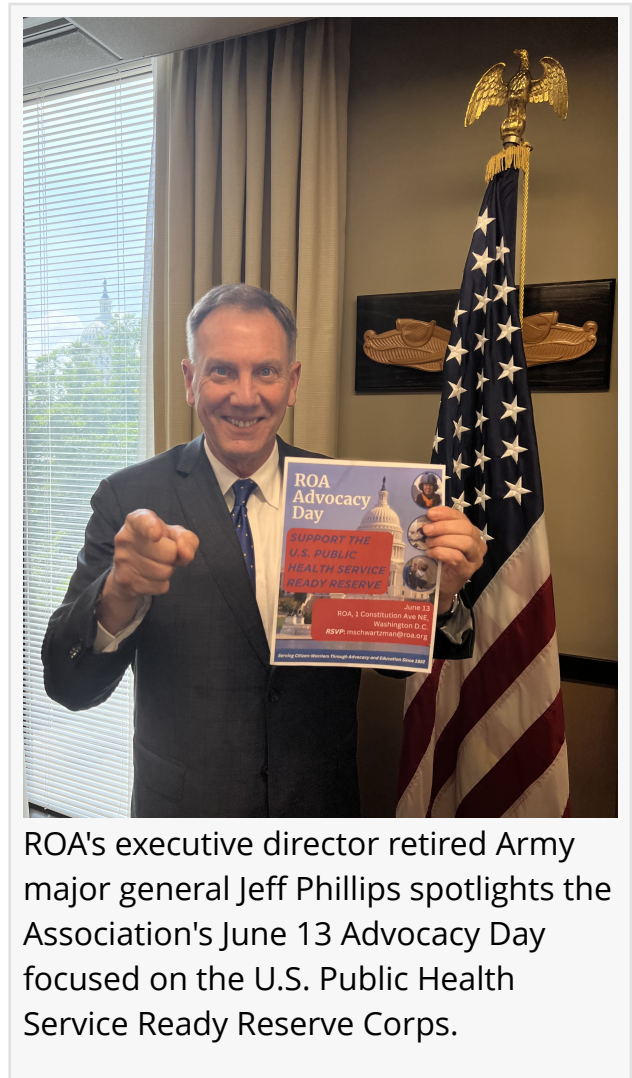
The USPHS RRC, despite the significant role it has in supporting DoD, is funded by HHS' budget, which is overseen by the House and Senate Committees on Finance. The HHS Fiscal Year 2025 budget request is significant, aiming at \$130.7 billion in discretionary and \$1.7 trillion in mandatory proposed budget authority.

On March 14, almost one week after the one-year anniversary of an education forum hosted by ROA on the USPHS RRC, the Senate Committee on Finance held a hearing on the HHS FY 2025 budget request.

ROA submitted a [statement](#) for the record to the committee urging its chairman and ranking member, Sens. Ron Wyden (OR) and Mike Crapo (ID), to appropriate close to \$30 million in FY 2025 appropriations for the RRC.

On May 14, Sens. Wyden, Duckworth, and Mazie Hirono (HI) [reinforced](#) ROA's request in a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee urging support for at least \$32 million in funding for the USPHR RRC to "ensure these highly trained frontline works are always ready and fully deployable to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all Americans."

ROA endorsed that letter and echoed it with its May 15 letter sent by Phillips.



ROA's executive director retired Army major general Jeff Phillips spotlights the Association's June 13 Advocacy Day focused on the U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps.



Congress must restore funding for the U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps. It has proven its effectiveness and is vital to ensuring Total Force readiness and public health preparedness.”

ROA executive director, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Jeffrey Phillips, U.S. Army

To build on the momentum gained, ROA is hosting an Advocacy Day on June 13 at its Minute Man Memorial Building located at 1 Constitution Ave NE. The goal of the Advocacy Day is simple: to broaden congressional support for the UPSHS RRC.

Without the support of HHS leadership, such a goal could prove unattainable.

Regardless, ROA will fight for the USPHS RRC and national security readiness.

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