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Eby Participating in Public Health Fellowship

 chds.us/c/item/826

A little more than a year removed from graduating from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Chas Eby is embarking on a fellowship with a goal of introducing elements of homeland security and emergency management to the discipline of public health preparedness and response.

Eby, Chief Planner for Emergency Preparedness with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, was named an Emerging Leaders in Biosecurity Initiative Fellow with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Center for Health Security. Because of sequestration funding delays, the fellowship is stretching into 2014.



Fellows are chosen for the program from varied fields within biosecurity. Similar to the CHDS mission of building a cadre of homeland security professionals, the fellowship endeavors to build a community of professionals and leaders in a "multidisciplinary" and "intergenerational" fashion. The fellowship offers a range of conferences, seminars, networking events, writing competitions, and educational webinars aimed at improving skills and building contacts.

"This is similar to CHDS, it is a method for expanding what we know about the complex field of health security and allowing us to focus on issues we wouldn't have time to do in our regular jobs," Eby said. "It is an opportunity to really broaden our view."

By the end of the program the goal is for participants to publish academically. Eby's interest is in prevention and mitigation planning for emerging biological threats such as the novel Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), a virus similar to SARS that stirred international concerns a decade ago. He is also interested in researching how day-to-day healthy lifestyle choices, such as appropriate use of medications and receiving routine vaccinations, can have a positive impact during a catastrophic emergency.

He intends to use the opportunity to write a paper that would be complementary to his CHDS award-winning thesis, "The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States since 9/11." The thesis examined lone wolf terrorism beyond the case-study model by applying a statistical approach that is common in public health.

During his fellowship he intends to apply homeland security and emergency management models for intelligence, prevention and network building into a biosecurity topic.

Recent papers published by the Center for Health Security include topics such as early diagnoses of infection, reports related to nuclear and radiological disasters, and pandemic preparedness and planning.

While crediting CHDS for incorporating public health into homeland security study, Eby believes more work is needed to broaden that link in the public's eye.

"I still think that sometimes both the public health and homeland security fields view themselves as separate disciplines when in reality they are usually intertwined," Eby said. "Any disaster is going to have an inherent public health component. All emergencies affect people's health. And tenets of homeland security study such as resilience and strategic planning can be useful within the public health field."

For more information on the UPMC Center for Health Security, visit: www.upmchealthsecurity.org

Eby may be followed on Twitter at @chas_eby.

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