

DIVISION OF FOREIGN QUARANTINE

PART I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1. Objectives

The objective of the Division of Foreign Quarantine is to prevent the introduction, transmission or spread of communicable disease from abroad. The programs carried out to meet these objectives are divided into two direct responsibilities:

(a) To prevent the introduction of quarantinable and other dangerous, contagious diseases into the United States by quarantine measures, such as—inspection and vaccination of persons and animals, and inspection of conveyances and things specified by quarantine law.

(b) To evaluate for excludable conditions all aliens with mental or physical defects specified under immigration law.

2. Operation

The Division of Foreign Quarantine is a direct Federal operation, conducted through 52 local Public Health Service quarantine stations, which serve 408 ports of entry in the United States. The Foreign Operations Branch has 25 staffed stations, 6 of which operate as area headquarters abroad. In addition to the Public Health Service stations there are contract facilities which function under the support and direction of area offices and are supervised by the Division of Foreign Quarantine headquarters staff. The Division of Foreign Quarantine gives technical assistance to State, local and private health organizations and to segments of private industry as well as to the activities of the Departments of Justice, State, Labor, Agriculture, Treasury, Defense, and other Federal agencies as they apply to quarantinable and certain other infectious diseases, and to aliens, foreign workers, and certain other segments of the traveling populations. It contracts with local foreign national physicians, medical groups and laboratory facilities for the medical evaluation of aliens seeking admission to the United States.

The Division of Foreign Quarantine serves as a manpower resource in the area of its specialty for numerous segments of other Federal agencies in times of emergency and to the World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization, and Pan American Sanitary Bureau. In the forthcoming year it is undertaking to develop, on a continuing basis, a program of training for foreign and domestic assignments, commissioned personnel to fill the professional needs of the Division of Foreign Quarantine and related organizations; and it continues to train quarantine inspectors and related personnel on an annual basis to fill its requirements for border inspectional staff. It acts as the central coordinating agency for the collection and distribution of knowledge concerning epidemic diseases which occur throughout the world. It serves as a model for quarantine activities to the emerging nations and works in close cooperation with other established quarantine services in the more advanced nations.

3. History

In 1794 Congress initiated an act, limited to 2 years, enabling the appointment of a quarantine health officer for the Port of Baltimore. In 1796 it authorized the President " * * * to direct the revenue officers and the officers commanding forts and the revenue cutters