GLOBAL HEALTH

U.S. Agencies Support Programs to Build Overseas Capacity for Infectious Disease Surveillance

What GAO Found

The U.S. government operates or supports four key programs aimed at building overseas surveillance capacity for infectious diseases. In fiscal years 2004-2006, U.S. agencies obligated approximately $84 million for these programs, which operate in developing countries around the world. Global Disease Detection is CDC’s main effort to build capacity for infectious disease surveillance in developing countries. The Field Epidemiology Training Programs, which CDC and USAID support, are another tool used to build infectious disease surveillance capacity worldwide. Additionally, USAID supports CDC and the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for Africa in designing and implementing Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response in 46 countries in Africa, with additional technical assistance to 8 African countries. DOD’s Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System also contributes to capacity building through projects undertaken at DOD overseas research laboratories. USAID supports additional capacity-building projects in various developing countries. The responsible agencies coordinate with each other to limit duplication of their overseas efforts.

For each of the four key surveillance capacity-building programs, the U.S. agencies monitor activities such as the number of epidemiologists trained, the number of outbreak investigations conducted, and types of laboratory training completed. In addition, CDC and USAID recently began systematic efforts to evaluate the impact of their programs; however, because no evaluations had been completed as of July 2007, it is too early to assess whether these evaluation efforts will demonstrate progress in building surveillance capacity.

U.S.-Supported Programs to Build Overseas Capacity for Surveillance of Infectious Disease

- Global Disease Detection: China, Egypt, Guatemala, Kenya, and Thailand
- Field Epidemiology Training Program: Brazil, Central America, Central Asia, China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, and Zimbabwe
- Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe
- Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System: Egypt, Kenya, Indonesia, Peru, and Thailand

Sources: GAO; Map Resources (map clip art).