

Eastern Border Health Initiative (EBHI)

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Eastern Border Health Initiative

- **2005:** EWIDS funds provide NY, VT, NH, and ME to dedicate time to planning cross border outreach. All border on Quebec.
- **Pre-EWIDS:** formal public health communication between Quebec and states was limited
 - Impact of language differences? Quebec French vs. limited (or no) US bilingual
- Concentrated effort over two-year period led to development of EBHI

Jurisdictions



Canada

New Brunswick

Nova Scotia

Quebec



United States

Maine

New Hampshire

New York

Vermont

Eastern Region US & CA Map



EBHI Partners

- State Health Departments & Provincial Ministry of Health
- Local health departments/PH units
- American Indian Tribes/ First Nations on the Border (New York, Maine)
- Federal:
 - Public Health Agency of Canada: regional Emergency Preparedness representatives
 - Offices of Public/Homeland Security
 - Border Authority- Customs
 - Federal Quarantine officers

Primary Goal

- Improve cross-border infectious disease surveillance and public health communication in the Eastern Border region of the US and Canada by developing and maintaining mechanisms for sharing public health infectious disease information and resources quickly and securely

Accomplishments

- **Steering Committee:** Developed and maintained as a monthly forum
- ***Infectious Disease Communication Guideline:*** Created and maintained guidelines
- **Enhanced public health notification and alerting capacity** through cross-border enrollment in the CDC's **Epi X** and PHAC's **CIOSC**

- **Eastern Border Region Influenza Report:** Collaborated with the CDC to develop U.S. report; goal is expansion to include provincial data
- **Continued quality improvement** through communication drills, participation in exercises, and ongoing relationship building
- **National:** Pan-Border Public Health Council



Annual Training Conferences: Bi-National Learning Opportunities

Learning about U.S.
Canadian:

- Public Health Structure
- Organization of Public Safety
- Role of federal agencies
 - CBP/CBSA
 - Agriculture
 - Quarantine/migration



- Translated materials;
simultaneous
interpretation in
Montreal

Annual Training Conferences Topics

- **Emergency Preparedness:**
 - Cross Border Communications
 - Cross Border agreements: legal issues
 - DGMQ / Canadian Quarantine act
 - International Health Regulations
- **Disease surveillance and outbreak investigations:**
 - Foodborne outbreak table top exercise
 - Vaccine preventable diseases
- **Pandemic Influenza**
 - Planning (pre 2009)
 - Lessons learned (spring 2010)

International Border Communicable Disease Response Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):

- SOP template developed by NY, VT & Quebec with DGMO and CBP input
- Presented to EBHI for feedback at annual meeting
- Exercised in a VT border TTX and a NY/Quebec functional exercise



Import / Export Specimen Transport Exercise

- Collaborating EBHI and GLBHI Laboratory Subcommittee
- Obtained permits
- Shipped Category B isolate cross border



Challenges: Ongoing challenge to maintain capacity

- Steering committee:
 - NYS has been only jurisdiction dedicated staff
 - Staff changes in various jurisdictions
- Disseminating what we're learning Annual training conferences serve this purpose, but out-of-state travel restrictions are a concern

Future of EBHI?

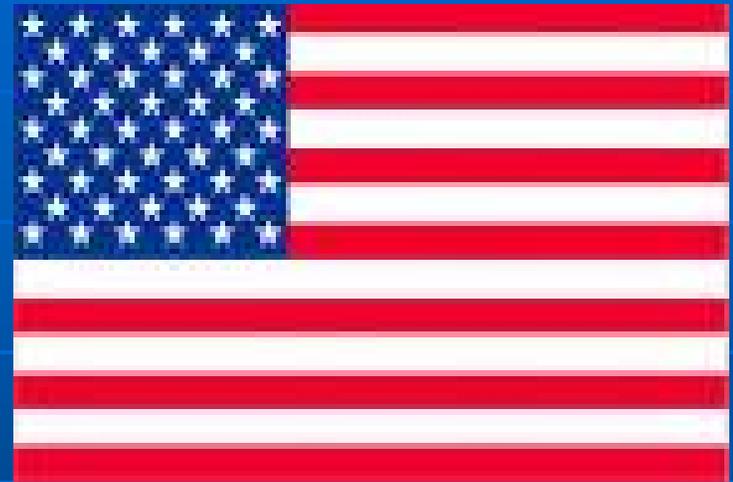


- May conference in Montreal
 - Steering committee meeting to discuss future
- Strong interest in maintaining and continuing development of this project
- New York State committed to program support



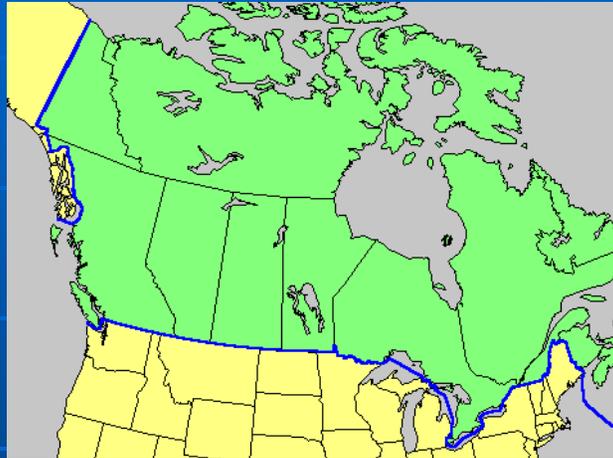
- **Church St Marketplace**, Burlington: 45 minutes from Canadian border
- **Festival International de Jazz de Montreal**
Montreal is 45 minutes from the Vermont and New York State border

Our joint challenge for the future:



Strong bi-national disease surveillance and response capacity is an ongoing need

Thanks to our Border Health Initiative Partners



Thanks to my Eastern Border Health
Colleagues

(with a special farewell thanks to Richard Buck and
an equally special welcome to Dennis White)