

Thursday, October 30, 2025

REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The Region 2 RESPTC at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue serves as a National Special Pathogen System (NSPS) Level 1 facility and leads special pathogen preparedness efforts for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more about RESPTC updates, resources, and partner events [here](#).

HONORING INFECTION PREVENTION WEEK



International Infection Prevention Week (October 19-25, 2025) is a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about the critical importance of infection prevention. Each year, this week celebrates the impact of IPs and reinforces the essential practices that protect patients, healthcare workers, and the public. It's a moment to honor their expertise, amplify their voice, and remind the world that infection prevention saves lives. Infection preventionists (IPs) are specially trained professionals, leaders, educators, and collaborators from diverse backgrounds, including medicine, nursing, public health, laboratory, and allied health fields. IPs are behind the scenes detectives who promote a culture of safety by looking for patterns of infection within the facility, responding to outbreaks, preparing for emerging pathogens, observing practices, educating and advising healthcare teams, and developing policies and procedures.

Thank you to all infection preventionists for their dedication and expertise!

OUTBREAK AND SPECIAL PATHOGEN NEWS



Image Source: CDC

Ebola Virus Disease in DRC

On 4 September 2025, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) declared an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in the country's Kasai Province. No cases have been reported outside of the DRC and the risk of infection in the United States is [low](#). As of October 15th, there were [64 cases and 45 deaths](#). The last Ebola patient in DRC was [discharged](#) on October 19, and no new cases have been reported since September 25.

Clade 1 Mpox in California

[California confirmed the two cases](#) of Clade I mpox last week that had no recent travel to known outbreak regions. Clade I may be more severe than the Clade IIb virus currently circulating in the U.S. Providers should continue to encourage [individuals at risk](#) for mpox to get vaccinated with JYNNEOS vaccine, which is effective against both clades of mpox.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Funding Opportunity for Health Care Facilities

We are excited to announce the launch of the **NSPS Level 2 Special Pathogen Treatment and Network Development (STAND) Award**, a \$37.5 million grant initiative funded by the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR). [The application is now OPEN.](#)

This award is designed to expand the **National Special Pathogen System (NSPS)** Level 2 facility network, building a stronger, more coordinated, and resilient approach to high-consequence infectious disease (HCID) response across the U.S.

Award at a Glance:

- **Award amount:** \$500,000 per facility
- **Awards available:** Up to 75 U.S. healthcare facilities
- **Total funding:** \$37.5 million
- **Application deadline:** December 2, 2025, at 4 p.m. CST
- **Anticipated performance period:** January 2 - June 29, 2026

Why Apply?

Awardees will:

- Enhance institutional and regional readiness
- Gain national visibility as leaders in special pathogen preparedness
- Access training, consultation, and technical support from NETEC
- Join a national Community of Practice dedicated to HCID response

Eligibility:

U.S.-based healthcare facilities (excluding federal facilities and Level 1 RESPTCs) with the infrastructure and workforce capacity to care for suspected or confirmed patients with a special pathogen.

[Start the application here.](#)

October Travel Screening Country List

The New York City Health + Hospitals/Bellevue Travel Screening List reviews current special pathogen disease outbreaks that require prompt identification, isolation and/or specialized evaluation and management. The Bellevue Special Pathogens Program team develops this list in partnership with colleagues at NYU, Toronto University Health Network, and the Japan Institute for Health Security. This list, which may be found [here](#), can serve as a resource while screening patients.

Current Infectious Disease Outbreaks for New York City Providers

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) offers a list of current infectious disease outbreaks as a resource for healthcare providers in New York City. Find the resource [here](#).

CDC Be Ready for Measles Toolkit

The CDC released a Be Ready for Measles Toolkit in June that includes fact sheets, social media graphics, and videos for the public, as well as outbreak-related response tools for clinicians and other public health professionals. Find the resource [here](#).

REGION 2 NEWS



IDWeek Film Features Bellevue

The Region 2 RESPTC at NYC Health + Hospitals / Bellevue was featured at IDWeek -- the joint annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, the HIV Medicine Association, the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society and the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists. **Watch the video**

[here](#) to learn about Bellevue's historic role in protecting New York from special pathogen threats.

Recent VHF Preparedness Research

NYC H+H/ Bellevue, in collaboration with University of Nebraska Medical Center, has published a manuscript in Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology (ASHE) entitled "Institutional readiness to provide critical care to patients with viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) in the United States after the COVID-19 pandemic". This study surveyed U.S. Special Pathogen Treatment Centers (SPTC) on their abilities to provide critical care interventions to patients with a suspected or confirmed VHF. Fourteen SPTCs completed the survey with most indicating the ability to provide intubation/mechanical ventilation, pharmacologic cardioversion, renal replacement and defibrillation. However, few were ready to provide cricothyrotomy or extracorporeal membranous oxygenation (ECMO) and many lack code status policies for a VHF patient. This study also highlights the challenges SPTCs faced maintaining VHF preparedness amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. [Click here](#) to read the full manuscript.

University of Rochester Medical Center Highly Infectious Disease Response Team Train NYS Western Region Public Health Nurses

The team at the NSPS Level 2 Special Pathogen Treatment Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center's Strong Memorial Hospital led a training for 20+ public health nurses from the Western New York Region's health departments on H5N1 specimen collection in June 2025. Thank you to Rhoda Palacio and Terri-Lynn O'Gara of the Rochester team for sharing your special pathogen preparedness knowledge!

TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

"Make it a habit to [perform] hand hygiene anytime you touch a piece of equipment, change an item of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), or come in contact with a patient or specimen! A change in your habits can help reduce the risk of infection transmission by this simple, but effective action." -- Trish Tennill, RN (Region 2 RESPTC Director of Nursing | Regional Training & Education)

OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

Ebola Virus Disease

Clinicians should review the "Recommendations for Clinicians" section of the recent CDC [Health Alert Network](#) (HAN). These recommendations include:

- "Systematically **assess patients with compatible symptoms (e.g., fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, gastrointestinal symptoms, or unexplained bleeding)** for exposure risk and the possibility of viral hemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) including EVD through a triage and evaluation process including a travel history. Early identification of EVD or other VHFs is important for providing appropriate and prompt patient care and preventing the spread of infection"
- "**Immediately isolate** and hospitalize patients who have both an exposure risk AND any symptoms compatible with EVD"
- "If [EVD is suspected](#), **contact your** state, tribal, local, or territorial **health department immediately** (via [24-hour Epi-on-call contact list](#))"

Additional Resources

- NETEC [Ebola Resource Library](#)
 - This resource library includes outbreak updates, EVD information, Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (VHF) preparedness checklists, Tip Sheets, Job Action Sheets, and PPE resources
- CDC [Ebola Disease Basics](#)
- WHO [Ebola Disease Fact Sheet](#)
- WHO [Disease Outbreak News \(DONs\)](#)
- [Laboratory Testing for Patients with a Suspected VHF or High-Consequence Disease](#)
- [Interim Guidance for EMS Systems and 9-1-1 Answering Points | Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers \(VHFs\)](#)

H5N1 Avian Influenza

Providers should consider the possibility of H5N1 in patients who had contact with potentially infected sick or dead animals in the past week and show the following symptoms:

- fever,
- cough,
- sore throat,
- body aches,
- headaches,
- fatigue,
- eye redness (or conjunctivitis), and/or
- shortness of breath

Source: [CDC](#)

Providers should report any non-sub typeable influenza A cases to their Department of Health.

Resources

- [Region 2 RESPTC H5N1 Avian Influenza Webinar Recording](#)
- CDC HAN | [Accelerated Subtyping of Influenza A in Hospitalized Patients](#)
- [NETEC Influenza A Resource Repository](#)
- [NETEC Webinar Series \(8/14/2024\): H5N1 Town Hall: Updates for Frontline Staff](#)
- NETEC [Laboratory Resources: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\)](#)
- CDC [Bird Flu News and Spotlights](#)

New York State Reporting

To report sick or dead poultry in New York State, call the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets at [518-457-3502](tel:518-457-3502).

OCTOBER SPOTLIGHT | Erin McGuire, MD

The Bellevue Special Pathogens Program/Region 2 RESPTC is excited to announce that Dr. Vikramjit Mukherjee, our former Medical Director, is starting a new role as the Special Pathogens Program Chief. Dr. Erin McGuire, our former Associate Medical Director, will be the program's new Medical Director. Congratulations Erin & Vikram! Meet our entire team [here](#) and learn more about our new Medical Director in this month's partner community spotlight:



Dr. Erin McGuire is the Medical Director of NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue's Special Pathogens Program and its Respiratory Therapy Program, as well as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine in the Department of Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine.

She attended Duke University for a combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residency before completing her fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at NYU. Dr. McGuire began her fellowship in 2019, just as New York City became the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. Immersed in the front-line response, she developed a lasting interest in special pathogens, preparedness, and system-level response to emerging infectious threats. She later contributed to New York City's 2022 mpox response, further strengthening her expertise in outbreak management and high-consequence infectious diseases.

At Bellevue, Dr. McGuire has been involved with innovative preparedness initiatives, including the Tranquil Passport Drill, a large-scale simulation exercise testing readiness for high-risk patient transfers, and the development of a Special Pathogens Response Team to ensure rapid, coordinated action during emerging threats.

Dr. McGuire is excited about the future of Bellevue's Special Pathogens Program and looks forward to continuing to expand the hospital's national presence in special pathogen preparedness. Through her dual leadership roles, she integrates clinical expertise with program development to advance preparedness, patient safety, and multidisciplinary collaboration in both everyday care and public health emergencies.

WHAT'S NEW ON THE REGION 2 RESPTC WEBSITE?

The Region 2 RESPTC website is a one-stop shop for all things related to special pathogen preparedness and response in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The team has updated the [Tools and Resource page](#) with new resources including the latest Travel Screening List and resources dedicated to the H5N1 response. You can also read or re-read past newsletter issues [here](#).

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