

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL BUILDING AND FACILITIES PLAN 2000

In the more than 50 years that CDC has been working to ensure public health, very little by way of buildings and facilities has changed. At the Chamblee Campus, for instance, the first laboratories were housed in converted army barracks, and these pre World War II structures which were meant to last 10 to 15 years are still in use today. Inside the buildings conditions are even more alarming.

Corridors are packed with freezers containing pathogenic agents and bio-hazardous substances because there just isn't enough room in the lab support areas. Likewise, filing cabinets full of documents, storage shelves and other items are lodged awkwardly in public hallways. The laboratories and offices where these objects should ideally be situated are in and of themselves strained far beyond capacity. Rooms that by all rights should house only one or two workers now contain four, five and more.

Every available space is utilized. Old bathrooms are even pressed into service packed with laboratory equipment and supplies. All too frequently a choice must be made between limiting the scope of work or the risk of infection, neither of which is acceptable. Critical systems are also in a shocking state of decline. Outdated electrical systems strain under the never ending load of added machinery and equipment. Duct work is deteriorating and lab workers have been forced to devise makeshift methods to minimize particles and debris blowing directly onto sensitive equipment and compromising test results. Rainwater must be diverted away from the expensive lab equipment sitting beneath the leaking ceilings.

In most CDC buildings, laboratory and office work must be done in a single large room where directional airflow cannot be controlled and hazardous work cannot be compartmentalized. Such conditions severely threaten the functionality, safety and efficiency of these areas. Unfortunately, the modern conditions enjoyed by this particular lab such as separate regulated air supply for lab and office areas are lacking in most of the labs.

CDC is trying, however, to provide this kind of configuration for all laboratory work involving highly infectious agents such as this Biosafety level four lab which handles the most dangerous microorganisms. A lofty goal considering that more than 30 new infectious diseases and agents like ebola hemorrhagic fever and Legionnaire's disease have been discovered in the last 25 years.

As alarming as this state of affairs must seem to the future of public health, a light is shining at the end of the tunnel. A master plan to address the problems of buildings and facilities for the purpose of ensuring the health of our nation and nations of the world is guiding the use of available resources and highlighting the need for a comprehensive overhaul. CDC's Atlanta facilities are spread across the greater metro area in 26

different locations. In the interest of better serving the nation's health, CDC has embarked on a ten-year renovation and construction project that if fully funded would allow modernization of facilities and bring most CDC staff together at the Roybal and Chamblee locations.

The master plan begins with the 46-acre Edward R. Roybal Campus located near Emory University. The 14-building complex, much of which dates back to the early 1960's, serves as headquarters and home base to 2,200 CDC employees and infectious disease research laboratories. New roads and utility systems will be installed on the recently acquired 18 acre west campus and four new office buildings will be erected within a 150-foot security setback zone.

CDC's master plan involving renovation and reconstruction of the Chamblee and Roybal campuses will provide CDC with safe, secure, modern and cost efficient facilities enabling the agency to better protect the nation's health and safety.