

U. S. CDC Saudi Arabia

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/global-health/countries/saudi-arabia.html>

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is part of CDC's Middle East/North Africa (MENA) regional platform, which includes 25 countries and territories. In 2020, the CDC established the MENA Regional Office in Oman to deepen health security partnerships and enhance regional readiness for emerging health threats. CDC's collaboration with Saudi Arabia dates back over 35 years and includes strong partnerships with the Ministry of Health, local and regional partners, and other U.S. Government agencies to detect, prevent, and respond to global public health threats. Priority program areas address emerging diseases, laboratory systems and epidemiology, public health emergency response, and disease surveillance. CDC's work aims to protect the health of Americans and support public health around the world.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Supported training for 241 public health professionals who graduated from the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)



- Responded to emerging public health diseases that regularly occur during the Hajj pilgrimage, which brings over a million people to the country every year



- Established the Saudi National Public Health Rapid Response Team Program—the first of its kind in the Gulf region—which identifies and trains a surge workforce on program operations



- Supported trainings to enhance capacities in advanced laboratory techniques, including collaborating with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Public Health Authority (PHA) and regional partners to convene the first-ever in-person PulseNet Middle East workshop focused on sequencing foodborne pathogens and investigating outbreaks in 2025. CDC works closely with PHA to strengthen genomic surveillance for foodborne pathogens in the region



- CDC supports lab surveillance for measles, rubella, and influenza at the PHA Laboratory, which serves as a National Influenza Center

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

Workforce Development

Since 1989, CDC has supported the strengthening of Saudi Arabia's public health workforce to investigate and respond to disease outbreaks. FETP residents develop critical skills to help track, contain, and eliminate outbreaks before they become epidemics. Many FETP graduates currently assume advanced and senior public health positions in the country. The program provides overarching training to the workforce to build up field epidemiology skills across the health sector. Saudi Arabia's two-year Advanced FETP leads to a diploma in Field Epidemiology from King Saud University's College of Medicine, which is recognized as equivalent to a master's degree by the Saudi Council for Health Specialties. CDC has provided technical assistance and staffed a CDC Resident Advisor to guide the program. The program is open to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. To date, 37 cohorts have completed the program, totaling over 200 graduates, of which 32 are from other Gulf countries.

The Advanced FETP has been an invaluable tool for the country to address public health challenges and emerging diseases, such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), a viral respiratory illness linked to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula and which has the highest burden in Saudi Arabia. FETP graduates also participate in public health response, such as during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, which brings over a million people to the country every year. In 2019, the FETP expanded through the launch of Frontline FETP, incorporating veterinarians and physicians into a shorter training program (3 months) at the local level. To date, 5 Frontline FETP cohorts have graduated, providing Saudi Arabia with more than 80 trained field epidemiologists across the country.

