

The United States Virgin Islands, a territory of the United States consists of four major islands – St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island. The population is a blend on many different ethnicities, including Blacks (76.2%), Whites (13.1%), and Hispanic or Latinos (14%). The key health problems generally reflect those in the United States, however there are some leading health indicators that are of greater immensity here, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases. The islands have two international airports, and over ten major docks. The island of St. Croix is home to one of the most extensive petrochemical refineries in the Western Hemisphere. On any given day, eight to ten cruise ships can enter St. Thomas's port. St. John and Water Island are surrounded by small cays and can be easily accessed by ferryboats, private boats, or helicopters. These factors, along with the territory's considerable tourist industry, all contribute to the U.S. Virgin Island's vulnerability. Because of this, the Department of Health has established the Bioterrorism Preparedness Program in order to upgrade the public health infrastructure to meet any existing infectious disease or bioterrorism threats.

The Virgin Islands Department of Health is seeking to host an epidemiology fellow to function as a Bioterrorism Surveillance Program Advisor. The fellow will aid the department in completing its mission to establish a successful program. This position would include the following tasks and responsibilities:

- Assess the surveillance program abilities in terms of capacity, as determined and described by the CDC, and other lead public health authorities.
- Upgrade the disease surveillance system, based in the Department of Health and incorporating hospital, clinic, and physician office systems.
- Create a method of tracking (electronically) any clinically unusual event, in type or occurrence, that may present to public or private clinics, offices, or hospitals.
- Assess hospital, clinic, and physician office policies and procedures to determine the appropriateness of response to unusual events. In that capacity, train hospital and clinic personnel in using the response system and protocols for appropriate response.
- Develop methods to conduct investigations of unusual cases and correlate with known syndromic presentations.
- Develop protocols for reporting pertinent and significant unusual events to the appropriate authorities.
- Develop a system of timely and accurate recording of such events. This includes development of a database that ensures standard data collection.
- Perform statistical analyses of such pertinent data (e.g. descriptive analysis, univariate analysis, trend analysis, multiple logistic regression, survival analysis, etc.).
- Prepare written and verbal reports and make presentations related to surveillance or epidemiology and bioterrorism activities.
- Provide technical assistance to the Public Health Emergency preparedness Committee regarding planning activities between the Department of Health, hospitals, law enforcement, public officials, and the community.
- Collaborate with the Department of Health's Legal Counsel to enforce or update pertinent clauses of the Virgin Islands Code to ensure compliance with existing laws and standards.

The fellow will work in the Commissioner of Health's Office and receive administrative, statistical, and data analysis support. There will be many opportunities to attend national, regional (Caribbean), and local continuing education courses. Upon completion of the fellowship, a permanent Epidemiologist position may be available in the program.

Primary Mentor: Mavis Matthew, MD, MPH
Commisioner of Health (2001-present)

Advanced Degrees: MD, Temple University School of Medicine (1984)
MPH, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Hygiene (1992)

Secondary Mentor: Philip A. Yeon, MD, MPHTM
Clinical Director, St. Croix STD/TB/HIV Program

Advanced Degrees: MD, Escola Paulista de Medicina (1990)
MPHTM, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (1999)