

# Mercer MRC

## A Newsletter for and about our volunteers



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### **7 Decades of Firsts — the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)**



Last year the CDC celebrated 70 years of service to the United States and the world. Many achievements in global health have been made since the CDC was founded on July 1, 1946 by Dr.

Joseph Mountin. Originally named the Communicable Disease Center, the agency initially focused on fighting malaria by killing mosquitoes. During the first year of operations, 59 percent of CDC's personnel were engaged in the eradication effort. Whereas malaria was once considered a threat to the country's security, today new threats have emerged. Over the last 70 years, CDC has tackled emerging diseases and many other health risks, such as Ebola, Zika virus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), West Nile virus, monkey pox, anthrax, avian and pandemic flu, and bioterrorism. This newsletter focuses on a timeline selection of notable public health events and achievements during the CDC's 7 Decades of Firsts.



CDC, 1946

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## 1946-1960

### 1946:

- ◆ CDC established for communicable diseases
- ◆ U.S. becomes malaria free

### 1947:

- ◆ Emory University deeds 15 acres of land to the Federal Government for the development of CDC headquarters on Clifton Road in Atlanta, Georgia

### 1949:

- ◆ Last case of smallpox in the U.S.

### 1951:

- ◆ Malaria is considered eliminated from the United States
- ◆ The Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) is established, recognizing the need for an adequate corps of trained epidemiologists who can be deployed immediately for any contingency, including chemical or biological warfare

### 1952:

- ◆ The Epidemic Intelligence Service participates in 205 outbreaks; most common are infectious hepatitis, poliomyelitis, histoplasmosis, gastroenteritis, encephalitis, typhoid fever, leptospirosis and influenza

### 1953:

- ◆ CDC reports first case of rabies in a bat
- ◆ The Communicable Disease Center National Surveillance Program is developed to maintain constant vigilance over communicable diseases to respond immediately when an outbreak occurs

### 1957:

- ◆ Onset of “Asian flu” influenza pandemic and response
- ◆ Asian flu pandemic emerges in Hong Kong with millions of cases and thousands of deaths. CDC quickly sets up an influenza surveillance unit, a joint operation of the Epidemiology and Laboratory Branches

### 1958:

- ◆ CDC investigates the first recorded epidemic of inhalation anthrax in the 20th century at a goat hair processing plant in Manchester, New Hampshire

### 1960:

- ◆ First National Health Examination Survey is conducted to collect data on the total prevalence of certain chronic diseases as well as the distribution of various physical and physiological measures
- ◆ New permanent headquarters opens in Atlanta, Georgia

## 1961-1971

### 1961:

- ◆ CDC takes over publication of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* from the National Office of Vital Statistics. *MMWR* is a weekly publication, containing a few short narrative reports and the weekly morbidity and mortality tables. It also publishes the annual "Summary of Notifiable Diseases"

### 1963:

- ◆ Immunization Assistance Grant Program is established and CDC administers Vaccination Assistance Act through project grants. The program is designed to raise and maintain high levels of immunization against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus

### 1964:

- ◆ Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP established)  
CDC holds first meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), to provide advice and guidance on the appropriate use of biologics and other preventive medical agents for effective disease control in the civilian population
- ◆ First Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health

### 1966:

- ◆ CDC announces a national measles eradication campaign at the American Public Health Association meeting
- ◆ Global Smallpox eradication effort launched

### 1967:

- ◆ Communicable Disease Center is renamed National Communicable Disease Center (NCDC) and the title of Chief of the Center is changed to CDC Director

### 1968:

- ◆ CDC investigates an unidentified, highly infectious respiratory disease in Pontiac, Michigan (later identified as Legionnaire's disease)
- ◆ A tuberculosis surveillance system begins within the United States
- ◆ Onset of "Hong Kong flu" influenza pandemic and response

### 1970:

- ◆ The National Communicable Disease Center (NCDC) is renamed Center for Disease Control (CDC)

### 1971:

- ◆ CDC recommends discontinuation of routine immunization and vaccination requirements for smallpox in the United States.



## 1972-1980

### 1973:

- ◆ CDC documents the first nationwide outbreak of Reye syndrome

### 1976:

- ◆ CDC diagnoses two recruits at Fort Dix, New Jersey with swine flu and concludes that a deadly flu pandemic is on its way. A national immunization program is launched. No epidemic occurs, before the immunization campaign is terminated, several people contract Guillain-Barré syndrome from the vaccine
- ◆ Epidemiologists investigate a deadly outbreak of a respiratory disease among attendees at a Philadelphia convention
- ◆ CDC sends disease detectives to investigate two large outbreaks of an unknown deadly hemorrhagic fever in Zaire and Sudan, a disease later known as Ebola
- ◆ Environmental Services Division analyzes blood samples collected through NHANES to demonstrate that the level of lead in blood is related to exposure to gasoline. Based on that data, the Environmental Protection Agency implements policies that decrease the amount of lead in gas by half from 1976 – 1980, subsequently dropping levels of lead in blood by 37%, and Congress is persuaded to phase out leaded gas permanently
- ◆ Legionnaire's disease discovery and response
- ◆ Guillain-Barré syndrome associated with swine influenza vaccine

### 1977:

- ◆ CDC isolates *Legionella pneumophila*, Legionnaires' disease, the cause of the deadly outbreak at a Philadelphia hotel

### 1978:

- ◆ Reports the first drug-resistant tuberculosis outbreak; causative organisms are found resistant to the three most commonly-used drugs

### 1979:

- ◆ Last recorded wild case of polio in the world

### 1980:

- ◆ *MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report)* publishes the first report on a newly recognized illness associated with tampon use: toxic shock syndrome; CDC organizes a task force to study the illness
- ◆ 4 Reports in the *MMWR* indicate association of Reye syndrome with aspirin use



CDC, mid 1970s

## 1981-1992

### 1981:

- ◆ *MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report)* publishes a report of five cases of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP) among previously healthy young men in Los Angeles.
- ◆ First AIDS cases reported in MMWR

### 1982:

- ◆ Epidemiologists discover that foodborne *E.coli* 0157 is the cause of two outbreaks of hemorrhagic colitis
- ◆ A report of 1,714 measles cases (an all-time low) indicates a 99% reduction from the annual average of 500,000 in the pre-vaccine era. National surveillance for Lyme disease, a tick-borne disease begins
- ◆ CDC receives first reports of AIDS in persons with hemophilia, other transfusion recipients, and in infants born to mothers with AIDS

### 1983:

- ◆ The National AIDS Hotline is established to handle the growing number of calls concerning the AIDS virus.

### 1988:

- ◆ Worldwide Polio Eradication Initiative launches: a public-private partnership led by national governments and spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- ◆ *Understanding AIDS*—information related to the prevention of HIV infection is sent to every household in America

### 1989:

- ◆ The 25th Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of smoking is issued
- ◆ A WHO collaborating center for disaster preparedness is established

### 1990:

- ◆ Reports possible transmission of HIV to a patient during invasive dental procedures
- ◆ CDC and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) develop the Safe Water System (SWS), protecting communities from contaminated water by promoting behavior change and providing affordable and sustainable solutions

### 1992:

- ◆ The agency is renamed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reflect a broader role and vision. The agency is asked by Congress to continue using the initials "CDC"

## 1993-2004

### 1995:

- ◆ *MMWR* reports on an outbreak of a mysterious illness in the southwestern U.S. Later recognized as Hantavirus infection. The deadly virus is transmitted by infected rodents through urine, droppings, and saliva. CDC responds by developing prevention and information materials for the disease
- ◆ Fatal respiratory syndrome associated with Hantavirus identified in southwestern U.S.

### 1998:

- ◆ Cereal grains enriched with folic acid by federal mandate to reduce birth defects

### 1999:

- ◆ CDC launches National Pharmaceutical Stockpile (now the Strategic National Stockpile), a stockpile of drugs, vaccines, and other medical products and supplies, to provide for the emergency health security of the US and its territories
- ◆ Establishes CDC's Laboratory Response Network, an integrated national and international network of laboratories that are fully equipped to respond quickly to acts of chemical or biological threats, emerging infectious diseases, and other public health threats and emergencies
- ◆ West Nile virus identified in New York City and response.

### 2001:

- ◆ CDC learns of the first case of inhalational anthrax in the U.S. since 1976. The person, a 63-year-old Florida man, is the first of 22 victims of domestic terrorism infected by anthrax sent through the mail.
- ◆ World Trade Center and bioterrorist **anthrax** attacks and response

### 2003:

- ◆ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is first discovered in Asia. CDC responds by providing guidance for surveillance, clinical and laboratory evaluation, and reporting. SARS outbreak in Asia and Canada and response.
- ◆ *MMWR* reports the first identification of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States
- ◆ A package containing ricin and a note threatening to poison water supplies is discovered in a South Carolina postal facility, becoming the first potential chemical terrorism event involving ricin in the U.S.
- ◆ U.S. experiences an outbreak of monkeypox, the first time human monkeypox is reported outside of Africa.

### 2004:

- ◆ Rubella is eliminated in the United States

## 2005-2016

### 2005:

- ◆ Hurricanes Katrina and Rita response

### 2006:

- ◆ Responds to a multi-state mumps outbreak involving more than 6,500 reported cases. This resurgence predominantly affects college-aged students living in the Midwest, with outbreaks occurring on many different midwestern college campuses
- ◆ Responds to multi-state outbreak of *E. coli*, infections linked to fresh spinach

### 2009:

- ◆ CDC identifies the novel H1N1 influenza virus. The H1N1 flu pandemic dominates CDC activity for the year, and demonstrates CDC's unique ability to assess and explain risk
- ◆ H1N1 flu pandemic outbreak and response

### 2010:

- ◆ In the aftermath of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, CDC response effort helps prevent 7,000 deaths from cholera

### 2012:

- ◆ CDC responds to the largest healthcare-associated outbreak in United States history, the fungal meningitis outbreak

### 2013:

- ◆ CDC activates its Emergency Operations Center to investigate a novel coronavirus called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

### 2014:

- ◆ The first case of Ebola is reported in Guinea in March; the disease spreads into the neighboring countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone
- ◆ CDC activates its Emergency Operations Center to respond to the largest Ebola outbreak in history affecting multiple countries in West Africa. CDC helps coordinate the response at the national level, providing health education and assisting with database management. Trains teams of people who can do contact tracing, finding everyone who came in direct contact with a sick Ebola patient
- ◆ Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) response

### 2016:

- ◆ Zika Virus outbreak (in Americas and U.S. Territories) response. CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated for Zika virus disease on January 22, 2016 and moved to a level 1 activation—the highest level – on February 8, 2016
- ◆ Flint water response



## CDC Today

CDC works with states and other partners to provide a system of health surveillance to monitor and prevent disease outbreaks (including bioterrorism), implement disease prevention strategies, and maintain national health statistics. CDC also guards against international disease transmission, with personnel stationed in more than 50 countries.

The agency has grown from a staff of 369 in 1946 to nearly 22,000 individuals (including 9,000 contractors and 971 Commissioned Corps) in 171 occupations.

CDC is now focusing on becoming a more efficient and impactful agency by focusing on five strategic areas: supporting state and local health departments, improving global health, implementing measures to decrease leading causes of death, strengthening surveillance and epidemiology, and reforming health policies.



CDC today



Safe water system, Kenya



Ebola Outbreak, Sierra Leone



MERS-CoV investigation, Saudi Arabia



Cholera outbreak, Haiti