

Infectious Disease

Information about program area:

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS), located in central New Jersey, provide public health services to over eight million New Jersey residents.

The Fellow will work with the NJDHSS's Communicable Disease Service (CDS), which is comprised of four area-specific programs (Infectious and Zoonotic Diseases, Sexually-Transmitted Diseases, Tuberculosis, and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases). The CDS provides guidance to local health departments and health care facilities statewide regarding routine investigations of reportable communicable diseases and outbreaks as well as public health emergencies, including emerging infections and events related to bioterrorism. CDS has approximately 100 staff members who represent a range of expertise, including physicians, veterinarians, nurses, epidemiologists, and health educators, who are available to the Fellow for consultation and/or collaboration.

Activities:

The Fellow's anticipated day-to-day activities would include work on long-term analytic projects and acute outbreak investigations (suggested projects below). Other routine activities would include:

- Phone duty once a week (CDS epidemiologists rotate daily to answer phone inquiries from public health and health care partners regarding reportable communicable disease issues);
- Participation in weekly meetings with CDS epidemiologists regarding current investigations/outbreaks;
- Participation in monthly meetings with regional (i.e., based at local health departments) epidemiologists regarding current investigations/outbreaks and lectures on topics in public health; and
- Participation in the monthly Epidemiology Seminar Series which feature presentations from epidemiologists throughout NJDHSS and include topics on infectious diseases, occupational health, environmental health, and health statistics.

Potential projects, opportunities for data analysis, outbreak field investigations, opportunities to work on interdisciplinary teams:

Potential projects might include:

- Analyzing foodborne disease data;
- Conducting a West Nile virus seroprevalence study among mosquito researchers
- Designing a surveillance system for community-associated MRSA;
- Measuring the economic impact of select antimicrobial-resistant organisms in New Jersey;
- Comparing aggregate hospital antibiogram data with that collected through NJDHSS's existing antimicrobial resistance surveillance system;

The Fellow will have numerous opportunities to lead and/or participate in outbreak investigations; the CDS receives over 100 reports of communicable disease outbreaks of various etiologies among various settings each year.

In addition, the Fellow will have numerous opportunities to work on interdisciplinary teams. Depending on the project/investigation, the CDS works closely with other areas in NJDHSS, including the Consumer and Environmental Health Service, the Occupational Health Service, the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, the Public Health and Environmental Laboratories, and the Division of Health Care Quality and Oversight. The Fellow will also have opportunities to collaborate with the NJDHSS Center for Health Statistics, which oversees areas including the state's Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Healthy NJ 2010, and vital statistics analysis.

Program or surveillance system evaluation component:

The Fellow may choose to analyze an existing CDS surveillance system—e.g., Lyme disease, influenza-like illness, pertussis.

Role of Fellow in State Emergency Preparedness Plan:

In the event of a public health emergency, the fellow would be part of the CDS response team (which includes sub-teams in the areas of business continuity, Emergency Call Center, communications, epidemiology/surveillance, and data management). The Fellow would serve in either the epidemiologic/surveillance or data management sub-teams.

Assignment Location: Trenton, NJ

Primary Mentor:	Christina Tan, MD Medical Director/Deputy State Epidemiologist, Communicable Disease Service
Degrees:	MD, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York (1996)
Secondary Mentor:	Corwin Robertson, MD, MPH Medical Director, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Communicable Disease Service
Degrees:	MD, Brown University, Rhode Island (1995) MPH, Norman J. Arnold School of Public Health, South Carolina (2001)