

# In the Spotlight



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## FDA Launches Fellowship Program to Develop Pipeline of Scientists and Healthcare Professionals

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is launching a two-year fellowship program aimed at attracting scientists, engineers and healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, to the agency. The FDA Commissioner's Fellowship Program will provide participants with advanced training in the scientific analysis involved in the safety and regulatory decisions unique to the agency's mission.

"Attracting the best scientists to FDA helps us make timely decisions and give doctors and patients helpful and accurate advice about treatment options. And timely decisions encourage more investment in developing new drugs and better medical devices," said Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services Tevi D. Troy. "The FDA Commissioner's Fellowship Program will not only bring great fellows in the door, but encourage them to make FDA their career."

Applicants are being considered for the first entering class of the program, which will begin in October 2008. The agency is seeking physicians, microbiologists, chemists, statisticians, pharmacists, biomedical engineers, nutritionists, veterinarians and other science professionals. Applicants should have a doctoral degree in medicine or another scientific field; engineers must have at least a bachelor's degree. Between 30 and 40 applicants will be accepted for the first entering class.

"The FDA is a science-based regulatory agency, and to fulfill our mission over the coming decade we will need to recruit thousands of highly skilled scientists and others with specialized and relevant expertise," said Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H., principal deputy commissioner and chief scientist. "The FDA Commissioner's Fellowship Program is designed to attract these people to the FDA and provide them with in-depth knowledge of the science that underpins regulatory decisions as we meet the challenges of both globalization and rapid changes in science and technology."

The FDA Commissioner's Fellowship Program will include coursework and extensive hands-on experience in FDA regulatory science including regulatory review opportunities. More than 20 courses and seminars will be offered on topics including FDA law, ethics and decision making, biostatistics, clinical trial design, population science and epidemiology, risk assessment, international activities, budgeting and operations, leadership, and public policy. A full listing of courses is available at <http://www.fda.gov/commissionersfellowships/default.htm>. The courses will be taught at the agency's new, state-of-the-art campus at White Oak, Md., and at other facilities by senior FDA staff and faculty from universities in the region.

During the first semester, each fellow will identify an in-depth research project to be completed during the program, allowing each fellow to explore a specific area of interest under the guidance of a senior FDA scientist who will serve as a preceptor. Fellows will devote about 70 percent of their time to the scientific project and 30 percent to coursework.

More information about the FDA Commissioner's Fellowship Program and instructions for applicants are available at <http://www.fda.gov/commissionersfellowships/program.html>.