

**Bill Foege:** The EIS program was an absolute eye-opener. From the very first day, I was excited by the size of the problems, the ingenuity of the solutions. There was an outbreak of hepatitis in officers in a naval base. When they investigated, they finally realized that there was a disgruntled worker who had peed into the salad dressing and spread hepatitis to the officers but no one else. I was captured by stories like that of people doing the detective work.

**Max Morell-Foege:** How did you figure out that path of getting to where you wanted to be?

**Bill Foege:** One day there was a suspected case of smallpox in a Navajo child and I was told to investigate it. I walk into the hospital room, and I knew immediately I had no idea what that child had. By that time, it was 1:30 in the morning but I called my superiors at CDC, and we went through everything that I had seen. And their conclusion was, “well, you can’t rule out smallpox.” For days, we were on the reservation running down all the contacts. And then it turned out it was disseminated herpes from measles, but it now primed my interest in smallpox. And the next year, I was given the chance to go to India and saw smallpox for real.

**Max Morell-Foege:** Do you think that now you would have been able to tell that it wasn’t smallpox?

**Bill Foege:** Well, I sure hope so. If not, I’ve wasted a lifetime.

**Max Morell-Foege:** Knowing what you know now, do you think we could have been better prepared for the coronavirus?

**Bill Foege:** Every time we have a problem like this — whether it’s Ebola or it’s Zika or coronavirus — we think, now, it will support public health infrastructure appropriately in the future and that doesn’t happen. The problem goes down, the funding goes down. We’ve got to keep the public health infrastructure in between outbreaks or we’re gonna continue to have this problem.

**Max Morell-Foege:** I’ve talked to people about getting the vaccine and I tell them about you. He’s my grandfather, he has a pretty good idea if the vaccine is safe and he’s telling me to get it. And he has my best interest at heart. It wasn’t always the science that was the most persuasive for people. It was that personal connection. I’m lucky that I have people in my life like you and grandma that have made a difference. You give me a lot of hope. What gives you hope for where things are going?

**Bill Foege:** You. And going beyond that, the number of young people who are interested in global health because they see this as a way of improving the world. That gives me hope.