

Timeline of CDC's Global Health Milestones from 1942–2021



1942



CDC's predecessor—the Office of Malaria Control in War Areas (MCWA)—was created to control malaria around military bases in the Southeastern U.S.



1951



Malaria was eliminated in the U.S.



1958



CDC sent a team of Epidemic Intelligence Service Officers to Southeast Asia to work on smallpox and cholera outbreaks. This was CDC's first technical support mission to Southeast Asia.



1967



The Foreign Quarantine Service joined CDC.



1973



CDC began regularly responding to public health crises abroad by providing famine assistance in sub-Saharan Africa.

1976



CDC sent disease detectives to investigate two large outbreaks of an unknown, deadly hemorrhagic fever in Zaire (DRC) and Sudan. This disease is now known as Ebola.

1979



CDC established the WHO Lassa fever Collaborating Center in Sierra Leone.

1980



CDC supported the launch of the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in Thailand, the first one outside of North America.

1980



CDC joined the global campaign to eradicate Guinea worm disease.

1980



The 33rd World Health Assembly declared the world free of smallpox, marking a landmark achievement in global health.

1981



CDC *MMWR* published a report of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia in five previously healthy young men in Los Angeles, California. This would later become known as the first published scientific account of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

1988



The worldwide Polio Eradication Initiative launched, spearheaded by WHO, Rotary International, CDC, and UNICEF.

1999



CDC established the Stop Transmission of Polio (STOP) Program to train and deploy international public health field staff to assist national immunization programs with polio investigation, surveillance, and planning of vaccination activities.

2000



CDC established the Global AIDS Program.

2000



CDC launched DPDx—an online resource for diagnostic assistance and training in laboratory identification of parasites.

2000s



H5N1 influenza started spreading among humans in the late 1990's, with several outbreaks occurring around the world throughout the 2000's.

2001



CDC, with American Red Cross, UNICEF, UNF and WHO, founded the Measles Initiative (expanded to include rubella elimination in 2011), becoming M&RI.

2002



Endemic measles eliminated in the Region of the Americas.

2003



SARS-associated coronavirus is first discovered in Asia. CDC responded by providing guidance for surveillance, clinical and laboratory evaluation, and reporting.

2003



CDC began to play a leading role in the newly announced U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest commitment by any nation to address one disease.

2005



The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) was created. Led by USAID and co-implemented with CDC, PMI aims to reduce malaria deaths and morbidity, with a long-term goal of eliminating malaria in 24 countries in Africa as well as three in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

2007



CDC launched the Global Disease Detection Operations Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

2010



CDC established the Center for Global Health.

2011



CDC launched its National Public Health Institutes (NPHI) program in partnership with the International Association of National Public Health Institutes and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

2011



CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to respond to polio.

2014



CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate assistance and disease control activities related to the largest Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa.

2015



CDC launched the Global Rapid Response Team (GRRT) to rapidly respond to global public health concerns, both within the United States and around the world.

2016



CDC's Emergency Operations Center was activated for Zika virus disease.

2018



CDC worked closely with the Ministry of Public Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and additional partners to respond to multiple Ebola outbreaks.

2020



WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11th, 2020. CDC is responding to COVID-19 and building on decades of global collaboration by deploying the GRRT domestically and serving as credible scientific and technical experts with international partners and partner country governments for COVID-19 science and public health practice.

2020



The WHO African Region was certified free of all wild poliovirus.

2021



WHO recommended the new RTS,S malaria vaccine for broader use. CDC's years of collaboration—including most recently with the RTS,S pilot introduction in Kenya—contributed to the WHO recommendation and helped pave the way for wide scale implementation of this promising new intervention.

[Back](#)

[Next](#)