

For immediate release
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PHS COMMISSIONED CORPS OFFICER CONTRACTS SARS

The medical doctor and epidemiologist being reported by news and wire services as having contracted the SARS virus in Taiwan is a Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officer assigned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The officer, whose name is not being released by COA for privacy reasons, joined the Commissioned Corps in June, 1998.

The officer, who had been in Taiwan for about one week, is a specialist in hospital decontamination and was assisting Taiwanese public health officials in their efforts to contain the spread of the SARS epidemic. He is being medically evacuated to Atlanta by a specially configured aircraft. Latest reports put his condition as stable.

PHS Commissioned Corps officers are also in Beijing, China helping to contain the SARS virus. Corps officers are also serving in the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Members of the Commissioned Corps serve wherever there is a need for their specialized skills. Officers are stationed in all 50 states, at more than 550 locations including remote Indian reservations and Federal prisons as well as headquarters offices of the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. Corps officers provide all health professionals assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard. Corps officers can be called to duty 24 hours a day and have responded on numerous occasions to public health emergencies.

The COA is the professional association comprised of active duty and retired members of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service.

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