

DPHSWD in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Accomplishments in KSA

- Increased disease detection capacity and real time communication with 30 health professionals from National Guard Health Affairs (NGHA) identifying data systems gaps and developing solutions to improve disease reporting throughout KSA.
- Successfully developed and deployed an electronic infectious disease surveillance system (IEDSS) at the four NGHA Medical Cities which will improve detection and response to healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and other health problems. Achieved 100% usage and utilization of the IHSN; currently 100% of National Guard Health Affairs ICPs are using the system regularly to enter 100% of HAI data in the four NGHA Medical Cities.
- Expanded real time disease detection capacity by training more than 300 Hajj healthcare workers on using the CDC/MoH National Notifiable Infectious Disease Surveillance System to collect and analyze Hajj surveillance data.
- The CDC country office coordinated the successful participation of 20 U.S. government officials from various agencies at the MoH Mass Gatherings workshop.

Overview and Goals

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through its Division of Public Health Systems and Workforce Development (DPHSWD), has been working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) since 1988. The goals for the partnership are:

- Strengthening the existing linkages between the public-health, medical and scientific communities in the U.S. and KSA
- Addressing common health problems and cooperating on public-health, medical, and scientific issues of mutual concern
- Encouraging greater understanding and strengthening further relationships between the two countries
- Recognizing the existence of broad mutual interests in the control and prevention of diseases and the promotion of health

Program Description

Building Workforce Capacity

DPHSWD supports workforce capacity building in KSA through the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP). The KSA FETP started in 1988 as the first program in the Middle East. For the first 10 years, CDC provided a resident advisor and technical support from Atlanta to the School of Community Medicine at King Saud University. A total of 94 officials graduated from the program during that time. In March 2009, a CDC team conducted an assessment visit and identified several opportunities for renewed collaboration including: strengthening the FETP, improving infectious and chronic disease surveillance, addressing public health lab infrastructure, and translating data into action steps. A CDC resident advisor is now in country working with the KSA FETP to strengthen the program.

Strengthening Public Health Systems

DPHSWD is strengthening public health systems in KSA with two surveillance projects with the KSA Ministry of Health (MoH) and KSA National Guard Health Affairs (NGHA). The projects aim to develop, deploy, and implement electronic disease surveillance systems that promote and strengthen the KSA public health capacity for better, faster, and more economical disease detection and response.

The CDC/NGHA Integrated Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NG-IEDSS) includes three major systems:

1. International Healthcare Safety Network (IHSN) to detect and prevent hospital acquired infections (HAIs);
2. Notifiable Electronic Disease Surveillance System to improve detection and response for other public health problems;
3. Environmental and Occupational Disorders Registry System to measure the burden and respond to occupational and environmental safety and health problems.

The NG-IEDSS will integrate existing clinical and laboratory systems with the public health infrastructure in order to improve the evidence base for planning, monitoring and improving health policies, practices and outcomes.



CDC GPHIP project core team and key partners at the CDC/NGHA project formal kickoff.



KSA MoH Minister, Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeh, receiving the CDC Mobile Hajj Surveillance team at his Mena field office to celebrate the success of 2009 Hajj collaboration.



Mr. Carl Kinkade (CDC) training Saudi Arabia FETP and public health professionals using mobile-based system.

In addition, the CDC country office and US Embassy Economic Section coordinated and managed successful discussions with the KSA MoH and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to engage KSA MoH in the US Department of State-led Biosecurity Engagement Program to identify its biosecurity needs and implement assistance to ensure safe, secure and sustainable bioscience capacity while reducing global biological threats.

Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure and Institutions

The CDC country office facilitated discussions and reached an agreement with KSA MoH on the next steps to support the establishment of a Bio Safety Level 4 central lab.

Future Plans

- Continued NG-IEDSS collaboration to include significant enhancements to the systems.
- Introduce Environmental and Syndromic Surveillance Modules to ND-IEDSS in Summer 2012.
- Begin collaboration with KSA Ministry of Defense and Aviation on a disease surveillance project.
- The MoH-King Saud University Diploma Program in Field Epidemiology will change to an MPH degree program with the recruitment of the 24th cohort of FETP residents in 2012.
- With technical support from the CDC resident advisor, FETP will strengthen its service-oriented relationship with MoH programs and aim for increased use of lab support in its field investigations.
- CDC resident advisor, FETP faculty, and FETP residents are assisting in the design and implementation of a new KSA MoH National Health Electronic Surveillance & Response Network in 2012.

Key Partners

- Saudi Arabian National Guard Health Affairs
- Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health
- US DoD/ Office of the Program Manager-Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program
- Health Ministers' Council for Cooperation Council Gulf States
- Organization of Islamic Conference
- US DoS/ International Health

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