Scientific Director

Focus: Scientific Leadership, Quality Assurance, and External Representation

Position Summary

GeoSentinel, a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM), is a global, clinical-care–based surveillance and research network of travel and tropical medicine sites that monitors infectious diseases and other adverse health events that affect international travelers. GeoSentinel is seeking a visionary and collaborative Scientific Director (SD) to provide scientific leadership for the network. Serving as an independent contractor under awards largely funded by the CDC, the SD will lead the network's scientific strategy, oversee research quality and integrity, and represent GeoSentinel in national and international scientific forums.

The SD will guide the development and implementation of network-wide surveillance and research activities, ensure adherence to rigorous scientific standards, and oversee the review and approval of protocols, publications, reports, and external presentations. This role interfaces with ISTM leadership, provides mentorship, oversight and support to scientific staff, and collaborates closely with CDC leadership on surveillance priorities, case definitions, and data standards.

This will be a part-time, fixed-term position (anticipated ~30–40% FTE) designed for an established scientist who will work closely with a full-time Data Scientist and a full-time Network Administrative Manager who are both responsible for day-to-day operations. The salary for this position is 67,482 USD to 89,976 USD annualized for part-time (calculated from a 224,940 USD full-time equivalent rate).

Our preference is for candidates available immediately. The SD is engaged for a term aligned with the current CDC award period, which at this time supports employment through August 31, 2027, with anticipated opportunity for extension not to exceed five (5) years in total and renewed to a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms, pending additional funding. Continuation beyond the first term is subject to satisfactory performance, mutual agreement, and availability of funding under a renewed funding award.

Key Responsibilities

Scientific Leadership & Strategy

- Provide overall scientific vision and establish the research, surveillance, and strategic agenda for the GeoSentinel Network.
- Lead development and oversight of research protocols, surveillance methodologies, scientific standards, and network procedures.
- Collaborate with CDC leadership, ISTM, and Network stakeholders to establish goals, priorities, and long-term strategies.
- Collaborate with other funders as needed to ensure harmonization of goals and deliverables.
- Build consensus across Network leadership and resolve scientific or operational conflicts as needed.

Network Leadership & Operations

- Provide leadership and coordination across GeoSentinel sites, affiliate members, committees, and supporting staff.
- Organize and lead regular meetings to support strategic planning, surveillance operations, publications, and future Network growth.
- Oversee Network policies, operational procedures, annual work plans, and Cooperative Agreement reporting requirements.
- Participate in executive-level management and planning activities with CDC and ISTM leadership.

Surveillance & Data Quality

- Oversee core surveillance activities, including outbreak identification, alarming diagnoses, and data quality improvement efforts.
- Guide surveillance data collection, management, and quality assurance processes across the Network.
- Ensure surveillance activities align with CDC standards, case definitions, and federal reporting requirements.
- Support ongoing communication with Network sites regarding outbreaks, unusual events, and surveillance issues.

Research, Analyses & Publications

- Oversee the design, implementation, and quality management of Network research projects and externally funded initiatives.
- Review and approve manuscripts, analyses, reports, abstracts, presentations, and scientific outputs prior to dissemination.
- Develop and oversee policies related to data use, proposal review, publications, ethics approvals, and external collaborations.
- Support supplemental funding applications, IRB coordination, and strategic publication initiatives.

Network Infrastructure & Resource Oversight

- Evaluate Network infrastructure needs and determine priorities for new, existing, and underperforming sites.
- Oversee onboarding, evaluation, and discontinuation of participating sites.
- Support budget planning, expenditure oversight, and site reimbursement processes in collaboration with ISTM leadership.
- Assist in planning annual and semi-annual Network meetings and site visits.

Collaboration, Representation & Partnerships

- Represent GeoSentinel at scientific conferences, public health forums, partner meetings, and external engagements.
- Serve as a liaison to CDC, academic institutions, governmental agencies, collaborators, funders, and affiliated networks.
- Develop and strengthen strategic partnerships and external scientific collaborations.
- Foster effective cross-cultural communication and collaborative relationships across the global Network.

Leadership & Mentorship

- Mentor and provide scientific guidance to the Data Scientist, Project Directors, and other scientific staff.
- Support Project Directors in addressing scientific and methodological questions for funded projects.
- Provide oversight and leadership to Network committees and collaborative working groups.

Required Qualifications

- PhD, MD, or equivalent advanced degree in life sciences, virology, microbiology, genomics, bioinformatics, or a closely related field
- Progressive, senior level experience directing and scaling scientific programs
- Demonstrated success in developing, leading, and supervising complex projects and managing high performing teams
- Excellent verbal and written skills, including strong presentation skills and the ability to translate complex technical language
- Demonstrated experience writing, reviewing, and editing grants, journal manuscripts, and/or conference abstracts and presentations.
- Ability to work and collaborate with a broad range of staff and stakeholders
- Experience working across multi-site or international research networks
- Established authority in a travel health or related field, demonstrated by a strong history of peer-reviewed publications, patents or successful grant execution
- Ability to cultivate external partnerships with academia, government agencies, and industry leaders
- Ability to commit a defined, limited percentage of time while maintaining an external primary appointment

Preferred Qualifications

- Prior experience in public health, and specifically with designing or leading surveillance programs.
- Familiarity with domestic (US) and international public health laboratory systems and data-sharing frameworks.
- Experience working with CDC or other national public health agencies.

How to Apply

Applications will be accepted through 24 July 2026. Following the application deadline, all submissions will undergo an initial review using standardized evaluation criteria to ensure a fair, objective, and consistent assessment process. Selected candidates will advance to a formal interview process, which may include multiple rounds of structured interviews, skills or project-based assessments, and reference checks. Final selection decisions will be based on overall qualifications, demonstrated experience, interview performance, and alignment with the needs and goals of the project/organization.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and current CV to Jaclyn Simon at jsimon@istm.org no later than 24 July 2026. The cover letter should outline the candidate's relevant experience, qualifications, and interest in the position.

To learn more about ISTM and GeoSentinel, visit us at istm.org and geosentinel.org.