FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

During this past quarter, International Health Specialist teams at combatant commands and component commands responded to a National Security Council request for information regarding assistance to partner nations over the past decade. The teams submitted success stories of strategic, long-term global health engagement that bolstered partner nations' ability to quickly and effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The teams' stories illuminate how their work helps to reduce and mitigate transnational threats to biosecurity like the one we are facing now.

The value IHS provide to the USAF and DoD, however, continues beyond their work in global health engagement. In this edition of Global Health Engagement Quarterly, we highlight the contributions that IHS are making to COVID-19 pandemic response activities. IHS experience working at the strategic and operational level elevates and broadens the applicability of medical specializations and enables the AFMS to better interoperate with counterparts across services, government agencies, and international organizations. Because of this, IHS are ideally poised to facilitate whole-of-government solutions to address the current pandemic as well as the unknown threats of tomorrow. Continued on page 2.

WESLEY D. PALMER, Colonel, USAF, MC, FS
Director, International Health Specialist Program
Editor's Note cont'd from page 1
The application of the IHS skillset to the pandemic response demonstrates its versatility and applicability outside of the traditional IHS scope. During this time of social unrest in the United States, and many parts of the world, it is prudent to think of the role the International Health Specialist can provide within his or her unit and the broader Air Force Medical Service. The United States Air Force provides an opportunity for individuals from many cultural backgrounds within the US to join the ranks of the greatest Air Force in the world. One of the IHS core competencies is cross-cultural competency, and although the focus is international, this work must first begin at home.

The US Air Force is one of the greatest institutions within the US government due to its diversity. It is through this diversity that we garner our strength and the respect of our counterparts across the world. Bridging cultural perspectives is a fundamental task of the IHS. Now, more than ever, all IHS must do a self-inventory and evaluate the roles they play in their units and communities, to ensure that cohesiveness rather than divisiveness is the tone set.

To achieve cohesiveness, we must frankly assess the long standing, and ill-applied, societal injustices that have afflicted members within our ranks. These past injustices cannot be undone, but together with empathy and understanding, we can address how they impact us today. With this understanding, hopefully, we can move forward in a positive and inclusive direction that values all members of our teams for the strength of the diversity they bring to our organizations.

IHS SUPPORT PANDEMIC RESPONSE

International Health Specialists' expertise proved important to support the Department of Defense's relief efforts to state health care systems fighting COVID-19. The Ninth Air Force-led Task Force-Southeast provided defense support of civil authorities within Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, regions III and IV. The task force’s largest mission was delivering support to a COVID-19 alternate care site set up at Temple University in Philadelphia that served as an overflow medical facility. Several International Health Specialists utilized IHS core competencies to support the task force’s establishment and mission. [...] Read the full article here.
IHS SPOTLIGHT:
TSgt KIPPING-CORDOBA

In January of 2020, TSgt Victor Kipping-Cordoba was at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic response in the United States. In his current position at the Center for Sustainment of Trauma Readiness Skills Omaha, which is a part of the Air Force Research Laboratory’s 711th Human Performance Wing, Kipping-Cordoba was helping to repatriate Americans returning from Wuhan, China and the Diamond Princess cruise ship.

C-STARS Omaha collaborates closely with the University of Nebraska Medical Center on infectious diseases. Together, they provided quarantine and isolation support, testing and evaluation of people under investigation, as well as clinical care for anyone who required hospitalization for COVID-19. In March, his team transitioned to train personnel at Joint Base Charleston to use the Transport Isolation System for patients with COVID-19. Applying lessons learned from working with UNMC earlier in the year, his team also integrated with Air Mobility Command staff to develop and implement plans for patient movement around the world and conduct testing and evaluation of other biocontainment units that could be used to enhance pandemic response. Kipping-Cordoba says his previous experience on the Air Forces Southern IHS team enhanced his performance in these critical roles.

ENGAGE WITH THE IHS PROGRAM

The AFMS - International Health Specialist (IHS) Program is with U.S. Air Force Medical Service - AFMS and 11 others.
Published by Zach Huebschman - May 14 at 11:53 AM - 🌐

The AFMS - International Health Specialist (IHS) Program has led #GlobalHealth Engagements during #Flintlock since 2005. Watch to see how the capabilities developed during Flintlock played a critical role in a devastating scenario in 2015.
CAREER BROADENING, EDUCATION, & TRAINING

2021/2022 USU MPH application cycle

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Academic Year 2021/2022 Advanced Academic Degree Application Call will open in the August/September timeframe. This timeframe may shift, so please check with your individual corps. For more information about applying to the International Health Specialist Global Health Concentration in collaboration with the Master of Public Health (MPH) program or any other graduate programs, reach out to your respective Corps Education and Utilization Branch. Read more about the Global Health Concentration here.

IHS SEI applications

The next IHS SEI application package is due 1 August 2020. Click here (CAC login required) for details.

IHS SEI AWARDEES:

- Maj George Diaz - Enabled IHS SEI (H8B)
- Maj Ryan Jung - Enabled IHS SEI (H8B)
- Capt Stephan Graff - Familiarized IHS SEI (H8A)
- Capt Matthew Vizer - Familiarized IHS SEI (H8A)

IN THE NEWS

Nurse and tech week: Heroes among us [AFMS]

Air Force nurses and medical technicians are answering our nation’s call, and now more than ever, during this pandemic, we know they are heroes one and all. Featured on the nightly news, nurses and medical nurses and medical technicians are filling manpower gaps in New York and elsewhere, risking their own lives in the process […]

AFRICOM's partnership endures during COVID-19 pandemic [USDOD]

[...] readiness exercises and conferences focused on pandemic response efforts all demonstrate the long-term investment by the command. Ghana, Senegal and Uganda independently decided to deploy their hospitals in support of their national response, said Air Force Maj. Mohamed Diallo, AFRICOM international health specialist […]

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OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Task Force-Southeast supports COVID-19 fight [USAF]
- Spirit of state partnership spurs Romania to deploy specialized team to help Alabama fight COVID-19 [EUCOM]
- Polish Medical Team Shares COVID-19 Lessons Learned With Guard [USDOD]
- 86 AW conducts COVID-19 patient movement training [USAFE-AFAF]
- A passion for helping and leading: Nurse leads Air Force Medical Service [AFMS]
- Mobility airmen conduct first transport isolation system medevac mission [USDOD]
- Virtual conference unites 19 air forces on pandemic response [PACAF]

IHS CORE COMPETENCY CORNER

This is one of ten competencies that International Health Specialists must master and maintain to be fully capable. Read about the others here.

Civil-Military Operations

Personnel will be trained, educated, and experienced in CMO. They will understand and appreciate the roles of the various agencies and actors involved in short and long-term humanitarian assistance; health sector disaster preparedness, relief, and response; and health sector reconstruction, stabilization, and capacity building.

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