



GUIDE TO BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT



"The global health engagement career field provides an opportunity to leverage our tremendous military medics to augment what combatant commands do in support of Department of Defense strategic objectives. It also provides an opportunity to think differently about how we leverage all military medical capabilities to support national security strategy. International Health Specialists must view their work through this lens as they build interoperability with Allies and partners and help the U.S. to navigate a multipolar world."

***Maj Gen Paul A. Friedrichs,
United States Air Force,
Joint Staff Surgeon***

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS DOD GHE?

US Department of Defense (DoD) global health engagement (GHE) is any health-related interaction DoD conducts with Allies' and partners' armed forces or civilian health authorities. DoD GHE programs and activities may be aimed at building trust and confidence, sharing information, building partner capabilities and capacity, and/or achieving interoperability.

WHY DOES DOD DO GHE?

Bolstering and modernizing alliances and partnerships is a core tenet of the US National Security Strategy. DoD GHE supports full spectrum security cooperation. GHE is mutually beneficial

and activities such as synchronizing pandemic prevention and response improves global health security for all.

HOW DOES GHE DO THIS?

Global health engagement encompasses a wide range of health and medical-related activities that the U.S. military conducts with other nations. Enabling military medics to work seamlessly with partner nation medical personnel and infrastructure provides a more ready and diversified health service support during crises and contingencies. From bilateral subject matter expert exchanges to multinational military exercises, global health engagement is a powerful national security tool.



GHE STRATEGIC VALUE



MEDICAL FORCE READINESS & INTEROPERABILITY

GHE activities support DoD's Joint Mission Essential Task List (JMETL) **Strategic National Task Seven (SN 7): Conduct Force Development**. Through interoperability exercises, US DoD medical personnel are better able to work alongside Ally and partner nation medical personnel. GHE also contributes to force readiness by ensuring that US military medical personnel maintain skill sets necessary to operate in various foreign environments. By supporting development of Ally and partner nation military medical capabilities, GHE enables development of a ready medical force prepared to operate together.



PARTNER OF CHOICE

GHE activities may include interaction with Ally and partner nations as well as with international organizations and civilian government agencies, fulfilling JMETL **Strategic National Task Eight (SN 8): Coordinate Military**

Engagement Activities. Successful military-military and military-civilian capacity building engagements and exercises can be structured to build trust and gain and maintain access to strategic areas of interest. By building and fortifying mutually-beneficial relationships, GHE supports the National Defense Strategy intent to integrate our efforts with our unmatched network of Alliances and partnerships.



PROACTIVE REGIONAL STABILITY

DoD GHE plays a role in DoD's mission to conduct stability operations throughout all phases of conflict and across the range of military operations, including in combat and non-combat environments. GHE programs and activities are coordinated with a range of stakeholders, fulfilling JMETL **Strategic Theater Task Eight (ST 8): Perform Military Engagement** by helping to establish civil security, restore essential services, fortify healthcare infrastructure, and deliver humanitarian assistance.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN GHE

Education & Training

- **Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Master of Public Health with Global Health Concentration**: USAF medics who complete this degree will have a potential follow-on assignment as an IHS team member
- **USU Global Health and Global Health Engagement Certificate (Distance Learning)**
- **International Affairs Master's Degree Tuition Assistance**
- **IHS Medical Readiness Fellowships**
- **USU Center for Global Health Engagement (CGHE) Courses**
- **Short Courses**: For an exhaustive list, reference the IHS SEI applications

Temporary Duty

- **Defense Institute for Medical Operations (DIMO) Instructor**: Opportunity for subject matter experts to support training courses
- **Language Enabled Airmen Program (LEAP)**: LEAP offers opportunities to maintain foreign language skills and cross-cultural experience
- **GHE Support**: Operational exercises, subject matter expert exchanges, air advising, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) support — see page 5

Assignments

- **Mobility Support Advisory Squadron**: 571 MSAS, Travis Air Force Base & 818 MSAS, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst
- **International Health Specialist Team Member**: See page 7

AIR FORCE MEDICAL SERVICE GHE

GHE operations, activities, and initiatives across the Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) enhance readiness, build partner capabilities and increase interoperability. AFMS GHE focuses on AFMS core competencies including aerospace medicine, aeromedical evacuation, force health protection, expeditionary medical support, and preparedness for disaster preparedness and response.

SOME EXAMPLES OF AFMS GHE:

- **USAF School of Aerospace Medicine (USAFSAM)**: Provides training to partner nation personnel, increasing interoperability
- **Defense Institute for Medical Operations (DIMO)**: Provides medical training for partners around the world via mobile training teams
- **Mobility Support Advisory Squadron**: Work with partner nations to develop tailored training and build capacity
- **48th Medical Group at Royal Air Force Lakenheath's Clinical Currency Program with UK National Health Service Hospitals**
- **Cope North**: Trilateral military exercise with a HA/DR component in the Indo-Pacific region
- **African Partner Outbreak Response Alliance (APORA)**: USAFE-AFAFRICA IHS coordinate annual events attended by 26 African member nations

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALIST PROGRAM

By formalizing requirements and training of GHE specialists, the International Health Specialist (IHS) Program professionalized these roles at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Full-time IHS personnel collaborate with Ally and partner nation counterparts to identify medical capability and capacity building goals of mutual interest. In turn, IHS personnel develop GHE activities and programs -- in alignment with the geographic Combatant Command Campaign Plan -- to achieve security cooperation objectives for the United States and the partner nation.

CORE CAPABILITIES



IHS SEI

AFMS identifies Total Force IHS through a series of Special Experience Identifiers (SEIs). The three levels of the IHS SEI are familiarized (451/H8A), enabled (452/H8B), and senior global (457/H8C). Download the **most recent** SEI application from the [IHS Kx page](#) for a full explanation of minimum requirements, additional qualifications, and potential substitutions. AFMS with experience, education, and language skills or cross-cultural competence should consider applying for the IHS SEI, starting at the familiarized level. Notable requirements include:

- **Operational Experience:** Experience in DoD GHE, expeditionary operations and other global health settings
- **Education & Training:** Completion of relevant coursework and training
- **Language or Cross-cultural Competence:** Language proficiency ([Defense Language Proficiency Test](#)) or ability to learn a language (Defense Language Aptitude Battery) in combination with demonstration of cross-cultural competence

Active duty SEI-holders will receive communication from the IHS Program Office in the early fall about projected vacancies of full-time IHS positions in the next PCS cycle.

POTENTIAL TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR IHS SEI HOLDERS



Delegates from the United States, Nigeria, North Macedonia, and Slovenia share intubation techniques during the U.S. Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa's European-African Military Nursing Exchange conference.



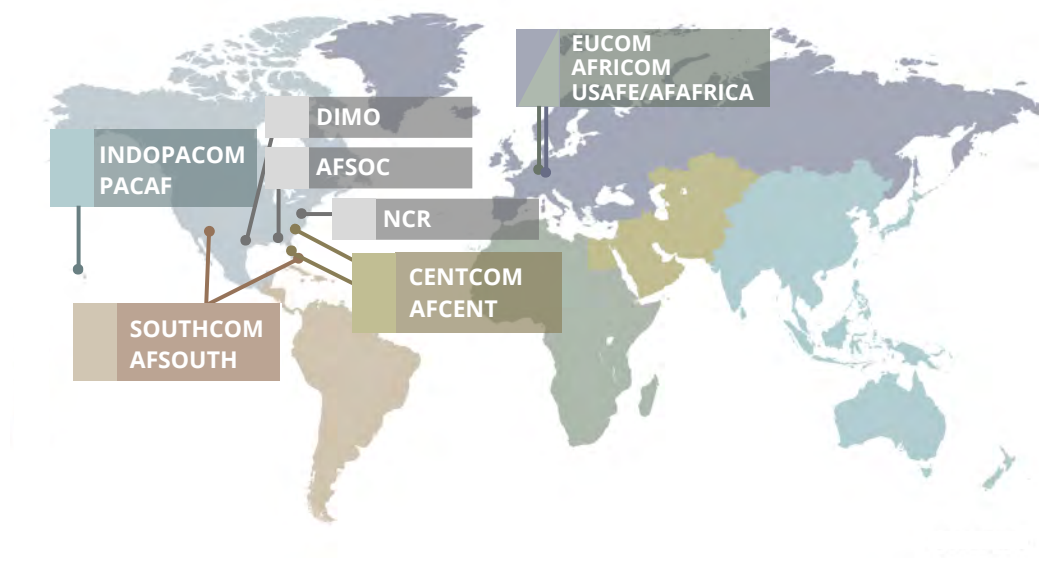
Medical Pods at the temporary Joint Mobility Processing Center at Ramstein Air Base, Germany are the first stop for medical care for newly arrived evacuees from Afghanistan during Operation Allies Welcome.



Hawaii Air National Guard and Indonesian Armed Forces medical experts engage in debate on how to best approach different pandemic response scenarios during a Pandemic Subject Matter Expert Exchange in Jakarta, Indonesia.

IHS ASSIGNMENTS

There are more than 60 full-time, active duty IHS-coded billets located in the Office of the Surgeon General (SG) at Combatant Commands, Air Components, and others such as the National Capital Region (NCR) team (see map). Roles and responsibilities of full-time IHS personnel may include: developing strategy for GHE and incorporating it into the Combatant Command Campaign Plan; GHE program design and management, to include Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation; planning and execution of GHE activities; coordination with joint, interagency and global partners; and strategic communication demonstrating value of GHE.



REQUIREMENTS:

- Officer: O-3 to O-6/ Enlisted: E-5 to E-8
- IHS SEI: H8A/451 or potential to acquire within 12 months
- Security Clearance: SECRET or higher
- Completion of Professional Military Education (PME) commensurate with rank
- Worldwide qualified
- Demonstrated cross-cultural competence
- Motivated, driven, and independent
- Highly developed interpersonal and organizational skills

ACTIONS TO TAKE:

1. Conduct a self-assessment (see next page)
2. Communicate desire to mentor, supervisor, commander, functional manager, specialty consultant, and/or associate chief
3. Ensure developmental plan (or assignment preference) is up-to-date in appropriate Air Force Personnel Center system
4. Check and review vacancy messages through Talent Marketplace or Assignment Management System
5. Submit application package per vacancy announcement

INTERESTED IN AN IHS ASSIGNMENT?

DO AN HONEST SELF-ASSESSMENT

01

Am I ready to expand beyond my primary AFSC?

IHS team members are action officers, often working far outside of their primary Air Force Specialty Code. They plan, develop, coordinate and/or execute GHE programs and activities in support of strategic objectives. IHS team members also support functions within the SG Directorate on various operational tasks.

02

Can I independently build teams of diverse stakeholders?

Successfully working in DoD GHE requires independent initiative to build teams with a range of stakeholders across the DoD, U.S. government inter-agency community, and Ally and partner nation counterparts.

03

Can I work easily with culturally diverse military/civilian personnel?

Full-time IHS team members will interact with personnel from a broad range of cultures and backgrounds. It is critical to be open-minded, diplomatic, courteous, and professional.

04

Do I have the flexibility to work in many different environments?

IHS team members may work with multiple Ally and partner nations with different priorities and processes. IHS personnel must be able to learn, assess and adapt planning to achieve shared objectives.

05

Can I see myself as a military health diplomat?

IHS team members will interact with a broad range of Ally and partner nation personnel, from peer-level professionals to senior leaders. Impeccable professionalism is required, as IHS team members represent the AFMS, the DoD, and the United States.

OBTAINING THE IHS SEI



PERUSE THE
KX-IHS FOR
RESOURCES



COMMUNICATE
TO YOUR CHAIN
OF COMMAND



COMPLETE &
SUBMIT THE
APPLICATION

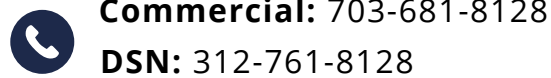


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