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Pathogens, Populations and Plagues

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Every week seems to bring reports of frightening infections – from newly discovered viruses, old viruses that have caught a sudden hold where they once were rare or bacteria that resist treatment with antibiotics. Ruth Berkelman, professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University and a former senior adviser to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will discuss the shifting balance between disease-causing microbes and humans in today's changing world.

Dr. Berkelman, a retired assistant surgeon general in the U.S. Public Health Service, held various positions at the CDC from 1980 to 2000. She was director of the Division of Surveillance and Epidemiologic Studies in the Epidemiology Program Office and subsequently became responsible for AIDS surveillance activities in the Division of HIV/AIDS. In 1992, she was named the deputy director of the National Center for Infectious Diseases and led the agency’s efforts in emerging infectious diseases. In 1998, she became a senior adviser to the director of the CDC and, in that role, focused her efforts on strengthening extramural research activities at CDC and initiating the prevention research initiative.