



News Release

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Fifth National Bio-Threat Conference Focuses on Solving Real-World Problems

DENVER, Colo. – The Fifth National Bio-Threat Conference, a collaborative interagency effort held March 27-29, provided a forum for dialogue between government, industry, academia, and first responders to address critical issues in environmental sampling, bio-detection, clinical diagnostics, and biosurveillance.

“What makes this conference stand out from others is its focus to solve real-world problems of service members and emergency responders,” said Peter Emanuel, Ph.D., one of the organizers of the Fifth National Bio-Threat Conference and BioSciences Division Chief at the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC). “Each organization showcased research and technologies that ensure our service members, first responders and laboratory technicians are prepared and well-equipped against emerging biological threats.”

“For example, the American Society for Testing Materials, or ASTM, sampling standard was established as a direct result of collaborative efforts and community consensus sparked by the Bio-Threat Conference series,” he continued. “This standard conventionalized the process of sampling suspicious powders within the emergency responder and military community.”

According to Emanuel, this year a lot of the discussion evolved around biosurveillance, a collection of programs and capabilities that allow us to recognize a pandemic before it becomes a pandemic.

“For a topic as complex as biosurveillance, it is key to use a multi-disciplinary approach, share information and collaborate,” he stated. “There is no better place than the Bio-Threat Conference to harness the brightest ideas, because we always have world-class experts from many different disciplines and organizations contribute to leading-edge biological defense solutions.”

“Global biosurveillance at its essence is a collaborative endeavor,” Emanuel adds. “A disease that begins on a farm in Mumbai can quickly make its way to Miami.”

He concludes that conversations at this conference are vital to identify and react to biological threats proactively as the world becomes a smaller place each day.

“ECBC has a long tradition of solving problems for emergency responders,” he said. “We’ve always been a key player in developing smart solutions to counter emerging biological threats.”

One of ECBC’s closest partners, the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense (JPEO-CBD), co-hosted this conference and led multiple discussions that addressed next-generation biosurveillance techniques and improvements.

“This conference was very valuable to what we are trying to accomplish within the Department of Defense,” said Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Nicholson, JPEO-CBD director for Biosurveillance Strategic Initiatives. “The biosurveillance mission is very diverse, and therefore it is beneficial to have a wide range of organizations here that look at problems from various angles.”

ECBC Research Biologist Brady Redmond, Ph.D. who is currently matrixed to JPEO-CBD described this conference as “a reunion of long-time colleagues that share a comfort level, which is conducive to a considerable amount of business.”

“ECBC plays a huge role in biosurveillance,” he said. “The Center is also known as a test bed for biosurveillance systems and methods.”

Sponsors and major contributors to this conference included the Department of Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the Department of Defense’s JPEO-CBD, Joint Project Manager Biological Defense, and Joint Project Manager Guardian.

Please find more photos of a poster session at the Fifth National Bio-Threat Conference at: <http://bit.ly/GXlu7j>.

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

ECBC is the Army’s principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our website at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/> or call (410) 436-7118.