

# TERRY ADIRIM

2006-07 AAAS Fellow at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Office of Health Affairs

Terry Adirim's 16 years in academic medicine include a residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; a pediatric emergency fellowship at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC; and most recently, a two-year stint at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia—first as associate director and then director of the Emergency Medicine Department. But Terry, who received her MD from the University of Miami, longed to translate her academic medical work into policy. "I was ready to move away from clinical medicine and explore health policy at the federal government level," she says.

When Terry accepted her AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship placement in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs (OHA), she didn't know what to expect. OHA (previously called the Office of the Chief Medical Officer) was new and Terry was one of just a few staff members. She soon learned that being part of a new and growing department is filled with many benefits, as well as challenges. "We had growing pains just as all new organizations do," Terry says of the department, which now employs approximately 40 staff members.

Her fellowship work included several high-profile projects, such as serving on the Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Prioritization Work Group; developing a new OHA division called the Medical First Responder Coordination Division; and formulating strategic plans and budget justifications for OHA's Office of Medical Readiness. "I've acquired a breadth of experience on a wide variety of disaster prepared-

ness issues such as pandemic influenza and disaster system planning," says Terry, who also is a founding member of the Disaster Preparedness Interest Group, a small networking organization comprised of individuals from agencies and congressional committees involved with homeland security issues. "We meet once a month to share information and hear from leaders in the federal government who work on emergency preparedness issues. It's an extremely helpful networking tool," she says.

Terry, who was hired by her office at the end of the fellowship, credits the AAAS Fellowship for opening up new avenues for her as a physician. "Medical doctors are scientists, too. We're interested in evidence-based policymaking. Many physicians aren't aware that opportunities exist for them to make a difference on the federal level."



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