



## U.S. CDC in Central America

CDC's presence in Central America started in the 1960s and strengthened in 2003 with the establishment of the CDC Central America Program Office in Guatemala. The Guatemala office works with Ministries of Health (MOHs) and partner organizations in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama. It also guides selected activities in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. CDC's Central America office in Guatemala protects America by bolstering regional health security, and expanding HIV and tuberculosis (TB) services. The work also strengthens surveillance for key pathogens that may pose a threat to the United States.

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



+5,000 graduates from the Central America Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP). These field epidemiologists sharpen skills to detect, report, and respond to outbreaks.



Provided specialized training for 4,000 Central American laboratory personnel.



CDC partners with over 40 HIV clinics in Central America to provide evidence-based HIV testing for more than 123,000 people and HIV treatment for over 31,000 people.



Conducted seven One Health Zoonotic Disease Prioritization workshops with ministries of agriculture, health, and environment across Central America.



CDC is a key partner in outbreak investigations, including measles, rabies, fungal infections, dengue, foodborne diseases, respiratory disease, and zoonotic diseases such as New World Screwworm (NWS).

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Global health security

CDC Central America works with countries and regional partners to bolster capacity to conduct disease surveillance, respond to outbreaks response, strengthen laboratory systems diagnostics, and develop their workforce.

### Surveillance strengthening

CDC Central America strengthens surveillance for key infectious disease pathogens and antimicrobial resistance in Central America and the Dominican Republic that could threaten the United States. CDC's Acute Febrile Illness Surveillance Network in Central America and the Dominican Republic identifies emerging disease threats, strengthens regional collaborations, and increases capacity to use data to guide public health responses.

CDC collaborates with multisector ministries across Central America to support the One Health approach that reinforces cross-disciplinary surveillance, prevention, and control of zoonotic diseases.

### Laboratory strengthening

CDC Central America lab work boosts laboratory-based disease surveillance and detection of novel strains and pathogens. CDC provide technical assistance to the Regional Network of National Laboratories (REDLAB) strategic plan. Other CDC Central America lab activities include:

- Strengthen genomic surveillance in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama.
- Increase diagnosis of fungal diseases in Belize and El Salvador.
- Enhance surveillance of norovirus and rotavirus in Costa Rica.

### Workforce development

CDC's Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) bolsters field epidemiologists' expertise to investigate and respond to disease outbreaks. FETP graduates, also known as disease detectives, and CDC partners investigate outbreaks that can pose a threat to the United States, such as Guillain Barre Syndrome in Guatemala; mucormycosis and dengue in Honduras; and rabies in Belize.

### Emergency response

CDC provides technical support to Ministers of Health during regional outbreak investigations. Currently CDC Central America and CDC in Atlanta are supporting regional outbreaks of the New World Screwworm. In the last 20 years, CDC Central America has been a key partner in responses to measles, rabies, fungal infections, dengue, foodborne diseases, and COVID-19. During COVID-19, trusted relationships between CDC and MOHs allow to quickly expand regional laboratory capacities and surveillance.

### HIV and TB

CDC collaborates with MOHs, community-based organizations, and regional partners to end the HIV epidemic in Central America. The work includes implementing and monitoring evidence-based programs that close gaps in HIV prevention, case finding, optimize treatment, and viral load suppression. CDC Central America helps countries get closer to the 2030 UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals. Activities include:

- Increasing HIV testing access and knowledge of HIV status.
- Strengthening HIV treatment retention and viral load suppression.
- Preventing and treating opportunistic infections, such as TB.
- Increasing laboratory capacity to test for HIV and monitor viral loads.

### Border health

The movement of people, animals, and animal products has increased from international travel and trade. As a result, diseases can spread quickly across borders and around the globe. CDC works on many border health activities include to enhance border health systems. CDC partners with countries to improve HIV services for mobile populations. CDC strengthens border health security conducting trainings on surveillance, public health policy, preventing cross-border spread of diseases, and responding to health emergencies at points of entry.

CDC Central America border health work includes:

- Identifying challenges in detecting and responding to health threats among populations moving within and out of Central America.
- Updating public health emergency plans and standard operating procedures to detect and respond to ill travelers at points of entry in El Salvador and Honduras.
- Strengthening information-sharing and collaboration between Costa Rica and Panama to facilitate coordinated responses to health threats.