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Dr. Schuchat began her public health career as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1988. Since 2006, she has directed the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, which administers the Vaccines for Children Program and facilitates global disease prevention through accelerated uptake of vaccines and strengthened disease surveillance and response.

Dr. Schuchat was CDC's Chief Health Officer during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic influenza response, assisted with responses to SARS in China and studies of pneumonia and meningitis vaccines in Africa. During the 1990s, she spearheaded national prevention guidelines that reduced newborn group B streptococcal infections by 80%. She has held multiple positions at CDC, including serving as the agency's Interim Deputy Director and as Acting Director of CDC's Center for Global Health. A member of the Institute of Medicine, Dr. Schuchat is also an Assistant Surgeon General in the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service.