



Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center

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Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center Funds New FDA-Cleared Influenza Diagnostic Kits for Deployed Medical Facilities

SILVER SPRING, MD – The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC), through its division of Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System (GEIS), has funded the development of two new kits recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that will increase the speed and accuracy of diagnosing influenza among military personnel in deployed settings.

The FDA granted clearance of the kits to the U.S. Army Office of the Surgeon General for use on the Joint Biological Agent Identification and Diagnostic System (JBAIDS) that has received prior FDA clearance on several biological select agents, such as *Bacillus anthracis* to be utilized in deployed settings.

The Influenza A/B Detection Kit will be used to for testing Influenza A and Influenza B – two subtypes of the virus that cause seasonal epidemic flu. The second kit will allow for the detection and differentiation of subtypes of influenza that includes A/H1, A/H3 and 2009 H1N1. The kits will be available for the start of the 2011 influenza season.

The FDA-approved JBAIDS, a 40-pound device small enough to slip into a rucksack, will be able to identify influenza viral nucleic acids isolated and purified from nasal swabs and nasal washes from patients who display signs and symptoms of respiratory infection. The device, which comprises a laptop connected to an analyzer, increases the Department of Defense's ability to test and identify emerging infectious diseases for influenza in deployed setting.



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Many medical facilities in deployed settings don't have the clinical tools available to allow personnel to rapidly diagnose infections – such as influenza – in humans. With the JBAIDS influenza kits, lab technicians can load samples into a carousel within the analyzer, which then identifies a specific strain of influenza or indicates a positive result for influenza that cannot be typed based on current assays.

“As a result, military services can more rapidly treat influenza among personnel and potentially reduce spread,” said Navy Capt Kevin Russell, director of AFHSC. More than 300 JBAIDS systems have been distributed to all branches of the services, including deployed units around the world.

“The broadly disseminated kits, if utilized, could provide early warning of a new influenza virus that we might not have heard about through traditional surveillance mechanisms for perhaps another week or month,” Capt Russell said. “Detecting new, drifted influenza viruses as early as possible can help us prevent the spread of the virus, and produce an updated vaccine in a timely manner.”

The influenza kits program was developed by the Joint Project Management Office for Chemical Biological Medical Systems (JPBO CBMS) in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, Edgewood Chemical Biological Center and the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity. Idaho Technology, Inc., based in Salt Lake City, developed the JBAIDS analyzer.

“It is phenomenal that the JPBO CBMS has been able to get FDA approval for the battery of influenza tests so quickly and in time for the influenza season,” Russell said.

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