



## HM CAREER PATH



Hospital Corpsmen (HM). The Hospital Corpsman (HM) rating is one of the most versatile and vital roles in the U.S. Navy, providing critical medical support across a broad spectrum of environments—from clinics and hospitals to combat zones and humanitarian missions. HMs are trained to deliver emergency and preventive care, assist in surgeries, manage patient records, and support dental and mental health services. They serve with Navy personnel and Marine Corps units worldwide, often in joint service or independent roles where they may act as the sole medical provider aboard ships, submarines, or in remote field conditions. As HMs advance, they can specialize through a variety of "C" school programs, earning credentials in fields such as radiology, surgical technology, respiratory therapy, pharmacy, and more. Advanced technical pathways such as Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC), Dive Medical Technician, and Special Operations Medical Support further expand their capabilities. With a foundation in tactical medicine and opportunities for continuous advancement, the HM rating offers a dynamic and rewarding career path that supports both mission readiness and long-term professional development within and beyond the Navy.

YEARS OF SERVICE	CAREER PROGRESSION	AVERAGE TIME TO ADVANCE	COMMISSIONING OR OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS	SEA/ SHORE FLOW	TYPICAL CAREER PATH DEVELOPMENT
27-30	HCMC	22.4 Yrs	CSEL programs (CMDCM/CMC)	See Notes: 1 thru 5	Follow on Sea/Shore Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., CSEL)  Duty: Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Flag Screening Command, OCONUS, ATG, Echelon III (e.g., TYCOM, BUPERS, NPC, DHA, HQMC, Joint Service)
24-27	HCMC HMCS	22.4 Yrs 19.2	CSEL programs (CMDCM, CMC, CMDCS, CSEL)	See Notes: 1 thru 5	7th Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., CSEL)  Duty: OCONUS, Sea/Shore Duty, Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Flag Screening Command, ATG, Echelon III (e.g., TYCOMS, BUPERS, NPC, DHA, HQMC, Joint Service)
21-24	HCMC HMCS HMC	22.4 Yrs 19.2 15.8	CSEL programs (CMDCM, CMC, CMDCS, CSEL)	See Notes: 1 thru 5	6th Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert/ Supervisor (e.g., CSEL, SEL, LCPO, Technical Supervisor, SMDR)  Duty: OCONUS, Sea/Shore Duty, Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Flag Screening Command, Instructor Duty, Echelon II/III commands
17-21	HCMC HMCS HMC HM1	22.4 Yrs 19.2 15.8 11	CSEL programs (CMDCM, CMC, CMDCS, CSEL) OCS, MSC-IPP, MECF	See Notes: 1 thru 5	5th Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., CSEL, SEL, LCPO, Technical Supervisor, SMDR)  Duty: OCONUS, Sea/Shore Duty, Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Instructor, OCONUS, Echelon II/III Commands



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13-17	HMCS HMC HM1 HM2	19.2 Yrs 15.8 11 5.9	CSEL Program (CMDCS,CSEL) OCS, MSC-IPP, MECP	See Notes: 1 thru 5	4th Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., CSEL, SEL, LCPO, Technical Supervisor, SMDR) Duty: OCONUS, Sea/Shore Duty, Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Instructor Duty, OCONUS, Echelon II/III Commands
9-13	HMC HM1 HM2	15.8 Yrs 11 5.9	“C” School STA-21, OCS, MECP, MSC-IPP, EMDP2	See Notes: 1 thru 5	3rd Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., SEL, LCPO, SMDR, LPO, Technical Supervisor)  Duty: OCONUS, Sea/Shore Special Programs*, Instructor Duty , Sea/Shore Duty  Training: “C” Schools to obtain NEC
5-9	HM1 HM2 HM3	11 Yrs 5.9 30 Months	“C” School STA-21, OCS, MECP, MSC-IPP, EMDP2	See Notes: 1 thru 5	2nd Tour  Billet: Leader and Technical Expert / Supervisor (e.g., LCPO, LPO, Technical Supervisor, Work Center Supervisor)  Duty: Sea Duty, Shore Duty, OCONUS  Training: “C” School to obtain NEC
2.5-5	HM2 HM3	5.9 Yrs 30 Months	Naval Academy, NROTC, STA- 21, MECP, MSC- IPP	See Notes: 1 thru 5	1st Sea Tour (36 Months)  Billet: Ship, FMF, Expeditionary 1st Shore Tour (24 Mos. Non-NEC). Billet: “C” School, MTF, OCONUS  Duty: Technician or General Duty HM  Training: “C” School Training. Sailors should consider an NEC after their first duty station if not already awarded
1-2.5	HN HA Accession Training	15 Months 6 Months			Recruit Training and all schools or training events required to support Navy Medicine.  Some Sailors will be assigned an NEC out of “A” School.



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### Rating Notes:

1. Performance in assigned duties should ALWAYS be the primary factor in determining selection to the next higher paygrade in alignment with the annual Convening Order and Board Precepts.
2. HM is a shore-centric rate. The HM rating promotes by rate, not by NEC. Traditional sea shore flow for Hospital Corpsman is 36/36, however, assignment and distribution is typically dictated by billet availability. Many NEC's within the rating have minimal or no sea duty opportunity while some are sea centric. Many NECs are closed looped which are distributable skillsets of personnel who are projected and assigned to consecutive tours within that NEC skill area. In lieu of traditional sea duty, sailors should refer to the Special Notes\* at the end of this document for other opportunities.

- a. The following NEC's have no sea duty opportunities:

L06A Cardiovascular Technician	L09A Nuclear Medicine Technologist
L13A Hemodialysis Technician	L14A Ophthalmic Surgical Tech (May be detailed as L23A)
L15A Ultrasound Technician (May be detailed as L17A)	L16A Mammography Technologist (May be detailed as L17A)
L18A Electro-neurodiagnostic Technologist	L21A Occupational Therapy Assistant
L25A Urology Technician (May be detailed as L23A)	L26A Orthopedic Technician
L29A Mortician	L30A Histopathology Technician
L38A Dental Laboratory Technician (Maxillofacial)	

3. Some HM NECs are extremely demanding, therefore, some career enhancing opportunities may be limited due to the independent nature of the primary duties assigned. Due to specific training and operational requirements, duties can be considered arduous and extremely challenging, therefore, some HMs will remain assigned to this functional area based on their technical expertise. Best qualified personnel within a technical expertise should have documented impact displaying major program management and/or development within their scope of practice. Some NECs professional responsibilities impede their participation in typical peer group or Sailorization-related activities. Candidates should not be viewed negatively if they are not peer ranked.
4. In the absence of sea duty and OCONUS opportunities Sailors should pursue Sea/Shore special programs or commands that support the Navy and Navy Medicine mission. See Special Notes.
5. Active involvement within appropriate paygrade mess, association, and/or hold a collateral duty with documented impact/leadership can aid in being competitive amongst peers. However, promotions should not be hindered for Sailors who have limited ability to participate in them.

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT FROM E6 TO E7

- Experience of increased responsibility and complexity in primary Hospital Corpsman or NEC responsibility assignments. Demonstrated impact in non-traditional billets outside of the Hospital Corps (ex. Recruiting, state department, RDC, etc).

#### FULLY QUALIFIED:

- Must have demonstrated advanced knowledge and be a known Subject Matter Expert.
- Must have documented results of leadership, demonstrate leadership skills, and impact on command mission within primary duty (may be assigned to medical or non-medical role).
- Must demonstrate technical expertise on platform served with documented impact.
- Must have qualified on primary Warfare (if assigned to a qualifying command and per required timeline).
  - (Currently no availability on T-AH or PRECOM Platforms for warfare qualification).
- Should demonstrate sustained superior leadership and competency in developing HM's/Sailors/or other services as measured by qualifications, advancement results, retention/attrition, and the extent to which the candidate trains and educates peer/subordinates on technical proficiency.



### **BEST QUALIFIED:**

- Consideration should be given to SOY finalists at Echelon 2 and Echelon 3 (i.e. winners at : NMFL, NMFP, NMFDC, NSW Group, MARFORCOM/PAC, SURFPAC/LANT, AIRPAC/LANT, SUBLANT/PAC, NECC, CNIC Regions, NAVIFOR, NETC).
- Consideration should be given for those who earn qualifications outside their normal job scope/rate to enhance unit mission readiness. Some examples include but NOT limited to: OOD-U/W, SSL, ATTWO, COW, DOOW, PILOT, MTT, 3MC, DCTT, CONN, SCUBA Supervisor, Air Diving Supervisor, Jump Master, RSO/Range OIC, etc....
- Consideration should be given for candidates with the instructor NEC who have qualified for Afloat Training Specialist or Master Training Specialist
  - Failure of enlisted personnel to obtain MTS qualification when a valid program does not exist shall not be interpreted as an indication of unsatisfactory or adverse leadership.
- Consideration should be given to personnel assigned to challenging duty or special program assignments with document impact to mission.
- Consideration should be given to those who have professional certification/licensure, especially if aligned with NEC or rating.
- Consideration should be given to those who lead and facilitate professional or personal development programs.
- Consideration should be given to those who hold rank specific mess or FCPOA position with impact to command morale and welfare.
- Consideration should be given to those with documented impact in process improvement.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT FROM E7 TO E8**

- Experience of increased responsibility and complexity in primary assignments to include demonstration in non-traditional billet.

### **FULLY QUALIFIED:**

- Must meet preceding E7 FULLY QUALIFIED criteria.
- Must have completed CPO-LDC.
- Must have demonstrated the ability to lead Chiefs, and develop Junior Officers.

### **BEST QUALIFIED:**

- Consideration of preceding E7 BEST QUALIFIED criteria.
- Special Consideration should be given to those filling billeted CSEL positions under Milestone COs.
- Consideration should be given to HMs who demonstrate rating involvement through participation in important rating modernization functions, including but not limited to: Occupational Standards Review, PQS Development, Selection Board, Navy Tactics Techniques and Procedures Revisions, Naval Publication revisions, Joint Publication Revisions, Advancement Exam Readiness Review, Course Curriculum Development, Rating Strategy Councils, NEC Enlisted Technical Leader, Defense Committee on Trauma, Executive Medical Department Enlisted Course (EMDEC) Facilitation and Training.
- Consideration should be given to personnel assigned to challenging duty and special duty assignments with document impact to mission.
- Consideration should be given to ELD-Facilitators with documented impact.
- Consideration should be given to TCCC-Instructors with documented impact.
- Consideration for those who seek out and perform duties in facilitating and instructing continuing medical education with documented impact.
- Consideration for those selected to lead CPO Initiation or committee.
- Consideration for those who hold a mess or CPOA position with impact to contributing to command morale and welfare.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT FROM E8 TO E9

- **Proven ability to lead and direct junior enlisted, chiefs, officers and civilians in tough, highly visible, and challenging environments.**

### **FULLY QUALIFIED:**

- Must meet preceding E8 FULLY QUALIFIED criteria.
- Must have completed Senior Enlisted Academy.
- Must have demonstrated the ability to lead Chiefs, Senior Chiefs, and develop Officers.
- Must have documented progression in leadership roles, with documented impact. (i.e. Div LCPO to Dept LCPO, Bn LCPO to Regt SEL etc)

### **BEST QUALIFIED:**

- Consideration of preceding E8 BEST QUALIFIED criteria.
- Special Consideration should be given to those filling billeted CSEL positions under Milestone COs.
- Consideration should be given to those who have completed Executive Medical Department Enlisted Course (EMDEC).
- Consideration should be given to those assigned to DHA MTFs who have completed the Defense Health Agency Intermediate Executive Skills Course.
- Consideration should be given to those who have documented completion of the CMC/COB PQS.
  - Hospital Corpsmen (HMs) assigned to submarines should be allowed to complete the CMC/COB PQS and apply directly to the CMC Program, bypassing the COB pathway. Sailors serving in a COB role contribute to a strain on undermanned HM skillsets. However, Sailors selected for the CMC program do not impact manning levels, as their rating is officially changed.

**Special Note\*** Sea Special Programs are considered duties in new ship construction, Fleet Decommissioning and Disestablishment, Naval Special Warfare Development Group, SSN-23, Specialized Research Diving Detachment (SRDD).

**Special Note\*** Serving a tour in a Shore Special Program billet will provide a unique opportunity to serve in one of 26 programs, including Production Recruiter, Recruit Division Commander or Company Chief, serve on the crew of USS CONSTITUTION or on the USS ARIZONA memorial, Detailers, MEPS, on Brig or TPU staff duty, Embassy or Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) assignment, SERE Instructor, and Professional Development Instructor, to name a few. MILPERSMAN article 1306-900 contains a complete list of special programs available.

**Special Note\*** Serving a successful tour in a Navy Medicine billet at training sites, remote sites (i.e., Diego Garcia, San Clemente Island, etc.), flag headquarters duty, White House Medical Unit (WHMO), or the Congressional Office of the Attending Physician provides valuable operational and strategic experience that may be considered favorably for career progression and competitive programs outside the traditional sea/shore rotation.