



Battles against epidemic Disease: from India to the White House

Voyage and Discovery Lecture

24 February 2004

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Before I knew Public Health existed.

- Canada and Calvin
- Oberlin College 1946-50
 - The Yearbook
 - A Radio Station
- Rochester Medical School 1950-54
 - Combining management and medicine
- Medical Intern – Cooperstown, NY

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A Public Health Career begins-- accidentally--1955

- Obligatory military service
 - A new interest in infectious diseases
 - **CDC and the Epidemic Intelligence Service**
 - Alex Langmuir and the Hopkins tradition
 - How to become a Chief
 - **Creation of a 5 year training program**
- Internal medicine resident 1957-59

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- "...one can think of the middle of the 20th century as the end of one of the most important social revolutions in history, the virtual elimination of the infectious diseases as a significant factor in social life."

Sir Macfarlane Burnet -- 1962

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Surveillance and International Health 1960-1966

- CDC Chief of Surveillance (1960-65)
 - A smallpox unit is formed
 - International initiatives
 - A good idea goes awry
- CDC Director of Smallpox Eradication-Measles Control Program: West and Central Africa (1965-66)

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An exile at WHO/Geneva -- 1966-77

- The Global Smallpox Program
 - A reluctant new Director is given an 18 month assignment
- The 10 year program
- The Expanded Program on Immunization

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Surprise! Hopkins Public Health: 1977-90

- A reluctant Dean
- The big H and the little h
- The Best Years
- The Search Committee and the Search and Find Committee

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Bush I and Clinton I 1990-95

- Science Advisor to the President
 - Qualifications
 - The perks of office
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health

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Biological Weapons: the unspeakable— 1995-2001

- Biological weapons – a repugnant subject to public health and medicine
 - 1995 --DOD and DOJ assume responsibility
- September 1997 – the effort to change
 - We live in an increasingly different world
 - Bioweapons -- especially smallpox and anthrax
 - New and emerging infections – AIDS, SARS
 - National security requires a strong public health
- The Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies

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A Drought changes to a Monsoon

- Dark Winter
- 9/11
- The new Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- A new term in Congress and the Executive- “Public health infrastructure”

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A Major infusion for public health

- State and local health departments
 - \$1 billion annually
 - Funds go to Governor for State Hlth Officer
 - Committee of all relevant agencies for planning
 - Epidemiology
 - Lab network
 - Communications
 - Training
 - Public education
 - Stockpile of antibiotics and vaccines

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Support for hospitals and R&D

- Hospitals \$500 million/year
 - Isolation rooms in all ERs
 - Plan for care of 500 acute patients per million population
- R and D \$1.5 billion/year
 - Regional centers of excellence
 - Basic research in pathogenesis and immunology

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Reflective observations

- Voyages into the unknown
 - To go, to do what never has been done before
- Opportunism is key
 - Goals must be seen in broad definition
 - At least half the job in public health is selling concepts and programs
- Every public health program could be improved with good research, both basic and applied.