

## **Nomination of LT [SAMPLE OFFICER], PHS # 70865, for the PHS Achievement Medal.**

LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] is nominated for commendable dedication and noteworthy culturally appropriate technical expertise during the period of January 200X to September 200X.

### **BACKGROUND**

The XYZ program is responsible for providing epidemiologic expertise for state and local disaster readiness programs in jurisdictions requesting assistance. LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] was assigned to the Anonymous State Department of Health (ASDOH) as a XYZ to bolster infectious disease surveillance and response capacity. Within an extremely remote island territory with no other epidemiologic support, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] independently designed and implemented an effective disease detection program and established an interagency Epi-Team for outbreak response. The emergence of dengue fever in Anonymous State in early 200X necessitated a comprehensive response for outbreak mitigation. Although local transmission of dengue fever had not occurred in the territory in recent seasons, the 2001-2002 dengue outbreak resulted in 1731 cases, which raised concerns about dengue reintroduction. LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] was instrumental in identifying the public health impact potential of resurgent dengue activity, coordinating public health and clinical outbreak response efforts and garnering government and nongovernmental agency support for mounting and maintaining the outbreak response.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACTS**

*Led Interagency Outbreak Response:* Immediately after determining that the reported cases of dengue fever were locally acquired in early January 200X, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] activated the Epi-Team, assembling hospital and public health response team members to coordinate territory proactive response. In the very early stages of the outbreak, the Epi-Team, under his leadership, established necessary response actions, developed key messages for community education, and identified agency-specific roles in controlling the spread of disease. Identifying gaps in the existing response infrastructure, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] solicited involvement of the Anonymous State Community College (ASCC) and Anonymous State Environmental Protection Agency, inviting participation and coordinated a multi-tiered community education campaign. Although perhaps standard protocol in many jurisdictions, such an overarching collaborative outbreak response had not previously been successfully implemented in the territory. The collaborative response remained active through September 200X. *Impacts:* LT [SAMPLE OFFICER]'s actions resulted in an effective and sustainable multi-agency dengue fever prevention campaign. This interagency collaboration was sustained for more than nine months, further instilling the value of a cooperative approach, while forging new partnerships and strengthening ties with response partners. Previously untapped funding sources for community education were secured. Though more than one hundred cases of dengue were reported in the territory during this period, the 200X dengue outbreak was very mild compared to historical dengue outbreaks.

*Arranged for Shipping Specimens:* Recognizing the importance of determining the strain of dengue circulating in the territory, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] identified laboratories capable and available to receive specimens for typing. Major barriers inhibiting the execution of this task were shipping restrictions imposed upon the territory by regional airlines and shipping partners. Acting on behalf of the Epi-Team partners, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] met with airline officials and shipping agents, developed protocol for meeting the specific shipping requirements of each of the regional partners and, upon garnering verbal support of a regional airline, sought multiple mechanisms for meeting stated requirements while efficiently transporting specimens overseas. LT [SAMPLE OFFICER], recognizing the value of maintaining these protocols to resolve historic shipping concerns, invited the

involvement of the Regional Laboratory to facilitate customs clearance of specimens en route to regional laboratories. While elements of these processes existed conceptually, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] diplomatically wove these elements together to meet multiple agency and jurisdictional requirements. **Impacts:** The specimens were successfully shipped off-island for typing at a regional laboratory. LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] and the Regional Laboratory Coordinator developed a Memorandum of Understanding between the LOCAL Medical Center, Regional Laboratory, ASDOH and YOUGETTHERE Airlines, which is in the final stages of formal approval. The territory's ability to access specialized regional laboratory support for outbreaks and public health crises has been dramatically improved.

*Served as Media Spokesperson and Subject Matter Expert for Clinicians:* Recognizing the need for a broad-based media campaign, coupled with targeted educational sessions, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] organized and served as content developer and spokesperson for the dengue prevention campaign. Although personal protective measures and vector control remain central elements of such campaigns, research conducted only months prior to the outbreak had revealed unique dengue vector reproductive patterns on the island of SOMEWHERE. ASCC entomologists had identified specific container types that were most productively producing dengue fever vectors in the territory. Working collaboratively with these researchers and community partners, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] incorporated highly specific mosquito breeding site control messages into the multilevel campaign. LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] conducted a dengue educational seminar for more than 35 physicians at a territory-wide provider meeting and conducted monthly outbreak updates for territory physicians and infection control personnel. He developed biweekly media update templates for local staff to report outbreak developments and reinforce key messages to print media. He served as spokesperson for television interviews and programs for repeated airing on public and private television stations. As a junior officer working independently in such an isolated, diverse locale, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] recognized the importance of advocating for and facilitating multilingual and culturally appropriate communications. He developed scripts for translation into [NATIVE LANGUAGE] for radio and village outreach, which were broadcast and presented by local staff members to a council of more than 40 village majors for community-based action. In addition, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] produced and maintained GIS case maps and dengue presentations, which were utilized by local staff and printed in territory newspapers. **Impact:** As a result of LT [SAMPLE OFFICER]'s leadership and direct actions, consistent dengue prevention communication from multiple agencies permeated media outlets throughout the territory, including radio, television and newspapers during the course of the outbreak. Thousands of culturally appropriate and island specific brochures were distributed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Lt [SAMPLE OFFICER]'s efforts were exemplary of high quality of leadership and dedication to the public's health. Although this outbreak coordination was officially beyond the scope of his role as a preparedness leader, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] identified the need for leadership and met that need as an advocate for collaboration and partnership building. Utilizing and building upon the response infrastructure and applying public health preparedness principles, LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] led an effective outbreak response that marked a major milestone in the local capacity building for territory preparedness. Indeed, leading the territory to independently manage such an outbreak is a noteworthy achievement, for which LT [SAMPLE OFFICER] is deserving of an Achievement Medal.