

Disease Detective Training Comes to China

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The [Associated Press](#) is reporting that U.S. and Chinese public health officials are collaborating to launch an epidemiology center in Shanghai in order to better train individuals in healthcare epidemiology and investigating infectious disease outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will provide the training and technical assistance, according to CDC deputy director Stephen B. Thacker.

Recent global pandemics and outbreaks of influenza and sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza in the last seven years emphasize a greater need for field and hospital epidemiologists in countries in which their public health infrastructure is still being developed.

The CDC says that it has trained more than 3,000 epidemiologists around the globe since it started its international program about three decades ago. The CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) is a unique two-year post-graduate training program of service and on-the-job learning for health professionals interested in the practice of applied epidemiology.

Since 1951, these 3,000-plus EIS officers have responded to requests for epidemiologic assistance within the United States and throughout the world. EIS officers are on the public health frontlines, conducting epidemiologic investigations, research, and public health surveillance both nationally and internationally.

Recent EIS investigations include cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in multiple states in 2009, as well as increased incidence of Haemophilus influenzae type B in Minnesota; investigation of infections with Staphylococcus aureus among patients undergoing procedures at a pain management clinic in West Virginia; and an outbreak of carbapenem-resistant Klebsiella pneumoniae at a long-term care facility in Illinois. In 2008, disease detectives investigated a multi-state outbreak of Salmonella Saintpaul infections in the U.S. and investigated a monkeypox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.