

Infectious Disease

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is a well staffed city health department with over 6,000 employees serving over 8 million New Yorkers. Nationally, the department is frequently on the forefront of responding to emerging health threats, innovations in public health surveillance, and programmatic intervention.

The fellow will be assigned to the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, one of seven Bureaus located within the Division of Disease Control. New York has the largest and most diverse HIV epidemic in the country and is home to 1 of 6 HIV-infected Americans.

The Bureau's surveillance unit investigates and reports approximately 3,800 new HIV diagnoses a year and receives an equal number of AIDS diagnoses annually. The Bureau's epidemiology staff are also responsible for investigation of any identified clusters of HIV infections or HIV cases of special public health interest. Several new surveillance systems are being implemented to identify recent HIV infections in close to real time and antiretroviral-resistant infections among the newly infected. The Bureau administers over 200 million dollars of programmatic funding for HIV prevention, treatment and other services for HIV-infected persons.

The fellow would join a committed group of public health professionals working to address this highly preventable, life-threatening, prevalent infectious disease at the population level through innovative surveillance and programmatic interventions. The fellow would specifically concentrate on areas where epidemiologic analysis can impact the Bureau's understanding of the state of the epidemic in ways that inform its programmatic interventions.

Potential projects include:

1. Surveillance or programmatic evaluation projects

- a. Evaluate the completeness of the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Registry using data from independent sources of HIV/AIDS cases in New York City
- b. Crossmatch NYC's HIV/AIDS Surveillance Registry with an outside data source of living persons in the US in order to assess migration patterns of PLWHA originally reported in NYC who may now be living elsewhere;
- c. Evaluate two new complementary surveillance system(s): Medical Monitoring Project and the Never-in-Care Project targeting HIV infected persons who are in and out of care.

2. Data analysis projects:

- a. Use a citywide hospitalization database to characterize HIV-related hospitalizations and assess the impact of funded treatment and care programs;

- b. Crossmatch NYC's HIV/AIDS Surveillance Registry with the NYC STD Registry in order to determine incidence and time to event for various sexually transmitted diseases among PLWHA in NYC.

3. Outbreak/field investigation projects

- a. Investigate identified clusters of HIV infection
- b. Investigate a foodborne outbreak with DOHMH's bureau of communicable disease
- c. Develop a database and tracking system for investigation of HIV cases of public health importance that can be integrated with the current HIV/AIDS Surveillance Registry.

4. Other day-to-day activities would be tailored to the fellow's interests but could include:

- a. Attending weekly Bureau-wide planning meeting that focus on strategic planning and presentation of new Bureau initiatives;
- b. Attending meetings with Bureau Sexually Transmitted Disease Control and Correctional Health Services regarding ongoing programmatic collaborations;
- c. Monthly surveillance conference calls with New York State regarding issues with surveillance data transfers and data flow;
- d. If the fellow has a specific interest in an area of HIV prevention and control, this would be accommodated (e.g. anti-stigma campaigns; sex harm reduction/condom distribution; needle exchange; prevention in women, people of color or transgender persons, etc);
- e. Attending DOHMH's many formal educational opportunities including Epidemiology Grand Rounds, research seminars, and trainings;
- f. Participating in collaborations with HIV researchers outside the Bureau and outside of DOHMH, including academic public health partners (e.g., Columbia University and Hunter College).

Opportunities to work in interdisciplinary teams:

HIV prevention and control is inherently interdisciplinary involving collaboration between persons with expertise in behavioral intervention, research methods, community intervention, medicine, social services, and epidemiology among other disciplines. All these disciplines are represented within the Bureau and the fellow will have the opportunity to work with persons of such diverse expertise.

The fellow will be integrated into DOHMH's emergency response structure, which is based on the Incident Management System (IMS). Like all DOHMH staff, he or she will be assigned to a specific response group and will participate in planning or emergency response activities.

Assignment Location: New York City, NY

Primary Mentor: Elizabeth Begier, MD, MPH

Medical Director, HIV Epidemiology Program

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Advanced Degrees: MPH, Johns Hopkins (2001)

MD, University of Pennsylvania (1994)

Secondary Mentor: Colin Shepard, MD

Director of HIV/AIDS Surveillance

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Advanced Degree: MD, Wake Forest University (1998)