

## Disease Detectives Protect People's Health And Safety

(NAPSA)—Young Native Americans in the Four Corners of the Southwestern U.S. were coming to the hospital with fever, coughing and serious respiratory difficulties, within days many died.

Disease detectives from the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) and other scientists of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were dispatched. They soon identified the cause as a hantavirus, a rare virus not previously known to cause disease in humans in North America.

That investigation was just one of the 10,000 CDC EIS Officers have conducted in the EIS's 50 year history.

These medical doctors, researchers and scientists monitor the world for and respond to all types of epidemics, including chronic disease and injuries.

The EIS played a key role in the global eradication of smallpox; restored public confidence in the first polio vaccine after a defective vaccine led to panic; and discovered how the AIDS virus was transmitted.

More recently, EIS officers documented the obesity epidemic in the United States, worked on reducing school-associated violent deaths; identified and worked to control the West Nile virus outbreak in the northeastern United States; investigated Ebola outbreaks in Uganda and Zaire; helped states reduce tobacco use and studied whether disease outbreaks were a result of bioterrorism.

Each year, EIS officers assist with approximately 100 investigations requested by states and other countries. In addition, field officers assigned to state and local health departments conduct an



**CDC disease detector, Scott Dowell, working to control an Ebola outbreak in Africa.**

average of 500 studies and consultations per year.

"The brave, dedicated public health officers who comprise the EIS have been on the front lines of the most challenging health threats to our nation and to the world," said CDC Director Jeffrey P. Koplan, M.D., M.P.H. "People are healthier and safer because of their sacrifices and accomplishments in controlling and preventing disease."

The EIS symbol, appropriately, is a worn shoe sole inside a globe. This symbol represents the thousands of EIS officers who "wear out" their shoe soles tracing the causes of epidemics, uncovering how they are spread, and providing a basis for their control.

You can learn more on line at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis>.