

Meet the Fellow

Geneka Glover, MPH

Host Lab: Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Degree: Masters

Graduated: May 2021

School: Mercer University

Tell us about your educational background?

I received my Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences in December 2015 from Georgia State University. I received my Masters of Public Health in May 2021 from Mercer University.

What brought you into laboratory science?

My interest changed from medicine to laboratory science when I became immersed in public health starting with environmental health and wanting to branch out from there. I was always keen to the laboratory setting and love to see the different results after testing. Each testing protocol and result is different and keeps me interested constantly as it's not truly mundane as many make the laboratory setting out to be. Since I wanted to expand my skills in the laboratory and animals are a huge part of the environment, I took the opportunity to learn more in an animal science laboratory. This gave me the opportunity to learn about how regulatory science plays a part in keeping us healthy. In many ways, animals and humans are all connected. It's imperative to know what diseases are zoonotic and can cause great harm to humans.

How did you hear about the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program?

I found the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program: an APHL-CDC Initiative through a Google search about gaining laboratory experience through the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

How did this fellowship match or exceed your expectations?

This fellowship has allowed me to gain laboratory experience, network with other like-minded individuals and obtain career advice from those who have come before me. I knew I would like the fellowship but I was not expecting so many nice people who are more than accommodating to not only me, but my child as well.

Tell us what you learned from your mentor.

I have learned the gift of compassion. Dr. Erika Schwarz-Collins is very brilliant in her own right. She has taught me how to improve my critical thinking skills, that it is okay with not being okay, and always communicate.

Tell us about your project assignments/laboratory roles.

My fellowship is in the virology lab under Sarah Horak, who is the Section Head for that laboratory. I conduct rabies necropsy sample collection and testing patient serum through different enzyme-linked



immunosorbent assay (ELISA) tests, cell culture and virus isolation. I have begun to try my hand at Leptospira culture setup and testing. There are other experiments or diagnostic testing I am becoming better with through the guidance of Sarah. My project was on Canine Tick-borne Diseases in Montana: A Serological Study Using Indirect Fluorescent Antibody (IFA) Assays. This project's main goal was to conduct an initial study to assess whether Montana has tick-borne diseases. There is currently no data or previous research that has been conducted on the subject. My project was the first of its kind to be conducted. We were able to prove that there is evidence of tick-borne diseases in Montana. This helps public health officials, physicians, and veterinarians to consider tick-borne diseases as differentials when assessing a diagnosis.

How has your fellowship experience inspired you?

This fellowship has confirmed my initial thoughts of obtaining a position at an enteric and zoonotic laboratory, preferably a biosafety laboratory level 2/3. I really admire the constant work that laboratorians do daily. It makes me proud to be a part of the few but many. I want to continue working with zoonotic and infectious diseases.

What do you believe the next step will be in your career path?

The next step in my career path is gaining a permanent position with an enteric and zoonotic laboratory as a microbiologist or biological scientist.

How would you describe the APHL Fellowship to other students?

This fellowship is flexible, knowledgeable, caring, and safe for many of us who come from a variety of backgrounds.



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Keri Smith