

Global Health Security Branch

Advancing global health security

Protecting Populations in the U.S. and Abroad

The Global Health Security Branch (GHSB) leads CDC's global health security engagement with other U.S. government agencies and programs, multilateral institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, ministries of health, and other international organizations to promote mutual strategies, research, and policies. GHSB includes key programs that partner with host countries to build surveillance and response capacity for potential public health events of national and international concern.



Mission

The Global Health Security Branch protects the health of Americans and global populations by assisting partner countries to prepare for and respond to international public health emergencies. The Branch accomplishes this mission through the implementation and coordination of early detection, rapid response, preparedness, and capacity building measures in the context of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the CDC's Global Health Strategy.

Global health security is the term used to describe the capacities required for countries to prepare for and respond to public health threats and reduce the risk of these threats from crossing borders. The global threat of diseases such as avian influenza and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) spreading from person to person and across borders poses a public health risk to all countries. The risk is especially high for low- and middle-resource countries with less-developed systems to detect, investigate, and quickly respond to emerging and re-emerging public health threats.

Enhancing Global Health Security through Effective Programs

The Global Disease Detection (GDD) Operations Center uses event-based surveillance to provide early warning about international disease threats and facilitates the detection and response to these events through a network of subject matter experts at CDC as well as a global network of CDC staff and partner organizations. The GDD Operations Center also facilitates and supports responses to international outbreaks when requested by ministries of health.

The International Emergency Preparedness Team enhances global health security through the application of evidence-based emergency management principles and activities. The team helps ministries of health and international partners prepare for emergencies by providing training and technical assistance for the development of plans, table-top exercises, and emergency operations centers (EOCs).

Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) is a comprehensive regional framework for strengthening national public health surveillance and response systems in Africa. This is a major collaborative activity for CDC with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO/AFRO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In WHO-AFRO, 44 out of 47 countries have adopted IDSR.

Global Public Health Informatics (GPHI) activities help enhance global health security through standards-based information management for improved decisions. The team helps ministries of health and international partners to more rapidly detect and respond to outbreaks by optimizing data access and use and improving data quality through design, development and deployment of information systems. The GPHI team also serves as the WHO Collaborating Center for Public Health Informatics.

Strengthening Partnerships

GHSB leverages resources to achieve the U.S. Government's public health objectives to assist other countries to successfully implement international global health security frameworks. The GHSB works with domestic and international programs across CDC to identify CDC subject matter experts who can support WHO Member States by:

- Supporting capacity building for disease surveillance and outbreak response, including laboratory capacity;
- Strengthening preparedness and emergency management capability;
- Providing training in field epidemiology and laboratory methods; and
- Developing and implementing the information technology tools for disease surveillance and response reporting.

GHSB implements these activities in partnership with other international and U.S. government departments and agencies. CDC's global health security partners include the World Health Organization, the U.S. Department of State's Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP), the U.S. Department of Defense's Cooperative Biological Engagement Program (CBEP), and USAID.

Supporting Ministries of Health and Achieving IHR Compliance

The revised IHR (2005) require all 194 WHO Member States to develop core capacities for monitoring, detecting, reporting, and responding to public health events of national and international concern. As the WHO Collaborating Center for Implementation of IHR National Surveillance and Response Capacity (the Collaborating Center), GHSB provides policy and technical assistance to WHO and its regional offices to support ministries of health in achieving compliance with the IHR (2005). The Collaborating Center also engages with other U.S. Government agencies and CDC programs to assist countries in strengthening the core functions required by the IHR (2005).

Accomplishments

CDC and WHO AFRO updated the IDSR Technical Guidelines to include recommendations from the IHR (2005). As of June 2013, seventeen (17) countries out of the 47 implementing countries have adapted the revised IDSR guidelines to their national context.

Improved Saudi Arabia's public health informatics capacity by building a National Guard Electronic Disease Surveillance System that incorporates the Healthcare Safety Network. Provided subject matter expertise in development of an Electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance System in the Caucasus region of Central Asia

Through global monitoring and an outbreak response contingency fund, the GDD Operations Centers has alerted programs across CDC to numerous disease events and enabled them to respond to over 80 requests for technical assistance from over 40 countries to help better understand the cause of the disease, factors that increase risk for disease and to control the outbreak where possible.

Future Direction

- Support host countries in achieving compliance with the IHR (2005)
- Focus CDC's global health security engagements on the support of IHR core capacity strengthening
- Assist host countries and CDC programs in the development of global health security work plans
- Leverage opportunities with our partners in BEP, CBEP, and USAID to strengthen global health security
- Develop and improve metrics to show CDC's success in developing global health security capacities
- Strengthen disease detection and response capacity