

(Announcer) This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

(Desirée Robinson) Hello, I'm Desir'ee Robinson. When a public health emergency strikes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff can travel anywhere in the world, at any time of day, with just two hours notice. The ability to go airborne in such a short timeframe plays a critical role in CDC's efforts to keep our nation safe and prepared. Oftentimes, it means the difference between life and death. Joining us to discuss CDC's immediate response to public health emergencies is Dr. Charles Rupprecht, Chief of CDC's Rabies Program, and Chemical Terrorism Lab Coordinator, Lieutenant Jacob Wamsley. Thank you both for joining us.

(Robinson) Lieutenant Wamsley, you flew to Panama and were on the ground when several deaths were reported there. Can you tell us a little bit about that mission?

(Lt. Jacob Wamsley) The initial mission that I was given to go down to Panama was that they had had some deaths, and they wanted to go down and get some patient samples and try to find out why the patients were dying. They had a little bit of insight; they weren't sure if it was biological or chemical, but I had the impression I was going down maybe to get 10 or 15 samples and bring them back to CDC for analysis. I arrived in country on a Thursday and we had a pretty good idea of what was going on by Tuesday. So in a matter of days, we were able to identify what was killing these people and having a direct affect on it harming anyone else.

(Robinson) Dr. Rupprecht, why is CDC's ability to have immediate access to air travel so critical during a public health emergency?

(Dr. Charles Rupprecht)

Oftentimes commercial carriers may have limitations on the amounts of that material that's to be carried, and also how it's transported. In our situation, we need dry ice in order to preserve the integrity of the material. So both the nature of it, how it's sent, such as on very cold dry ice, and also without the whims of a

commercial carrier schedule allows us to provide a service, a rapid diagnostic turnaround time, to a state when hours, as opposed to days or weeks, are really a premium for this disease. In the past we didn't have that resource. This resource that's available today allows us to continue to protect the public's health.

(Robinson)

Gentlemen, thank you for joining us.

(Announcer)

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