

CSTE Consultants Provide Support for CDC Field Epidemiology Training Programs in the Middle East/North Africa Region

Background

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) are applied epidemiology programs offered by CDC to help foreign countries develop, set up, and implement dynamic public health strategies to improve and strengthen their public health system and infrastructure. The **Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)** is co-sponsoring activities in the Middle East/North Africa Region (MENA) region and has provided consultants to participate in ongoing training efforts to fulfill the mission of improving global surveillance and epidemiology:

Morocco FELTP (M-FELTP) Mentor Workshop

Dr. Raoult Ratard, the State Epidemiologist for the Louisiana Office of Public Health, attended a July 2010 workshop held in Rabat, Morocco as a subject matter expert. At the workshop, the curriculum for the Moroccan Field Epidemiology Training Program was finalized and field supervisors were introduced to their goals and objectives, types of field experiences, problems encountered in similar programs and solutions. Discussion topics included surveillance prioritization, analysis and reporting of surveillance, outbreak detection, monitoring and tracking, and program evaluation criteria. Dr. Ratard reported that "All in attendance indicated enthusiastically that they had learned much from the presentations and discussions." The Moroccan Field Epidemiology Training Program began in October 2010 and was modeled after the United States EIS program. Nine trainees were selected among highly qualified public health staff from Moroccan institutions.

Mass Gatherings Workshop

On September 25-30, 2010, a workshop was held in Amman, Jordan on surveillance issues at mass gatherings. As a CSTE consultant, **Dr. Dennis Perrotta** worked with CDC to organize the agenda for the five day meeting. More than forty participants from the MENA region attended the workshop along with EMPHNET and CDC staff. Participating Middle East/North Africa region countries were Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The workshop consisted of lectures, discussions, and strategy sessions. Field Epidemiology Training Program staff from the eight countries also provided reviews of their experiences with surveillance of diseases during mass gatherings. Participants had the opportunity to work through scenarios, such as religious mass gatherings, sporting events and political events, in groups to apply the skills they learned during the course of the workshop. On the final day of the workshop, these groups presented their plans for risk assessment, risk prioritization, and post event activities. Dr. Perrotta was designated as the mentor for the Field Epidemiology Training Program in Saudi Arabia and has continued his role as a mentor in the following six months. A follow-up meeting was held in February 2011 in Marrakech, Morocco to assist Field Epidemiology Training Program fellows in writing constructive reports regarding their mass gathering surveillance projects.