

Dr. Briggs Explains Global Public Health (3:55 minutes)

Time Stamp 00:00:00: For me, global public health really is the scientific [investigation] and investment in working on and seeing that the welfare and health of people across the world are taken care of. I think that's really the most important issue. And exactly how you do that depends on what field you're in. But the end goal is actually to improve the health and well-being of citizens living everywhere.

Time Stamp 00:00:31: Well, components of global public health are wide-ranging. They're all the way from preventative medicine, including vaccines, to providing treatment for illnesses to seeing how you can improve the economic situation. How does the politics play into it? As well as, What are the entities that cause diseases to emerge, and even looking at the latest disaster from Japan [a disastrous tsunami wave stemming from a powerful earthquake off the northeast coast] and how does that work into public health? So I think public health really encompasses just about everything that we do on a day-to-day basis.

Time Stamp 00:01:11: There are three really important factors that have probably led to some changes recently in global public health. Certainly, one of the biggest factors is these large foundations that are now coming into play — for example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. And they have really made a big change in the amount of money that they donate to various organizations, to various health programs, and when you look at the amount of funding that comes in from a large foundation like that, you can see why they can start to make the agenda as to what should be the prime topics of concern. And I would say that a second entity is the fantastic changes that have occurred in communications. We're able now to have e-communications around the world. And really there is absolutely no reason why health education can't go to every country in the world because they certainly have access to the Internet and to programs, etc., and conducting workshops and other educational programs on the Internet is totally possible. I would say that the last thing that maybe has helped global public health is the realization that nobody can do it alone, and that we need to work together collaboratively. For instance, the foundations, WHO [World Health Organization], the World Society for Protection of Animals, the World Animal Health Association, FAO, all of these entities need to work together and bring their strengths together for programs. I think that when we look to see where progress is being made, it's being made where large entities and small entities are coming together to solve the problem.

Time Stamp 00:03:08: You know, if a student was interested in pursuing global public health, I think one of the things they should consider is to get a Masters of Public Health. It's always wonderful to have an advanced degree in either medicine or veterinary medicine. That's always a step forward. But also, to have field experience, to have externships. For example, there's an EIS [Epidemic Intelligence Service] program through the Centers for Disease Control where students can apply and go there and work and actually be involved with outbreak situations across the world, and that gives you a real depth of information about what is involved if they decide to go into public health.