

# IEIP & GDD Partners Brief

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## *Int'l Experts Assist Planning for Botulism Emergency Response Center*

MOPH's Bureau of Epidemiology, IEIP, and WHO/SEARO jointly sponsored a meeting for the planning and development of a Botulism Emergency Response Center serving Thailand and the region. The center will serve as a preparedness model for other uncommon but serious diseases for which rapid responses are critical. Experts from Thailand, United States, Argentina, Republic of Georgia, and Switzerland discussed the components of botulism prevention and control.

CDC's Enteric Diseases Epidemiology and Lab Branches, Laboratory Response Network, Poxvirus and Rabies Branch, Drug Services, and Division of Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response all provided technical assistance. The meeting produced a plan to procure an antitoxin stockpile. Funding for the September 2007 meeting was provided by a Global Disease Detection supplemental award to CDC's Enteric Disease Branch.

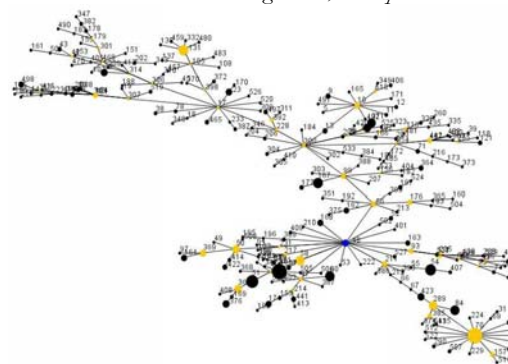
- Kip Baggett

## **Melioidosis Collaborations Kick Off with 3-day PCR Workshop**

Specialists in melioidosis, a serious bacterial infection caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, visited IEIP in September to increase the capacity of local scientists to conduct sophisticated molecular testing. IEIP surveillance has identified melioidosis as an important cause of pneumonia and bacteremia. Other objectives of the visit from CDC's Bacterial Zoonoses Branch (Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases) were to learn about the melioidosis activities of IEIP and other local research teams, and to foster future collaborations, including linking with veterinary public health scientists in Thailand. The team conducted a three-day workshop on real-time PCR for IEIP and provincial lab staff, who will then train Thai NIH staff. Productive and detailed discussions were also held with Thai NIH, AFRIMS, and the Oxford University-Wellcome-Mahidol University Programme. The promising collaborations begun

by the CDC group were furthered when they returned in November to attend the World Melioidosis Conference in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

- George Watt, Saitthip Suttbirattana



*Multi-locus sequence typing of B. pseudomallei shows genetic relatedness. Several isolates pictured above were cultured through IEIP surveillance. Diagram courtesy CDC melioidosis laboratory.*

## **Cholera Outbreak Response at Mae La Camp, June – August**

A cholera outbreak during a large-scale resettlement of Burmese refugees provided an opportunity for Immigrant and Refugee Health Program (IRHP) and IEIP/GDD staff to collaborate with Thai MOPH, Aide Médicale Internationale, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Tak Provincial and Tha Song Yang District Health Offices, and the Thai Ministry of the Interior.

Preliminary findings from a case-control study conducted in collaboration with CDC's Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases (DFBMD) identified drinking well water and eating street-vended food as risk factors, and hand washing before eating to be protective. An environmental engineer from DFBMD mapped cholera case households and the camp's 216 water sites using GPS, and tested all of the water sites. IRHP and IOM conducted active surveillance for diarrhea. Resettlement of more than 8,000 refugees proceeded uninterrupted.

- Jacqueline Gindler, IRHP

## **One month field epidemiology course at MOPH, Thailand**

Forty public health professionals from Cambodia, China, East Timor, Laos, India, Vietnam, and Thailand, including one trainee from IEIP Thailand, attended a one-month intensive field epidemiology training course in June.

Organized by the Field Epidemiology Training Program of MOPH, the course supports FETP's mission to build Thailand's national epidemiology capacity. MOPH also supports the training needs of neighboring nations and contributes to a Southeast Asian public health network by reserving seats for public health officials from regional countries each year. In addition to basic epidemiology and biostatistics, the course focused on rapid detection and response for emerging health problems using a problem-based approach to learning.

Building on IEIP's partnership with MOPH, Influenza Research Coordinator Suchada Kaewchana was invited to attend this year's course.

- Suchada Kaewchana