## **Infectious Diseases Epidemiologist**

Degree: PhD/DSc/DrPH (in Epidemiology)

Rank: Assistant Professor or Associate Professor, Tenure Track

Estimated Start Date: 10/1/07

Departments:

Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases (0.5 FTE)

Department of Public Health Sciences (0.5 FTE)

## **Rationale and Justification for Position**

Research in infectious diseases has become a major priority at the Hershey Medical Center as the institution seeks to submit a successful application for a Clinical Translational Science Award (CTSA) from the NIH. Vital to this application is the development of effective research collaborations throughout the Penn State system bringing together the now independent infectious diseases researchers under one umbrella. Multiple centers throughout several Penn State University campuses conduct high-level funded research in varied aspects of infectious diseases. These units include at Hershey Medical Center: Division of Infectious Diseases, Dept of Microbiology, Department of Pathology, and Department of Public Health Sciences; at University Park: Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics and Center for Immunology and Infectious Disease; and at Penn State Harrisburg: Center for Survey Research. The current and planned collaborations are part of what is envisioned to become the cross-campus **Penn State Institute for Infectious Diseases (PSIID)**.

Already the Division of Infectious Diseases and Department of Public Health Sciences have developed a research collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (Division of HIV/AIDS, and HIV Epi Investigation Section) on various HIV/AIDS epidemiology projects [including related STDs, TB and viral hepatitis (non-enteric)] in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This collaboration brings together clinical researchers (Hershey), survey researchers and geospatial mappers (Penn State Harrisburg), infectious disease modelers (University Park) and the Pennsylvania Dept. of Health (PA DOH). Two collaborative projects are underway. The first is a series of projects (Unmet Needs of HIV-Infected Patients) that focus on estimating, assessing and addressing the unmet needs of the large number of HIV-infected patients in the Commonwealth who have fallen out of care and are at risk of falling ill themselves as well as spreading HIV infection. The second project focuses on optimizing HIV testing throughout the Commonwealth by analyzing HIV test results for Pennsylvania over the last six years totaling hundreds of thousands of results in order to create a model that will optimize the millions of dollars the Commonwealth spends on HIV testing each year. A third project has recently been awarded. The three-year project, funded by the CDC, focuses on African-American residents throughout the Commonwealth to pilot expanded HIV [and related STDs, TB and viral hepatitis (non-enteric)] testing in high-volume clinical settings such as emergency departments, community health centers, and jails/prisons. This project is expected to begin on 10/1/07 and includes substantial funding for this proposed faculty position.

We anticipate that these three projects have enormous potential for expanding our collaborative work with Public Health agencies in Pennsylvania and globally. Yet we are missing a key team member: an HIV epidemiologist. In discussions among all collaborators, we have identified as a priority the hiring of a PhD-level epidemiologist with experience in HIV who can assist in the further development of this important collaborative work.

## Job Description

This individual would optimally be a seasoned Assistant Professor or Associate Professor who has experience with large population research involving HIV-infected patients. The position will be jointly funded by the Department of Medicine (Division of Infectious Diseases), Department of Public Health Sciences (PHS), and the Huck Institute of Life Sciences at University Park. The individual will use PHS for his/her principal office, for computer and data management support, and for secretarial support. The important faculty contacts that this individual will utilize for project development are Drs. Crook and Zurlo (Division of Infectious Diseases), Drs. Hudson, Grenfell and Bjornstad (University Park), Drs. Chinchilli and Lloyd (PHS), and Dr. Benjamin Muthambi (PA DOH, HIV Epi Investigation Section). The potential for expanding collaboration with Public Health agencies in PA and globally cannot be overstated. At the behest of the PA DOH, Division of HIV/AIDS, Dr. Muthambi has worked with the above-mentioned individuals over the last 18 months in establishing this collaborative effort. Through proactively responding to Public Health agencies' outreach to establish collaborative relationships with academia, our team expects to expand collaboration with Public Health agencies in Pennsylvania and globally, on development and evaluation of innovative public health intervention programs, and analyses of large public health and clinical databases on HIV/AIDS [and related STDs, TB and viral hepatitis (non-enteric)]. Public Health agencies often do not have sufficient personnel nor expertise to exploit these large data sets in order to better understand the HIV epidemic in Pennsylvania and globally and therefore help to better focus population scale interventions on HIV and related conditions (which consume large amounts of resources in Pennsylvania and globally). We envision that our new epidemiologist will serve as the point person to advance the development of collaborative public health projects and exploit these public health and clinical data sets in collaboration with the strong HIV clinical researchers at Hershey and the world-class infectious disease modelers at University Park.

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations, applications and curriculum vitae may be submitted in confidence via email to jzurlo@psu.edu or mailed to John Zurlo, MD, Director HIV/AIDS Program, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, 500 University Drive, Mail Code H-036, Hershey, PA 17033.

The Pennsylvania State University

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