



# GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY

*United States Air Force Global Health Engagement Newsletter*

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The United States relies on a robust constellation of allies and partners to achieve its national security objectives. Since its inception in 2000, the International Health Specialist Program has played a significant role in transforming global health engagement to support joint and combatant commanders in strengthening alliances and partnerships. AFMS organizes and assigns IHS at combatant commands and air component commands, which has methodically driven more purposeful and strategic security cooperation with Allies and Partners.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the program, this newsletter features past and present successes of International Health Specialists. These stories reflect how IHS teams continuously make improvements to global health engagement that enable partner nations' military and civilian agencies to advance their own medical capabilities and capacity long after the engagement ends. Rather than conducting finite annual events that may disrupt or compete with host nation medical systems, IHS teams aim for smaller, more frequent formats that allow for regular recalibration to achieve mutually beneficial, long-term goals. In the decades ahead, IHS will lead, collaborate, and innovate in health security cooperation practices and will serve as the Department of Defense's go-to global health resource.

**WESLEY D. PALMER, Colonel, USAF, MC, FS**  
Director, International Health Specialist Program

# 20 YEARS OF IHS: DRIVING STRATEGIC AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

Over the past 20 years, the International Health Specialist Program has played a key role in transforming global health engagement, giving it a new structure and a new purpose. As the program has matured, its impact on global health engagement has grown.

Prior to the launch of the program, global health engagement consisted of large humanitarian events where U.S. military medics provided care to local populations of partner nations. Founder of the International Health Specialist Program and former U.S. Air Force Surgeon General, retired Lt. Gen. P.K. Carlton, explained that a key component of his vision was to create specialists with deep geopolitical and cultural skills who could drive more meaningful and long-term engagement with U.S. partners and allies. “These specialists would be able to lead engagements that not only influence the entire world medically, but also support National Defense Strategy objectives within regions around the globe,” said Carlton. “The mutual benefit to the United States and its partners and allies persuaded the Department of Defense to invest in this program.”

International Health Specialists began to shift the paradigm of global health engagements. They created long-term plans with partner nations that focused on building military medical capabilities through a wide variety of exercises and exchanges. They were able to lead this change because the program professionalized the role, establishing qualification criteria and developing training curriculum.

“When you place International Health Specialists at the combatant commands, you are able to harness the full potential of these specialists,” explained Former U.S. Central Command Surgeon and Joint Staff Surgeon, retired Lt. Gen. Douglas Robb. “They are able to structure diverse global health engagements across an area of operation to support the combatant commander’s strategy in the region. But more importantly, they are able to influence the entire joint perspective and approach to medical planning and security cooperation.” Continue reading [here](#).



# IHS SPOTLIGHT: USAFE/AFAFRICA IHS TEAM CONDUCTS VIRTUAL APORA EVENT

The International Health Specialist team at U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa leveraged technology as a solution to strengthen partnership and continue hosting the 2020 African Partnership Outbreak Response Alliance event virtually, enabling the U.S. and African partner nations to exchange best practices for pandemic response. This alliance of African nations was originally established in 2014 to enable African partner nations to share information and best practices to combat Ebola. This year the alliance addressed a new pandemic. Continue reading on last page.

## 20 YEARS OF IHS: GHE SUCCESS STORIES

IHS team members and stakeholders describe noteworthy accomplishments and experiences that underscore the strategic value of the program. Videos feature Chile (2005), Thailand (2006), Laos (2007), Georgia (2010), Philippines (2013), Liberia (2014), Colombia (2014), Kazakhstan (2017), Angola (2017), interoperability, readiness, trusted partnerships, strategic value, and professional development. Check for updates as we continue to publish these videos.



[View the video series](#)



**INTEROPERABILITY**



**PHILLIPINES**



**GEORGIA**



**COLOMBIA**



**LIBERIA**

# CAREER BROADENING, EDUCATION & TRAINING

## Security Cooperation Workforce Certification

The Defense Security Cooperation University provides this certification program to help ensure that DoD personnel assigned to positions in the Security Cooperation Workforce have the training and experience necessary to carry out those responsibilities more effectively. Starting January 1, 2021, this certification will be mandatory for those in the Security Cooperation Workforce. Find more information here about how to complete the certification program:

[https://www.dscu.mil/pages/resources/cert\\_program\\_info\\_and\\_faqs.aspx](https://www.dscu.mil/pages/resources/cert_program_info_and_faqs.aspx).



## IN THE NEWS

[MHS leaders discuss future of military medicine during AMSUS panel \[AFMS\]](#)

[Kadena's Critical Care Air Transport Team – one of a kind \[PACAF\]](#)

[Air Force Surgeon General focuses on leadership at annual workshop \[AFMS\]](#)

[US builds partnership capacity with Air Chiefs in Indo-Pacific \[PACAF\]](#)

[DOD Leaders Brief Women, Peace, Security Program to Congressional Caucus \[SOUTHCOM\]](#)

## IHS CORE COMPETENCY CORNER

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Incorporates monitoring and evaluation of health engagement activities for long-term health and programmatic outcomes. Serves as an expert in health system assessment, health sector common operating picture development, design of appropriate metrics for health engagements and programs, and analyzing outputs and outcomes to guide decision making on health engagement planning. Read about the others here: <https://go.usa.gov/xpyY9>

## 2020 Q4 IHS SEI AWARDEES

### Familiarized

- Capt De La Cruz, Jewelyn (H8A)
- Capt Lee, Sean (H8A)
- Capt Ozcan, Ersin (H8A)
- Capt Xie, Inara (H8A)
- Lt Col Breceda, Alejandro (H8A)
- Maj Baxi, Sanjiv (H8A)
- Maj Buehrig, Craig (H8A)
- Maj McMichael, Charles (H8A)
- MSgt Roman, Daniel (451)
- TSgt Aldan, Necita (451)

### Enabled

- Col Allen, Andrew (H8B)
- Maj Dodobara-Griffith, Lisa (H8B)

**ANNOUNCEMENT: The next IHS SEI application will use a new application format. The package is due 5 February 2021. Click here (CAC login required) for details:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/yyb6prw2>

## Virtual APORA cont'd

The USAFE-AFAFRICA International Health Specialist team coordinates an event to bring the member nations together biannually. International Health Specialists Lt. Col. Kristen Soltis-Tyler, Capt. Sharon Laughter, Master Sgt. Kingsley Parker, and Tech Sgt. Enrick Earle organized and facilitated the event this year in support of U.S. Africa Command. The team took advantage of the opportunity to invite more attendees than they would normally be able to. The event was the team's largest virtual event to-date with over 47 participants from 18 nations. Subject matter experts from the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, Sandia Laboratories, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency all attended the 2020 conference. They covered topics related to COVID-19 including risk communication, rapid response team management, and African Regional Biorisk Management Networks.

"Conducting this event virtually was important to maintain continuity of exchange and collaboration with these partner nations during a time when this alliance is especially relevant," said Laughter, the lead coordinator for the event. Although Ebola and SARS-CoV-2 are very different viruses, many of the processes needed to deploy a whole-of-government response have been applicable to this new pandemic. "The best practices that APORA helped to establish for interagency coordination, civilian-military operations, and international collaboration proved valuable for COVID-19 response activities," said Parker. Collaboration is not limited to the event and member nations have been sharing information related to COVID-19 response efforts throughout the pandemic. "Having established lines of communication jumpstarted international collaboration on the continent," explained Earle.

Due to ongoing travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the USAFE-AFAFRICA International Health Specialist team aims to replicate the success of these virtual engagement methods to facilitate further collaboration and foster relationships during a time when in-person, on-the-ground activities are not feasible.

"One of the greatest challenges in facilitating a virtual event was losing the informal side conversations that supplement the scheduled meetings," said Soltis-Tyler. "In the future we will look for ways to create spaces for this informal communication and other innovative solutions to promote continuous dialogue due to constraints in the present operating environment." Virtual events do not fully replicate the value of engaging and connecting through in person meetings. However, a combined approach toward continued engagement can help strengthen information sharing and coordinated outbreak response.

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Engage with Air Force Medical Service:



Engage with the IHS program and learn how to apply:



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