

Thursday, December 18, 2025

## REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Happy Holidays from the Region 2 RESPTC team! This season, we are grateful for all of our incredible partners that strengthen the resilience of our region to special pathogen threats. 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](#).

## OUTBREAK AND SPECIAL PATHOGEN NEWS



**Image Source:** *The Guardian*

### Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Ministry of Health declared an MVD outbreak on November 14, 2025. As of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, there were 13 laboratory confirmed cases and eight deaths. In a [December 3<sup>rd</sup> Health Advisory](#), the CDC did not recommend additional assessments or monitoring of travelers arriving from Ethiopia by jurisdictional health departments.

**H5N5**

A Washington State resident died of H5N5 avian influenza in late November. This was the first confirmed human infection with this variant globally. Public health officials suspect exposure to domestic poultry or wild birds was the most likely infectious source. There was no evidence of transmission of this virus between people.

### **MERs**

Two individuals in France were diagnosed with Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in early December. Both individuals had reported consumption of camel meat and were returning travelers from Oman. Both were hospitalized and in stable condition. Contact tracing is underway with no secondary transmission detected thus far.

## **RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **NEW! Project ECHO Healthcare Preparedness Virtual Learning Sessions for HHS Region 2**

NYC H+H/Bellevue Hospital is launching a series of virtual Project ECHO learning sessions and conversations to engage audiences of public health practitioners, emergency managers, healthcare organizations, and community-based organizations to co-design equitable, coordinated, and resilient emergency preparedness and response systems. If you are interested in learning more about this initiative and would like to implement topics, please fill out this [form](#).

### **December 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](#).

## **REGION 2 NEWS**



Representatives from the Region 2 RESPTC team meeting with the USVI Commissioner of Health, a Region 2 ASPR REC, and leaders from the USVI Department of Health.

The Region 2 RESPTC team meeting with the Puerto Rico Secretary of Health, Puerto Rico healthcare emergency preparedness leaders, representatives from CDC, and a Region 2 ASPR Rec.



The Region 2 RESPTC team leading a training on isolation pod technology for a hospital in St. Croix.



The Region 2 RESPTC's Regional Training Lead, Trish Tennill, discussing how to safely use isolation technology.

## Special Pathogen Preparedness Efforts in the US Virgin Islands (USVI) and Puerto Rico

The USVI and Puerto Rico Departments of Health met with members of the Region 2 RESPTC team to discuss special pathogen preparedness efforts in their territories.

In USVI, the RESPTC team met with the Commissioner of Health to discuss upcoming preparedness efforts. The Region 2 RESPTC is deploying three isolation pods in USVI to bolster the jurisdiction's capability to safely isolate patients suspected of or confirmed with special pathogens. This technology will revamp the island's isolation capability after Hurricane Maria destroyed St. Croix's only negative pressure rooms. The RESPTC team led a training for 25+ healthcare and public health representatives on St. Croix to teach the workforce how to safely use this technology.

In Puerto Rico, the RESPTC Team met with the Secretary of Health and various leaders to discuss ways to partner for special pathogen preparedness. The RESPTC team will continue to support preparedness efforts on the island through training, technical assistance, and resource sharing.

### Region 2 RESPTC Drill





Earlier in December, the Special Pathogen Unit at NYC Health + Hospitals / Bellevue conducted a drill testing the unit's ability to quickly order and receive an experimental drug used to treat Marburg Virus Disease. Through its relationships with NETEC/SPRN and BARDA, Bellevue received this product (during normal business hours) in under 6 hours from initial request. The drill included practicing obtaining informed consent in a biocontainment unit (pictured above).



*Two nurses from South Korea's Seoul National University Bundang Hospital with NYC Health + Hospitals/ Bellevue Chief Operating Officer (Erfan Karim), Public Affairs Executive Director (Ivan Acosta), and Special Pathogens Program Administrative Director (Mike Thompson).*

### **International Special Pathogen Preparedness Partnerships**

This month, the Region 2 RESPTC was visited by a nurse from Taiwan and two nurses from South Korea interested in special pathogen preparedness. Both visits facilitated the exchange of ideas and information to bolster special pathogen preparedness efforts at home and abroad.

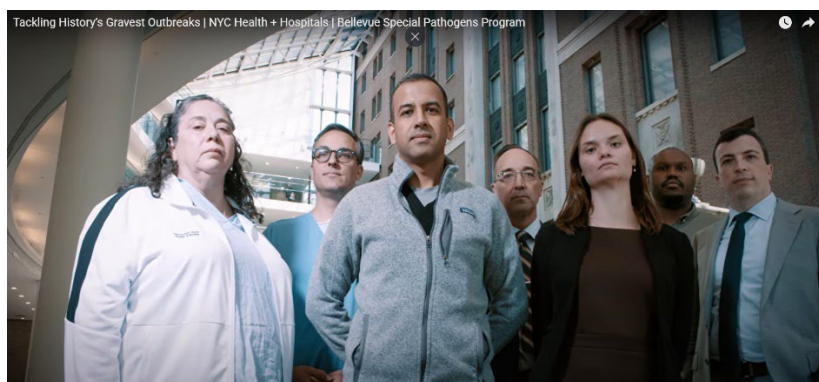
### **Research Publications**

NYC H+H/ Bellevue has published a manuscript in *Public Health Reports* entitled "Characteristics of Inpatient Admission for Mpox Infection Control Isolation at 2 Large New York City Health Systems, 2022-2023". This study was conducted on all

patients admitted to an NYC H+H or NYU Langone acute care hospital with a PCR-confirmed positive Mpox test. A subset of hospitalized patients (12.1%) were primarily admitted for infection control isolation. Those hospitalized for medical indications (vs isolation) were significantly more likely to be HIV positive (63.8% vs 12.5%;  $P = .006$ ), to have secondary bacterial infections (65.5% vs 25.0%;  $P = .03$ ), and to receive antibiotics (81.0% vs 25.0%;  $P < .001$ ). We found no significant difference in the median cumulative length of stay per patient between the two groups. Our findings argue for increased community-based isolation capacity to avoid the use of hospital beds primarily for infection control isolation. [Click here](#) to read the full manuscript.

### NACCHO Post Highlighting June 2025 Tranquil Passport Drill

Mary Foote and Nang Thu Thu Kyaw of the NYC Department of Health and the Region 2 RESPTC Steering Committee published a National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) blog discussing the public health perspective on June's Tranquil Passport Exercise. Read more [here](#).



### 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.**

## OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

### Marburg Virus Disease (MVD)

MVD is a highly infectious viral hemorrhagic fever that is clinically similar to Ebola. MVD is spread through contact with blood or bodily fluids of an infected individual. Learn more about transmission [here](#).

Early signs and symptoms include:

- fever,
- chills,
- malaise,
- headache,
- muscle aches,
- sore throat,
- chest pain,
- abdominal pain,
- vomiting,
- diarrhea, and

- maculopapular, erythematous rash.

Symptoms may progress to include:

- jaundice,
- inflammation of the pancreas,
- severe weight loss,
- delirium,
- shock,
- liver failure,
- massive hemorrhaging, and
- multiorgan failure.

### Resources

- [CDC| Marburg Virus Disease Situation Summary](#)
- [NETEC Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers \(VHFs\) Matrix](#)
- [Health Care Facility Viral Hemorrhagic Fever \(VHF\) Preparedness Checklist](#)
- [EMS Guidelines for Marburg Virus Disease](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Measures for Marburg Virus Disease](#)

### 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).

**DECEMBER SPOTLIGHT | Public Health Laboratories**

**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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