

Capacity-building efforts by the AFHSC-GEIS program

Abstract

Capacity-building initiatives related to public health are defined as developing laboratory infrastructure, strengthening host-country disease surveillance initiatives, transferring technical expertise and training personnel. These initiatives represented a major piece of the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, Division of Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System (AFHSC-GEIS) contributions to worldwide emerging infectious disease (EID) surveillance and response. Capacity-building initiatives were undertaken with over 80 local and regional Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Defense, as well as other government entities and institutions worldwide. The efforts supported at least 52 national influenza centers and other country-specific influenza, regional and U.S.-based EID reference laboratories (44 civilian, eight military) in 46 countries worldwide. Equally important, reference testing, laboratory infrastructure and equipment support was provided to over 500 field sites in 74 countries worldwide from October 2008 to September 2009. These activities allowed countries to better meet the milestones of implementation of the 2005 International Health Regulations and complemented many initiatives undertaken by other U.S. government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State.