



Nancy Messonnier, MD

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Messonnier is originally from Philadelphia, PA, and came to CDC through the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) program. “I thought I would only stay at CDC for two years [for EIS] and then go back to Philadelphia. Within six months, I had performed my first outbreak investigation and I knew that I didn’t want to be anywhere else. The investigation involved a meningitis outbreak in Gregg County, Texas, which was a place I had never been before. It was an educational and rewarding experience. I had been in residency training and clinics and all of a sudden, there I was out in the field. That outbreak and the accompanying analysis got me hooked. It turned out that even though the meningococcal vaccine had been licensed in the United States, this was the first time there was a community estimate of the effectiveness of the vaccine. This was a major advancement in immunization, and I ended up getting my first paper published in JAMA.”

I’m responsible for overseeing NCIRD, which prevents disease, disability, and death through immunization and by control of respiratory diseases. We provide leadership, expertise, and service in laboratory and epidemiological sciences, and in immunization program delivery. We implement the Vaccines for Children Program—a national program that vaccinates about half of the children in the United States each year. From measles to mumps, polio to MERS, whooping cough to Legionnaires’ disease, seasonal flu to pandemic flu, we handle age-old diseases and emerging ones.

