

**CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS):
A Unique Fellowship for Physicians**

Hosted by the Association of American Medical Colleges and
American Medical Student Association
Wednesday, March 09, 2016

Question and Answer Session

1. I am about to start residency in Internal Medicine/Prev Med and perhaps ID fellowship, I have previously done externships with the CDC and have an MPH. Is there anything I should do in residency that will make me more competitive for EIS?
 - EIS has always had a highly competitive application process, typically with more than 500 applications received for less than 80 positions each year. Many considerations are taken into account during the final selection, including evidence addressing the following questions:
 - How will EIS training help the applicant achieve his or her career goals? We try and determine if the applicant has made a clear case for how they would benefit from training.
 - What service can the applicant immediately provide to CDC? This is balanced against training needs, as EIS is "training through service".
 - Is this a logical next step in the applicant's career path? Is this a logical progression in the applicant's previous career path or work history, or a radical departure? Did they explain why? Does it make sense?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate a record of excellence and productivity that would predict a productive EIS experience? Not just academics, but leadership, service, innovation, etc.
2. As an EIS worker, or any public health worker, I would imagine you will likely be placed or travel to a foreign place for a certain amount of time. How do public health workers that have to travel manage having families/ relationships?
 - Though flexibility is a key attribute of any EIS officer, the program offers over 100 assignments with varying degree of travel to accommodate as much as possible for individual preferences
3. In regards to EIS, must one have their MPH completed prior to applying?
 - Physicians are not required to have an MPH in order to apply to the EIS program
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
4. Do EIS officers get posted in local health departments in Texas?
 - EIS is CDC's 2-year training program in the practice of applied epidemiology. Each year, 70–80 new EIS officers are placed in assignments at CDC headquarters, or in state or local health departments. The availability of each assignment varies from year to year.
5. Approximately how many of the ~600 applicants are interviewed?
 - EIS has always had a highly competitive application process, typically with more than 500 applications received each year, and around 200 applicants are interviewed for less than 80 positions each year.
6. What is the mix between uniformed and nonuniformed for the EIS program?
 - Approximately 30% of the incoming EIS officers are accepted into the uniformed service, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS).
 - Additional information is at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/hiring.html>
7. Are there any opportunities to do rotations at the CDC during residency?
 - Opportunities for rotations at CDC during residency are available through CDC's Preventive Medicine Residency and Fellowship Program
 - Additional information is at <http://www.cdc.gov/prevmed/>

8. Regarding assignments: You mentioned a "match" process. What are the chances that I will be assigned to my current state?
- EIS applicants are required to be flexible when applying to the EIS program. During the match process, each new EIS officer must rank at least six assignments from over 100 assignments available across CDC and state and local health departments.
9. Once residency is over, is it necessary to have any additional training in public health?
- For physicians, no additional training is required
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
10. I'm not a physician, but I have a PhD in microbiology and am currently in a MPH program. Is hands-on experience in public health needed?
- No additional training is required
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
11. Are physician assistants also eligible for this fellowship, and if so, is there a separate webinar for that? (I'm pre-med/pre-PA, trying to figure out which path I should take.)
- As a physician assistant, you may be able to apply to EIS if you have either an MPH or an equivalent degree (e.g., MS, MSc, MSN, MHI, MHA, MHSA, MA) with coursework in epidemiology or quantitative methods, or relevant public health experience
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
12. What percentage of EIS officers have a medical degree? Is there a high number of EIS officers who have a PhD instead?
- The EIS class composition evolves with demographic trends and expanded public health scope. In 1951, 22 physicians and 1 sanitary engineer comprised the first, all-male, EIS class. In contrast, the 2015 class consists of 40 physicians, 29 PhD-level scientists, 9 veterinarians, 1 nurse, and 1 physical therapist. Of the 80 new EIS officers, 56 (70%) are female.
 - Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/diseasedetectives.html>
13. As an allied health applicant (PA), must I have a MPH in order to apply? Does course work in public health or work experience suffice?
- As a physician assistant you may be able to apply to EIS if you have either an MPH or an equivalent degree (e.g., MS, MSc, MSN, MHI, MHA, MHSA, MA) with coursework in epidemiology or quantitative methods, or relevant public health experience
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
14. Can international medical graduates apply for EIS? How are MDs in public health from developing countries like India considered?
- Because of the program's domestic focus, only a limited number of non-U.S. citizens are selected for EIS. If you are a citizen of another country and meet the degree and experience requirements listed for U.S. citizens, you are eligible to apply. You must also:
 - Provide evidence of English-language proficiency (see [EIS TOEFL Requirements](#))
 - Be a legal permanent resident or eligible for a J-1 Visa under the Research Scholar category
 - Additional eligibility requirements for non-U.S. citizens are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
15. Can you tell us more about how EIS officer worksite selection works (i.e., which CDC division or state/local health department officers work at)?
- EIS is CDC's 2-year training program in the practice of applied epidemiology. Each year, 70–80 new EIS officers are matched to assignments at CDC headquarters, or in state or local health departments. The availability of each assignment varies from year to year.

16. After most individual clinicians finish an EIS fellowship (especially if they do an ID fellowship or similar fellowship beforehand), what do they do afterwards for a career, besides stay at CDC? Will CDC provide job assistance?
- EIS provides a pathway for a wide range of careers. Many EIS graduates choose public health careers at the local, state, or federal level, while others continue to apply their epidemiological and clinical skills in clinical or academic settings. EIS alumni who stay in public health ensure that CDC and other agencies have sustainable epidemiologic expertise. Alumni include:
 - Acting Surgeons General
 - CDC directors
 - CDC center, division, and branch leaders
 - Public health and medical school faculty and deans
 - Foundation and non-governmental organization executives
 - State epidemiologists
 - Pharmaceutical and insurance industry executives
 - Medical epidemiologists
 - State health officials
 - Health and medical editors, reporters, and writers
17. I am an International Medical Graduate from India, preparing for my medical boards. I also have an MPH, and currently in my last year of Epidemiology program at Houston. Is it recommended for me to apply for EIS now, after my PhD, or after residency?
- Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
 - Please contact the EIS program at EIS@cdc.gov if you have any questions
18. I am a Preventive Medicine Resident. Have you had foreign graduates going from a J1 - Alien Physicians to J1 - Research Scholar with EIS?
- Additional eligibility details at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
 - Please contact the EIS program at EIS@cdc.gov if you have any questions
19. Is there a good point of contact for questions regarding transitioning from a branch of the military to the USPHS for the purpose of entering the EIS program?
- Please contact the EIS program at EIS@cdc.gov if you have any questions
20. What would you recommend for prospective officers who have a clinical background in medicine but have not received specific training in epidemiology and statistical analysis? Are there reading recommendations for applicants prior to starting EIS?
- No additional training is required for physicians
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
21. Are nurses eligible to apply for EIS?
- Nurses may apply. As with other healthcare professionals, applicants must have either an MPH or an equivalent degree (e.g., MS, MSc, MSN, MHI, MHA, MHSA, MA) with coursework in epidemiology or quantitative methods, or relevant public health experience
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
22. Is atrophy of clinical skills a concern for physicians in the EIS program?
- During EIS, officers are presented with new and emerging health problems which require them to keep up-to-date knowledge of clinical sciences. As an EIS officer investigating acute public health events such as Zika virus or lead poisoning, you will gain expertise in these clinically relevant diseases. Having sharp clinical skills is important for physicians working in public health, and some physician EIS officers do additional clinical work while they are in the fellowship. Yet, that must be balanced with EIS officers' ability to respond quickly when called for a public health emergency. The two years in EIS pass quickly and it is important for officers to capitalize on opportunities for hands-on field work. Additionally, most physician EIS officers have several opportunities to present their work to other clinicians at national conferences and through peer-reviewed articles.

23. I have been in OB/GYN solo private practice for 10 years and practicing for close to 15 years. I have a desire to begin a career in public health. How can I be competitive when compared to others?
- EIS has always had a highly competitive application process, typically with more than 500 applications received for less than 80 positions each year. Many considerations are taken into account during the final selection, including evidence addressing the following questions:
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24. Is the EIS program a paid position? Or are you in a student status and relying on loans, or other employment?
- EIS is a competitively paid fellowship
 - Additional information is at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/hiring.html>
25. Is it possible for Latin American students to apply for the medical student electives?
- To be eligible for the student electives for medical students at CDC you must be enrolled in a school accredited by one of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, American Osteopathic Association or the American Veterinary Medical Association, and must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
 - Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/epielective/appinfo.html>
26. Are there any opportunities for pediatricians within EIS?
- Whether you are a specialist in infectious diseases, pediatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, pathology, or any other clinical discipline, EIS offers options to meet various interests, such as infectious diseases, environmental health, occupational health, global health, or injury prevention and control. When responding to domestic or international acute health events, EIS officers are learning while making a difference.
27. For physicians without an MPH, how much do you value practical public health experiences in applicants compared to formal public health degrees?
- For physicians no additional training or public health experience is required
 - Additional eligibility details are at <http://www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html>
28. How competitive are ID fellows—with an infection prevention and control sub-fellowship—in EIS, though having no MPH and no direct epidemiology training?
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