



The USPHS Scientist Category: Commitment to Service through Readiness and Deployment



LT Colleen Scott and LCDR Neil Bonzagni

Sponsored by the Scientist Professional Advisory Committee

Background

The Scientist category is composed of a diverse, multidisciplinary cadre of officers holding doctoral degrees in their disciplines. Scientist officers are assigned to 18 agencies across local, state, and federal public health jurisdictions, with the goal of protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the nation. Towards this, Scientist officers play an integral role in supporting public health missions during deployments, as part of the National Incident Management Strategy, and in response to emerging public health crises.

Scientists by the numbers

Based on data available from the Recruitment, Readiness, and Retention committee. As of October 2016:

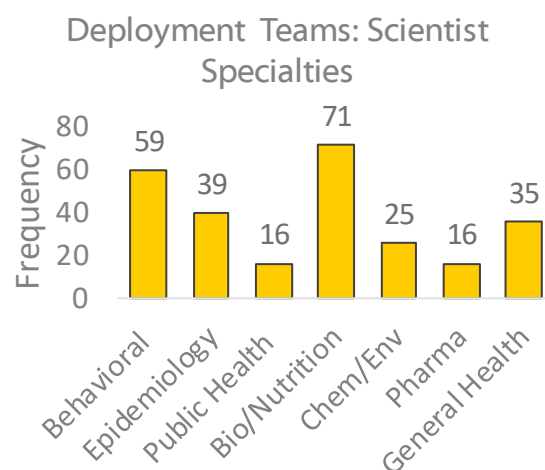
319 (90% of which are basic ready)

45+
disciplines in their primary assignments

18
federal agencies and OPDIVs

261 (82% of all active duty Scientists)

Scientists rostered to USPHS deployment teams (inclusive of Tiers 1-3)



Deployment to American Samoa for Zika, October-November 16 - LT Ruth Link-Gelles

Population: Island nation of American Samoa (AS) (population ~54,000) in South Pacific, which was recently impacted by the Zika virus outbreak.

Mission: Emergency medical response for remote access population with limited medical resources; support of epidemiological survey of affected population, to include identification of Zika cases through clinical testing, and monitoring newborns for Zika-associated birth defects; augmenting post-partum maternal services for Zika-positive mothers.

Public Health Outcome: Strengthened epidemiological surveillance of Zika virus among AS population, by providing additional clinical and maternal health services to at-risk population; developed public health messaging and educational resources for AS population on signs, symptoms and transmission of Zika virus.

LT Link-Gelles Contributions: Integral member to (5) member team of Commissioned Corps Officers deployed to AS; provided public health outreach to Zika-positive mothers and their infants by directly supporting epidemiological studies and clinical/maternal services.



Left to Right: LCDR Jason Wilken and LT Ruth Link-Gelles.

Deployment to Louisiana Major Flooding Baton Rouge- LCDR Lisa Jarvis Durham

Population: Residents of 20 parishes surrounding Baton Rouge impacted by August 2016 major flooding.

Mission: Staff and subsequently demobilize a 250 bed Federal Medical Station (FMS) for Special Needs Patients, to include infirmed or incapacitated patients unable to evacuate to general population shelters during Louisiana Major flooding in Baton Rouge

Public Health Outcome: Cared for and provided primary care and mental health services for FMS patients, and provided referral and transfer services upon discharge of patient upon demobilization of FMS.

LCDR Lisa Jarvis-Durham Contributions: Integral member to Administrative Branch of Rapid Deployment Force #4; charged with the responsibility of managing medical records of FMS patients, and ensuring the continuity of care via patient referral and transfer during demobilization of the FMS.



LCDR Lisa Jarvis-Durham while serving during Baton Rouge Flood Deployment Aug/Sep 2016.

2016 Independence Day Deployment - RIST-NCR LCDR Qiao Bobo, Ph.D

Population: An estimated 750,000 visitors gather on the National Mall and surrounding areas for various July 4th celebratory activities.

Mission: Assure safety and accountability of personnel; deploy health/medical resources; work collaboratively with on-site partners; support the deployment and redeployment of direct support and contingency resources; provide resources to support an initial response capability in a mass casualty incident; prepare for joint reception staging, onward movement and integration.

Public Health Outcome: Ensured health and safety of the estimated 750,000 visitors.

LCDR Bobo Contributions: Deployed 5 times with RIST-NCR team, most recently as the Admin/Finance Section Chief, supporting the Commander and Operations Section through tracking issues like reimbursement and regulatory compliance. Generated daily reports and communicated with deployed personnel.



Left to Right: CDR Andrew Chen, CAPT Ross Spears, CDR Dominic Frasca, and CDR Qiao Bobo.

Summary

Scientist officers in the USPHS are an indispensable asset in the fight to prevent, intervene and mitigate disease and suffering during public health emergencies.

National Center for Environmental Health
U.S. Public Health Service

