

U.S. CDC and WHO Collaborations— Inﬂuenza

The HHS/CDC Inﬂuenza Division has maintained cooperative agreements with WHO Headquarters and the WHO Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Regional Office for the Western Paciﬁc (WPRO) for many years to address seasonal and pandemic inﬂuenza. In 2006, new cooperative agreements were put in place with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), the Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) and the Regional Office for Europe (EURO). The main purpose of the cooperative agreements is to address global and regional preparedness for inﬂuenza—both seasonal and avian—through support to enhance the WHO Global Inﬂuenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS), and technical support to countries’ inﬂuenza prevention and control programs. This effectively increases the number of countries participating in the global system and more importantly enhances the early warning capacity and communications so there is a greater chance for early identiﬁcation of a pandemic.

Recently, we have expanded our focus to also support efforts to increase inﬂuenza prevention through vaccination globally. Greater use of inﬂuenza vaccines will reduce the burden of inﬂuenza every year, but also provide a greatly expanded base of timely vaccine manufacturing to be used during pandemic inﬂuenza. Towards this goal, we have supported activities that will develop the evidence for use of vaccines globally and in partner countries. Activities include supporting partners to develop estimates of inﬂuenza-associated disease and cost burden, projects to understand the effectiveness of inﬂuenza vaccines in special populations relevant to policy expansion, and supporting countries’ policy making bodies. Information about the project activities for the regional offices is integrated under the speciﬁc regions. CDC’s Inﬂuenza Division provided funding and technical support to WHO Headquarters annually for multiple projects related to inﬂuenza, outlined below.

Activities supported through WHO

Inﬂuenza Laboratory Surveillance

- Strengthening of global inﬂuenza laboratory surveillance through improved diagnostic capacity and enhanced shipping capacity of inﬂuenza viruses/specimens to WHO Collaborating Centers (WHO CC).
- Strengthening global coordination and communication of GISRS by conducting periodic National Inﬂuenza Center (NIC) surveys and feeding results of the analysis into a NIC meeting with all regions.
- Supporting NICs to attend the WHO vaccine composition consultations in September and February to support this goal.

Inﬂuenza Epidemiology and Surveillance

- Strengthening inﬂuenza monitoring at the global level including development of automated analysis and visual presentation tools.

- Developing a risk assessment tool.
- Supporting developing countries in risk assessment and response.
- Supporting countries in the development of influenza surveillance systems and assessment of disease burden to inform vaccine and antiviral use decisions.
- Developing estimates of influenza deaths during seasonal epidemics and pandemics.
- Developing a tool for community-level risk assessment for H5N1 infection in collaboration with OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

Strengthening Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Planning

- Review of national pandemic assessment and development of lessons learned to revise pandemic preparedness guidelines.
- Review of:
 - » measures and indicators of severity during a pandemic.
 - » the concept of pandemic phases for decision-making.
- Maintenance and improvements to the digital library.

Public Health Leadership and Global Coordination

- Provision of technical guidance and support to member states for—
 - » development of coordinated pandemic preparedness initiatives.
 - » developing future strategies aligned with WHO Headquarters and regional office guidance for global pandemic preparedness with a view toward long-term public health capacity and compliance with IHR.
- Dissemination of guidance:
 - » to minimize social and economic disruption.
 - » to other United Nations agencies and programs.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Introduction

- Collection and dissemination of information on influenza vaccine availability and utilization.
- Assurance of quality and safety of influenza vaccines by visiting manufacturing sites and technical reviews of production procedures.
- Support for influenza vaccination policy through the development of mathematical models to estimate potential public health impact of various vaccine introduction strategies and potential impact of vaccine introduction on mortality among children younger than 5 years old.
- Capacity development and facilitation of influenza vaccine policy in WHO Regions.
- Support of WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts to update global vaccine recommendations.
- Support of WHO's Global Action Plan for Influenza Vaccines to expand the availability of influenza vaccines globally.