

# HIDALGO COUNTY HEALTH ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

**Job Title:** Epidemiologist

**FLSA Status:** Exempt

**Dept. Code:** 340

**Civil Service Status:** Non-Exempt

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## **SUMMARY:**

Under the general supervision of the Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Physician, and Public Health Preparedness Coordinator oversees the surveillance department and participates as needed during a biological attack or disease outbreak. Serves as the county specialist on biological warfare defense and prevention and control of selected infectious diseases. Conducts surveillance for notifiable conditions in Hidalgo County. Implements policies and protocols to improve surveillance activities. Plans, develops, and directs epidemiologic investigations and active surveillance programs. Plans, develops and conducts disease surveillance and bioterrorism response training. Oversees the Public Health Preparedness & Response Team (PHPRT) surveillance staff. Duties are performed under minimal supervision with considerable latitude for the use of initiative and independent judgment. Will be required to be "on call" as assigned or during an event.

## **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

To perform this job successfully, the Epidemiologist must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties and responsibilities.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Participates as a member of the PHPRT and responds to biological attack or disease outbreaks. Serves as the county coordinator for biological warfare defense planning. Develops effective relationships and networks of communication. Implements bioterrorism plans and protocols. Serves as a liaison with other local and state entities. Serves as a consultant regarding preparedness and communicable disease issues.
- Monitors disease incidence within the county to rapidly detect and address disease outbreaks including biological agents. Plans, establishes, and monitors surveillance activities/reporting systems in collaboration with DSHS. Develops and implements policies and protocols to improve the quality of health information collected. Serves as a technical resource and coordinates epidemiologic data collection and analysis. Develops effective relationships and networks of communication with local infection control practitioners, physicians, hospital administrators and others to promote teamwork and collaboration in implementing/enhancing reporting/surveillance activities.
- Responds to infectious disease outbreaks that cause significant morbidity and/or mortality. Plan, develop, and direct advanced epidemiologic/outbreak investigations, including verifying diagnoses, notifying appropriate personnel, collecting and submitting patient/environmental specimens, constructing questionnaires, review, abstract, interpret medical records, conduct patient and physician interviews, and recommend appropriate control measures.
- Conducts reporting/ active surveillance, epidemiology, and biowarfare defense training. Using word processing, databases, statistical, and graphical computer software, develops educational materials and training and operations guidance manuals.
- Provides direction in the collection, analysis, evaluation and distribution of communicable disease data. Analyzes data using EpiInfo, SPSS, SAS, Access, or other pertinent software. Establish and maintain a system to track on-going investigations; summarizes and distributes findings in a timely manner.

- Prepare reports and make presentations related to surveillance, epidemiology, and bioterrorism activities. Prepares bioterrorism defense guidelines.
- Performs other related duties as assigned
- May be required to work other than normal hours, including weekends and holidays must be able to travel on short notice. Must provide your own dependable transportation (automobile)

#### **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:**

- Bachelor's degree in a science allied to public health or in epidemiology from an accredited college or university. A master's degree may be substituted for 1 year of the required experience.
- Significant experience (at least 2 years) in epidemiology/communicable disease surveillance.
- Experience with biological warfare defense preparedness and response.
- Experience in supervising and directing the work of others.
- Experience using statistical software.

#### **CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS:**

- Employee must have a current valid Texas Motor Vehicle Operator's License;
- Must be able to be insured by County Insurance carrier.

#### **OTHER SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Knowledge of the principles of epidemiology and Texas public health laws, especially those that govern the control and reporting of notifiable conditions. Knowledge of the transmission of infectious disease. Knowledge of biowarfare preparedness and response. Knowledge of current social, economic and public health issues relevant to public health. Knowledge of medical terminology. Knowledge of data management and statistical methods.
- Skill in using word processing, database, spreadsheet and graphic software packages including Word Perfect, Word, Fox Pro, Access, Excel, Quattro Pro, Epiinfo, SPSS, SAS, Power Point. Skill in interpreting diagnostic laboratory results and information from medical charts. Skill in training and making public presentations. Skill in writing and editing. Skill in mathematical computation and statistical analysis.
- Ability to organize and prioritize workload and meet deadlines. Ability to plan, develop and manage a disease surveillance program. Ability to prepare written reports and develop and implement policies and procedures. Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationship with employees, management, representatives of local medical and public health communities, the medical and the general public. Ability to present complex information to a variety of audiences. Ability to assemble, summarize and interpret pertinent technical literature.
- Ability to identify problems and implement appropriate solutions. Ability to work independently, exercising sound judgement. Ability to initiate projects and work on multiple projects at the same time. Ability to supervise and train staff. Ability to work discreetly and maintain confidentiality.
- May be required to work other than normal hours including weekends and holidays.
- Must provide your own dependable transportation (automobile)

#### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS:**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to speak and listen. The employee frequently is required to stand, walk; sit, use hands and fingers, handle or feel objects tools or controls; reach, climb or balance, bend, stoop and kneel.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move objects weighing up to 25 pounds. Visual acuity required by this job includes near and distant vision, depth perception, color perception, and the ability to adjust focus/vision to equal or be corrected to 20/20.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The noise level in the work environment is usually low.

**IMMUNIZATION/TB SCREENING REQUIREMENTS:**

Employees may be required to receive immunizations recommended by the ACIP, ACP, and TDH based on anticipated disease exposure (e.g. hepatitis B, rabies, anthrax and smallpox vaccines) TB skin testing will be required initially and periodically.

**SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:**

Maintain physical condition appropriate to the performance of assigned duties and

Responsibilities which may include the following:

- sitting for extended periods of time
- frequent standing, bending and reaching
- operating assigned equipment

Maintain mental capacity which permits:

- walking
- operating a motor vehicle
- making sound decisions and using good judgment
- handling financial affairs effectively and honestly
- maintaining confidentiality
- demonstrating intellectual capabilities

Effectively handle a work environment and conditions which involve:

- working closely with others
- working in a busy environment

Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for:

- making observations
- reading and writing
- operating assigned equipment
- communicating with others

**ACCIDENT PREVENTION PROGRAM:**

Required to follow all department safety regulations.