



# GUIDE TO BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT



# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

## WHAT IS DOD GHE?

US Department of Defense (DoD) global health engagement (GHE) is health-related interaction between the DoD and Ally and partner nation health authorities and organizations. DoD GHE operations, activities and investments (OAI)s may be aimed at building trust and confidence, sharing information, building partner capabilities and capacity, enhancing joint force readiness, and/or achieving interoperability.

## WHY DOES DOD DO GHE?

Cooperating to address shared challenges 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 improve global health security for all.

## HOW DOES GHE DO THIS?

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



# GHE STRATEGIC VALUE



## MEDICAL FORCE READINESS & INTEROPERABILITY

GHE activities support DoD's Universal Joint Task List (UJTL) **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 UJTL **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 UJTL **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.





## Education & Training

- **IHS/GHE Full-Spectrum Readiness Fellowships**
- **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
- **International Affairs Master's Degree Tuition Assistance**
- **Security Cooperation Training at Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU)**
- **USU Center for Global Health Engagement (CGHE) Courses**
- **Other Courses:** For an exhaustive list, reference the IHS SEI applications on MilSuite

## Temporary Duty

- **Defense Institute for Medical Operations (DIMO) Instructor:** DIMO offers opportunities for subject matter experts to support training courses
- **Language Enabled Airmen Program (LEAP):** LEAP offers opportunities to build and 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 (MSAS):** 571 MSAS, Travis Air Force Base & 818 MSAS, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst
- **International Health Specialist (IHS) Team Member:** See page 7

# AIR FORCE MEDICAL SERVICE GHE

GHE OAs 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 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**: 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
- **Interactions at OCONUS MTFs with host nation medical personnel**: Integration of Air Force medics within partner nation 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. 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 OAs -- in alignment with the geographic Combatant Command Campaign Plan -- to achieve security cooperation objectives for the United States and the partner nation.

## CORE COMPETENCIES



# IHS SEI

The AFMS identifies personnel as IHS via Special Experience Identifiers (SEI). Download the current SEI applications from the [IHS MilSuite page](#) for an explanation of minimum requirements, additional qualifications, and potential substitutions. AFMS personnel with experience, education, and cross-cultural competency and/or foreign language skills should consider applying for the IHS SEI. Notable requirements include:

- **Operational Experience:** Experience in DoD GHE, expeditionary operations, and other global health settings
- **Education & Training:** Completion of relevant coursework and training

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



U.S. Air Force medic instructs a Philippine Air Force medic on how to prepare a simulated disaster patient medical manikin for care and transportation during a mass assurance exercise for Pacific Airlift Rally 2023 at Clark Air Base, Philippines.



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 at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

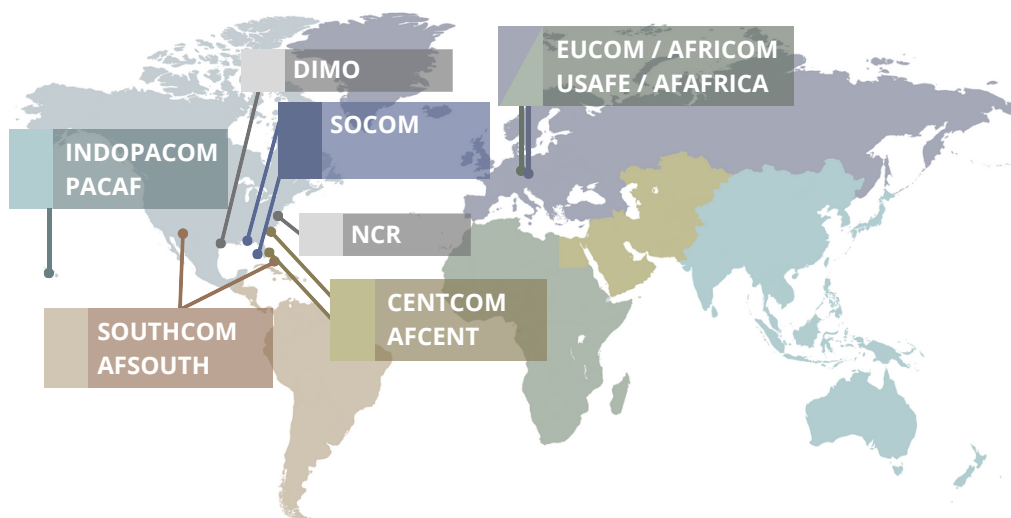


West Virginia Air National Guard and Peruvian Air Force conduct a patient transport scenario at Pisco Air Base, Peru, as part of Cooperacion IX, to develop interoperability in times of emergency response.



# IHS ASSIGNMENTS

There are more than 60 active duty IHS assignments located in the Office of the Surgeon General (SG) at Combatant Commands, Air Component Commands, DIMO, and various positions in the National Capital Region (NCR). Roles and responsibilities of 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 the value of GHE OAI.



## REQUIREMENTS:

- Officer: O-3 to O-6/ Enlisted: E-5 to E-8
- IHS SEI: Familiarized or potential to acquire within 12 months
- Security Clearance: SECRET or higher
- Enrollment into Professional Military Education (PME) commensurate with rank; Completion within first year highly recommended
- 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 IHS Program Office and chain of command, career field manager, or functional manager
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
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 OAs in support of strategic objectives. IHS team members also support operational tasks and must have effective written and verbal communication skills to support high level staff work.

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?**

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.



# GUARD AND RESERVE

The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve supports total force integration and strengthens medical readiness through GHE.

## AIR NATIONAL GUARD

The Air National Guard (ANG) provides mission-ready Airmen to safeguard the homeland, serve our communities, and to execute global operations. The State Partnership Program (SPP) is a unique opportunity for ANG personnel to participate in GHE efforts while achieving training and readiness objectives.

## AIR FORCE RESERVE

Air Force Reserve (AFR) personnel are highly skilled professionals with advanced training in civilian healthcare and can be sourced to augment the IHS mission. AFR personnel participate in GHE OAls to strengthen strategic alliances with Partner Nations and allies. These collaborations enhance force readiness, promote global health, and support interoperability.

## POTENTIAL TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR GUARD AND RESERVE



Oregon Air National Guardsman demonstrates airway management skills during an International Trauma Life Support course in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



U.S. Air Force Reserve Aeromedical technicians and their Peruvian counterparts perform a casualty evacuation training scenario in Callao, Peru, during exercise Resolute Sentinel 23.

# OBTAINING THE IHS SEI



EXPLORE THE  
MILSUITE FOR  
RESOURCES



COMMUNICATE  
TO YOUR CHAIN  
OF COMMAND



COMPLETE &  
SUBMIT THE  
APPLICATION



SEND TO  
IHS PROGRAM  
OFFICE

## ENGAGE WITH US:



## CONTACT US:



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## LEARN MORE:



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<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/air-force-global-health-engagement>