

We have enjoyed the opportunity to host a fellow from the initial class and look forward to another excellent experience with a future fellow. The fellow will be situated within the Communicable Disease Division, Bureau of Epidemiology and specifically work in the foodborne disease area. The foodborne disease staffs are grouped within Michigan's Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions. The Michigan ELC Building Program is responsible for communicable disease surveillance, prevention, and control of disease in the following areas: enteric, respiratory, waterborne, zoonotic, vectorborne, and neurologic diseases. Five epidemiologists currently staff the core program. Michigan has a robust state health reference laboratory with highly trained staff scientists. Interactions between the ELC Program and laboratory staff occur on a daily basis. The ELC Program assists Michigan local health departments (LHD's) in strengthening their basic capacity in the above-mentioned areas of infectious disease threats.

There are forty-five (45) local health jurisdictions which serve the 10 million residents of the state. The geography of Michigan is unique in that it is bordered by four Great Lakes and comprised of two peninsulas, the Upper and the Lower. The state also shares an international border with Canada which may be accessed at three bridges, creating special concerns for international health issues. A high-level need exists for capacity-building in outbreak response among the many rural health jurisdictions across the state where there has historically been limited epidemiologic expertise. Assistance with foodborne outbreaks is particularly needed because of the frequent occurrence of these events at all times of the year.

The ELC Program organizes and hosts an annual statewide Communicable Disease Conference each spring which is offered at two locations in the state. The focus is to provide updated information and guidance on communicable disease topics and emerging disease threats. The target audience includes all Local Health Departments as well as infection control practitioners and clinical laboratory directors from healthcare systems and nursing homes. Our previous fellow had the opportunity to present at these meetings.

The ELC Program also plays an integral role in the Michigan Local Public Health Accreditation Program which seeks to assure implementation of public health standards by all LHD's in the state. The ELC Program maintains responsibility for evaluating and accrediting LHD's in the areas of Health Protection and General Communicable Disease Control. This is a formalized process which entails on-site reviews at each local jurisdiction, approval and monitoring of corrective plans of action for deficient indicators, and provision of technical assistance for accreditation functions.

## 2) Day to Day Activities

The Michigan Infectious Disease Fellow would have a truly unique opportunity to act as a member of the Infectious Disease Epidemiology team, with special emphasis on foodborne and emerging infectious disease opportunities. On a daily basis, the CSTE Fellow would assist in monitoring enteric illness patterns throughout the state and using epidemiologic and laboratory data to identify clusters and outbreaks both within and across jurisdictions. The CSTE Fellow would provide support to acute outbreak investigations requiring immediate public health response, under the guidance of the lead ELC epidemiologist. Typical roles would include assisting with development of study design, construction of case definitions and line listings, development of hypotheses and hypothesis-testing questionnaires, data analyses, contact with MDCH laboratory staff and coordinating appropriate and timely laboratory specimen testing

requests and submissions. Other support activities may include guidance with database structure, data entry, participating in conference calls, and report-writing guidance and review. Creation and delivery of presentations of investigative methods and findings would also be supported.

The Fellow would also provide consultation and technical assistance to local health authorities regarding enteric illness case reporting rules and case definitions, pathogen identification and interpretation of laboratory test results, and disease control measures. Many of these consultations routinely involve control measures for pathogens with high transmissibility and/or high morbidity. Other frequent consultations would concern high-risk situations and high-risk groups such as enteric outbreaks involving food handlers, schools, daycare centers, and other institutionalized populations.

### 3) Potential Projects

In addition to the opportunities described above to participate in investigations of acute outbreaks of foodborne or emerging diseases, the CSTE Fellow could choose among several focused activity areas to tailor experiences leading to advanced skills in applied epidemiology as well as some policy and program development. The fellow, together with both mentors will be able to choose a project suited to the background of the fellow and current needs of the Division.

Opportunities to collaborate on interdisciplinary teams include: ELC workgroup (a statewide task force of epidemiologists, sanitarians, laboratorians and physicians devoted to improving local health department applied epidemiologic knowledge and skills and provide the state with feedback on tools and resources under development), collaborations with the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center at Michigan State University, Michigan Department of Agriculture food safety specialists and MDCH laboratorians.

### 4) Program or surveillance system evaluation

The fellow will be expected to review a surveillance system currently in place for one/more selected notifiable disease in the state.

### 5) Role of Fellow in Michigan Emergency Preparedness plan

Michigan has an established Office of Public Health Preparedness. It has drawn staff from both the epidemiology and laboratory programs of the health department and thus maintains close ties with both of these programs. The Fellow would have many opportunities to participate in trainings, discussions and projects with the Office of PH Preparedness in Michigan. Among these would be:

Merit Team member with PPE training (an emergency team composed of epidemiologists ready to respond to large-scale or unusual outbreaks or bioterrorist threat)

Foodborne Annex to Michigan All-Hazards Plan: The Fellow will be integrated into the planning activities and coordination with other agencies as this plan is developed as a component of the state's All-Hazards Emergency Plan.

The Fellow would also be encouraged to take advantage of the many Bioterrorism- Preparedness educational opportunities and exercises offered through the Michigan Center for Public Health Preparedness, which is part of a national network of centers established to support preparedness efforts of state and local health departments nationwide.

**Assignment Location:                      Lansing, MI**

Primary Mentor:     Mary Grace Stobierski, DVM, MPH  
                                 Chief, Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section

Advanced Degrees:   DVM, Michigan State University (1983)  
                                 MPH, University of Michigan (1989)

Secondary Mentor:   Sally Bidol, RN, MPH  
                                 Senior Communicable Disease Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees:   MPH, University of Michigan School of Public Health (1991)