

Infectious Diseases-Quarantine, Infectious Diseases

Georgia Department of Public Health & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine/Quarantine and Health Services Branch

Atlanta, Georgia

Assignment Description

The Fellow will work on projects within the Quarantine and Border Health Services (QBHS) Branch at CDC and the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH). There will be opportunities for collaboration between QBHS and GDPH, and some as separate projects for each institution. The focus will be on infectious disease surveillance, outbreak investigations, evaluation of aviation illness responses, and preparedness.

The Fellow will be based at the QBHS Branch, but work will involve activities at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson international airport and the Georgia Department of Public Health and its affiliates.

Day-to-Day Activities

At the QBHS Branch, the Fellow will be assigned to the Aviation Activity (AA) Team in the Quarantine Travel Epidemiology Team (QuarTET). AA and QuarTET work with state and local partners - such as the Georgia Department of Public Health - to provide guidelines for the conduct of air contact investigations, and when possible, to provide health interventions and education to travelers exposed to a communicable disease of public health during travel, to reduce morbidity and mortality from that disease and reduce the likelihood of the importation into and spread with the U.S. of that disease. Currently, AA includes a Lead (primary mentor) an ORISE Fellow, a contractor, and three other workgroup members from within QBHSB.

At GDPH the CSTE Fellow will be housed in the Acute Disease Epidemiology Section (ADES) in the Epidemiology Program, which is directed by the Georgia State Epidemiologist, Dr. Cherie Drenzek. ADES is one of 6 Sections in the Epidemiology Program; the others include the Chronic Disease, Healthy Behaviors, and Injury Epidemiology Section, the HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Section, the STD Epidemiology Section, the TB Epidemiology Section, and the MCH Epidemiology Section. The mission of the Acute Disease Epidemiology Section (ADES) is to optimize the health of Georgians by preventing and mitigating certain communicable and/or notifiable infectious diseases. The ADES is dedicated to fulfilling its mission by using epidemiologic methods to:

- Conduct surveillance of infectious diseases (opportunity to work in many other subject areas as well)
- Identify and respond to emerging infectious disease threats and public health crises such as the opioid epidemic
- Provide support to local and district public health and private partners in identifying training and resource needs, developing guidelines for and investigating outbreaks or increases in endemic rates of disease, developing educational and training materials, and collecting and disseminating data.

- Publish and disseminate public health information: statistical reports (e.g. Georgia Epidemiology Report), outbreak investigation reports, annual data summaries, and educational materials. Participate in emergency preparedness planning, response and recovery efforts.

Potential Projects

Surveillance Activity Evaluation of Air Contact Investigations

The fellow will evaluate disease-specific data collected through the Quarantine Activity Reporting System (QARS) to inform the implementation/revision of existing Standard Operating Procedures for Air Contact Investigations.

Surveillance Evaluation Evaluation of Standard Reporting Tool for Reporting Ill Travelers to Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch

The fellow will evaluate a new Standard Reporting Tool for Reporting Ill Travelers to the Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch, developed in a collaboration between CSTE and QBHS Branch. QBHSB will be concluding the second year of a Cooperative Agreement with CSTE in the summer of 2020, including an evaluation of the process by which State and Local Health Departments (SLHD) report ill travelers to QBHSB, and the development of a standard reporting tool, one that has never been used by the Branch before, that will be rolled out to CSTE membership by summer 2020. After the standard reporting tool has been in use by SLHDs for 6-12 months, the fellow would conduct an evaluation of the new standard reporting tool to determine how it is working for SLHDs as well as for Quarantine Stations, and based on findings, what improvements need to be made to the standard reporting tool and reporting process in general.

Major Project Leading/Supporting Outbreak Investigations

The fellow will have the opportunity to work with the GADPH in an outbreak response requiring a full epidemiologic investigation.

Preparedness Role

The Fellow will receive training and experience in public health preparedness and response through the QBHSB and the Georgia Department of Public Health. QBHSB has a Preparedness and Policy Coordination Team that works with our Quarantine Stations to work with Airport and Maritime Partners, and State and Local Health Departments, to develop Communicable Disease Response Plans for the Aviation and Maritime Ports in States. The Fellow will assist in planning for public health responses to natural disasters (e.g. pandemics) and man-made disasters (e.g. bioterrorism attacks), and in the design and as well as the operation of preparedness tabletop exercises.

At GADPH, the fellow can be involved with many preparedness activities, depending on their areas of interest. Possible projects include developing a chemical and radiation exposure epidemiology response plan, revising the port of entry communicable disease response plan and participating in exercising the plan with the CDC Quarantine Station, and local partners, participating in outbreak and other state level emergency responses, and more.

Additional Activities

There may be opportunities for public health responses at the federal level through CDC.

Mentors

Primary

Araceli Rey, BSN, RN, MPH

Aviation Activity Lead

Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, CDC

Secondary

Laura Edison, DVM, MPH

CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer assigned to the Georgia Department of Public Health