

Infectious Disease

The Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section (CDES) is located in Shoreline, WA about 12 miles north of the heart of Seattle. Our section oversees surveillance and investigation for notifiable communicable diseases in Washington (except TB, STDs, HIV, chronic viral hepatitis) in collaboration with 35 local health departments; Surveillance and Epidemiologic Response to Bioterrorism is located within the CDES, providing many opportunities to be involved in public health emergency preparedness and response. The section has 17 public health professionals, including four doctoral level epidemiologists, five masters' level epidemiologists, a CDC EIS Officer, learning specialist and support staff. The section office is adjacent to the Public Health Laboratories (PHL), which provide reference laboratory services for the State, including testing for select agents.

The Fellow participates in daily CDES team meetings and bi-weekly Puget Sound communicable disease meetings to report on and discuss current investigations and issues. They work with other Department programs (e.g., Food Safety, Immunizations, STDs) local health departments, state, regional and local communicable disease epidemiologists, public health nurses, environmental health specialists, and the PHL on communicable disease investigations. They assist in surveillance activities, data collection and analysis; planning and response to emerging issues such as avian influenza and West Nile virus. Additional day-to-day activities will depend on the applicants' areas of interest and experience, but could include assisting with response to outbreaks of foodborne, vectorborne, zoonotic and vaccine-preventable diseases; molecular epidemiology; development and presentation of epidemiology training materials for local public health; participating in cross-border and emergency preparedness planning, including planning for pandemic influenza. Fellows meet regularly with their mentors for feedback and also with other epidemiologists they are working with on projects. In addition to travel to the annual CSTE meeting, our Fellow attends the very popular annual West Coast Epi meeting held in OR or WA and the annual Western Regional EIS meeting. Previous Fellows have published articles in the MMWR and traveled to national and international meetings to present the results of their work in the Section.

Recent collaborative data analysis projects include: evaluation of trends in Chlamydia infections from the HHS Region X Infertility Prevention Project; trends in community-acquired methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus infections from Group Health microbiology data.

Recent communicable disease investigations conducted in conjunction with local public health agencies include Japanese encephalitis in a traveler, scombroid intoxication from escolar; tularemia; hantavirus pulmonary syndrome; an outbreak of tuberculosis among the homeless; a multi-state outbreak of salmonellosis associated with ice cream; and a cluster of salmonella associated with pet treats investigated in collaboration with British Columbia Centre for Disease Control.

A collaborative program in zoonotic disease surveillance has been initiated with support from Public Health Preparedness and Response funds – participants include wildlife rehabilitators, fish and wildlife biologists, veterinarians, Washington State University veterinary diagnostic laboratory, zoos and others. Emergency response activities may include assisting with development of procedures and checklists for the Department of Health Communicable Disease Emergency Response Plan, pandemic influenza planning, and development and participation in

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tabletop exercises and drills. There is potential for collaborative projects with the PHL, Immunization Program, and other Department of Health Programs.

The recent implementation of an electronic notifiable conditions and laboratory reporting systems will provide ample opportunities for the fellow to evaluate surveillance, as will the recent implementation of surveillance for human transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

Assignment Location: **Shoreline, WA**

Primary Mentor: Jo Hofmann, MD
State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases

Advanced Degree:

Secondary Mentor: Chas DeBolt
Vaccine Preventable Disease Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: