

Epidemic Intelligence Service

Disease Detectives Up Close: New York City



“EIS was an amazing opportunity to be on the front lines of public health.”

—Isaac Benowitz, MD,
EIS class of 2014



As an EIS officer, Dr. Benowitz worked in Liberia as part of CDC’s Ebola response team. In 2014, 158 EIS officers contributed almost 700 work days to the fight against Ebola. EIS officers continue to be called upon for assistance in public health emergencies worldwide. In 2016, we have seen a 35% increase in requests for assistance—called Epi-Aids—over the previous year.

Isaac Benowitz, MD

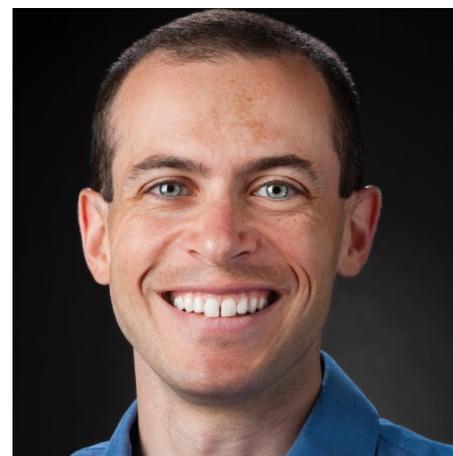
I’m from Boston, and I’m a pediatrician by training. I’ve been interested in public health for years. Before becoming an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer, I spent 4 years studying environmental contamination near toxic waste sites for CDC’s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

From 2014 to 2016, I was an EIS officer assigned to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where I investigated a large outbreak of Legionnaires’ disease. This work led to nationally recognized rules for regulation and oversight of cooling towers. I also helped the city respond to Ebola and Zika by getting doctors and hospitals ready to identify and care for patients. In both of those episodes New York City was a national leader.

In 2014, I worked in Liberia as part of CDC’s Ebola response team. I helped a county health team strengthen their ability to find and treat Ebola patients and protect communities, and helped the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare improve nationwide resource coordination through better use of patient tracking data.

I’m now a permanent employee at CDC in Atlanta, in the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. I’m investigating infectious disease outbreaks in healthcare settings, providing expertise on the role of medical devices in infections, and developing standards for infection control in health care. Most of my work helps state and local health departments in their investigations. I’m excited to have the opportunity to support them, and I would like to work for a state or local health department later on.

For me, EIS was an amazing opportunity to be on the front lines of public health. I got swept up into some of the most important issues of the day, learned from one of the country’s stellar local health departments, and brought that expertise back to CDC.



Isaac Benowitz, MD, EIS class of 2014, was assigned to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and helped investigate a 2015 outbreak of Legionnaires’ disease.

Learn more about EIS at
www.cdc.gov/eis

Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services (CSELS)
Division of Scientific Education and Professional Development (DSEPD)

