

Infectious Disease- Quarantine

Assignment Description

This fellowship position is sponsored jointly by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Atlanta Quarantine Station which is located at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and the Department of Health and Wellness in Fulton County, GA. The CDC Atlanta Quarantine Station is in the CDC Division of Global Migration & Quarantine, Quarantine & Border Health Services Branch. Recently, the CDC Atlanta Quarantine Station established a collaboration with DeKalb County Board of Health Refugee Services, which is also located in metropolitan Atlanta, to determine health trends in arriving refugees. The Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness is the local health department for the Atlanta urban area. Recently, it was awarded direct CDC funding to establish a major HIV prevention initiative for the entire Atlanta metro area. Perinatal HIV transmission is a focus of this initiative. More broadly, this High Impact HIV Prevention Program emphasizes enhanced testing, diagnosis, linkage to care and viral suppression through effective treatment. New surveillance systems have been established to facilitate this initiative, and these will require ongoing evaluation. Both mentors for this position are graduates of the CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Program, and are experienced supervisors of EIS Officers, Preventive Medicine Residents, public health staff, students, and trainees.

Day-to- Day Activities

At the Department of Health and Wellness in Fulton County, the fellow will meet with supervisors and project collaborators, write project protocols, perform telephone interviews during investigations, attend public health department meetings, travel to regional or national meetings, interact with staff from other public health programs such as Immunizations, Epidemiology, Health Promotion, Communicable Disease (HIV/STD and Tuberculosis) Prevention programs and other public health agencies in the Atlanta Metro area (i.e. Georgia State Department of Public Health, and other county health departments). The fellow will respond to inquiries from the general public and the media after appropriate training.

At the CDC Atlanta Quarantine Station, day-to-day activities include responding to report of ill and deceased passengers at airports and seaports in a four state area (GA, NC, SC, and TN), providing technical support to airport and seaport partners including Customs and Border Protection (CBP), TSA, Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Coast Guard, emergency medical responders, airlines, maritime cargo shipping companies, cruise lines, and state and local health departments and foreign public health authorities. Activities also include conducting contact investigations of infectious disease exposures (TB, measles, rubella, pertussis, meningococcal infection, etc.) on aircraft and ships, boarding arriving international aircraft to evaluate ill or deceased passengers, reviewing medical packets for arriving immigrants, overseeing animal importations, updating emergency response plans for U.S. ports of entry, emergency drug shipments for treatment of botulism, diphtheria and malaria, and adding and removing travelers from federal travel restrictions (Do Not Board/Lookout Lists). At CDC, the fellow will learn about policies designed for the protection of human subjects, the role of an Institutional Review Board (IRB), and become familiar with the International Health Regulations (IHR). The fellow will participate in meetings and conferences at CDC and will be encouraged to enroll in CDC classes on media relations, manuscript writing, and oral presentations.

Each week, the fellow will spend 2 ½ days at the CDC Atlanta Quarantine Station and 2 ½ days at the Department of Health and Wellness in Fulton County. At both sites, the fellow will have the opportunity to analyze and interpret public health data, evaluate surveillance systems, help plan and

participate in tabletop exercises and other emergency preparedness activities, communicate public health messages to the lay public while effectively negotiating cultural sensitivities in diverse and multilingual populations, and prepare oral presentations and written reports. The fellow will become familiar with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). In addition, the fellow will be expected to present an oral or poster presentation at a national meeting of public health professionals (such as the CSTE conference), and to prepare at least one manuscript for publication.

Potential Projects

The Fellow may choose from a wide range of infectious disease-related projects which may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Conduct acute disease outbreak investigations including those involving restaurants and health care facilities.
2. Analyze data from communicable disease control programs such as perinatal HIV prevention, using statistical software such as SAS or Epiinfo.
3. Evaluate the timeliness of disease reporting by providers and hospitals in Fulton County
4. Develop and evaluate active surveillance systems for foodborne diseases, bioterrorism syndromes, severe acute respiratory infections, or vaccine preventable diseases such as varicella at the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness.
5. Evaluate linkages of newly diagnosed HIV patients to care in Fulton County, interpret data and findings, and recommend appropriate changes in control measures and prevention programs.
6. Analyze illnesses and deaths reported by the CDC Atlanta Quarantine Station to the CDC/DGMQ Quarantine Activity Reporting System (QARS).
7. Evaluate the CDC Quarantine Activity Reporting System (QARS), which collects reports of events of public health importance, including traveler illnesses and deaths, reported by CDC Quarantine Stations.
8. Assist the development of a secure refugee health surveillance system, and analyze refugee health data to determine health trends in refugees in collaboration with the DeKalb County Board of Health and the CDC Atlanta Quarantine.
9. Design an epidemiologic study, write a protocol, and submit it for review by Human Subjects Review.

Preparedness Role

The Fellow will receive training and experience in public health preparedness and response through both the Atlanta Quarantine Station preparedness activities and also through the Department of Health and Wellness in Fulton County which is a lead department in the Atlanta Metro area for the national Cities Readiness Initiative. The fellow will assist in the design and operation of preparedness tabletop exercises as well as exercises for use of the National Strategic Stockpile, and planning for public health responses to natural disasters (e.g. pandemics) and man-made disasters (e.g. bioterrorism attacks).

Assignment Location: Atlanta, GA

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Secondary Mentor:

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