



## Real-Life “Disease Detectives”

(NAPSA)—In the shadowy world of superbugs and viruses, there’s a group of dedicated professionals who wage a constant battle to protect America from outbreaks.

### Who They Are

These “disease detectives” have investigated some of the most mysterious and deadly outbreaks in modern history—from AIDS to SARS to the anthrax attacks.

As America’s Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers, they work long hours under enormous pressure to quickly and accurately identify the source of an outbreak. Their first duty is to meet quickly with public health officials, doctors and patients to assess the outbreak and develop an action plan.

“These are the people on the front lines of outbreaks that affect people around the world,” said Dr. Scott Dowell, director of Global Disease Detection and Emergency Response at CDC. “There’s an EIS officer investigating an outbreak every week of the year.”

EIS officers are usually new, young doctors who sign up for two years to serve at CDC or with a state or other public health department. It’s a unique post-graduate training program of service and on-the-job learning for health professionals interested in the practice of applied epidemiology. Most hold Ph.D.s or doctoral degrees in medicine, veterinary science or dentistry. A small number of nurses, pharmacists and physician assistants are also part of the program.



**Dedicated Epidemic Intelligence Service officers put their lives on the line to keep America and the world secure from health threats.**

### What They Do

Usually on the public health front lines, conducting epidemiological investigations, research and public health surveillance, they have to be always ready at a moment’s notice to go anywhere in the world. For example, Dr. Dowell remembers canceling his Thanksgiving to respond to a multistate food-borne outbreak and, on another occasion, dropping everything to go to the Congo to fight an Ebola outbreak.

“Often, the cases continue to pile up and people want to know what you are going to do about it,” Dr. Dowell said. “You do feel the pressure of time. There’s not a lot of sleeping.”

### Where To Learn More

You can find further information online at [www.cdc.gov/eis/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/eis/index.html). For more information about CDC’s response to contagious diseases, visit [www.cdc.gov/24-7](http://www.cdc.gov/24-7).