



One Health Commission
World Health Through Collaboration

Dr. Karen Becker
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Karen Becker, DVM, MPH, has been working at the interface of animal and human health as a veterinary public health expert during most of her career. During her career in the United States Government since 1998, she has demonstrated the importance of animal health to protect public health and security, food safety and economic development. Since completing the Epidemic Intelligence Service in 2000, she has participated in the control and elimination of Foot and Mouth Disease in the United Kingdom, the global response to SARS in China, and has been engaged in foreign policy by working with groups such as the G8, the Ministerial Global Health Security Action Group, Mexico and Canada on North American Pandemic Preparedness and other international platforms toward prevention and control of intentional and naturally occurring threats.

Dr. Becker graduated from the University of Illinois's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1987. After six years of small animal medicine and surgery, she became interested in new career opportunities which led to a AVMA/AAAS Congressional science Fellowship working in the U.S. Senate for Edward Kennedy and Barbara Mikulski on health care policy. Before the EIS, Dr. Becker earned her master in Public Health at Johns Hopkins, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in international health working in China on the effects of tobacco smoking, and emerging threats such as HIV.

On September 12, 2001 Dr. Becker was planning to return to conduct FMD case control studies in North Western England but those plans were overtaken by the terrorist's attacks in the US, after which Secretary Thompson requested her to serve as an advisor out of the HHS Secretary's Emergency Command Center in Washington. It was soon thereafter that Dr. Becker was selected by DA Henderson, assistant secretary, as the senior health advisor to the new Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness. After about 10 months of focusing on domestic programs, Dr. Becker was asked to lead international activities with the realization among all that global health security required work beyond our national borders.

During the past three years, Dr. Becker has been detailed by the USDA to serve as the senior veterinary public health advisor for the Africa Bureau at the United States Agency for International Development. Her main focus has been on the development of a program which addresses zoonotic diseases such as avian influenza and Rift Valley Fever as well as those diseases which have an impact on food supply, trade and African livelihoods of African communities.

Last July, Dr. Becker was the first woman to be awarded the AVMA International Veterinary Congress Prize. Other awards include the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service and for State and Local Public Health Preparedness, CDC's Research Award for the Investigation of Rotavirus Vaccine and Intussusceptions, and the CDC National Center for Environmental Health Director's Award for Disaster Response for her contributions during the 1999 North Carolina Hurricanes.