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## 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](#).



*R2RESPTC on the move! RESPTC team members joined experts from 21 countries at the NETEC International Workshop 2026 in Atlanta, GA to strengthen readiness for emerging infectious diseases through discussion on H5N1, surge preparedness, HLIUs, workforce resilience, and global coordination. Read more about the workshop [here](#).*

## OUTBREAK AND SPECIAL PATHOGEN NEWS

### **Ebola Disease Outbreak (Bundibugyo Virus)**

There is a growing Ebola outbreak in Central Africa. On May 5, 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted of a high-mortality outbreak of unknown illness in the Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including deaths among health workers. On May 14, the Institut national de recherche biomédicale (INRB) Kinshasa confirmed Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD) in blood samples. BVD is one of the Ebola diseases with case fatality rates ranging from 30-50% in past outbreaks and no licensed vaccines or medical countermeasures. The outbreak is occurring in areas affected by insecurity, population displacement, mining-related population movement, and frequent cross-border travel, all of which increase the risk of further transmission and challenges in contact tracing. As of May 25, WHO [reports](#) more than 900 suspected cases and over 200 suspected deaths. There has been cross-border spread to Uganda, with 7 cases and 1 death, including transmission to healthcare workers. WHO has declared a public health [emergency](#) of international concern (PHEIC) and considers [risk](#) in DRC as "very high" and the regional risk as "high". The CDC currently considers the overall risk to the American public as [low](#).

## Andes Hantavirus Outbreak

An [outbreak](#) of Andes hantavirus started onboard the MV Hondius, a cruise ship, in April 2026. As of May 25, a total of 13 cases, including three deaths, have been [reported](#) (case fatality ratio 23%). All confirmed and probable cases are amongst the MV Hondius passengers and crew. Andes hantavirus causes hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) and is the only hantavirus species known to spread person-to-person. There are no licensed vaccines or medical countermeasures. There are 41 people in the US considered exposed and being monitored by public health authorities. No confirmed cases have been identified thus far in the US. The CDC currently considers the overall risk to the American public as extremely [low](#).

## RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Bellevue Project ECHO has conducted 10 VCoP sessions thus far with our Hantavirus session being our most attended session with a total attendance of 646 participants! We ended our FIFA block this month with our last session on May 28<sup>th</sup>. In lieu of recent events, our next session will be held on June 11<sup>th</sup> from 12-1pm EST on the recent Ebola outbreak, providing information on situation updates and regional preparation. To attend this session, please RSVP [here](#).

If you are interested in learning more about this initiative and would like to implement topics, please fill out this [form](#). To access prior sessions please visit the Region 2 RESPTC webinar library at <https://www.r2resptc.org/tools.php>.

### HCID Preparedness for 2026 FIFA World Cup

With the FIFA World Cup less than two months away, we have released a preprint manuscript providing recommendations for local healthcare facilities in the New York/ New Jersey area. The United States, and particularly the New York/ New Jersey region will be welcoming high volumes of international travelers with a risk of carrying both routine illnesses and high consequence infectious diseases (HCIDs). "Game on, Pathogens: Operationalizing HCID Preparedness Lessons for the 2026 FIFA World Cup" describes the preparedness efforts the region has taken thus far and offers practical measures healthcare facilities can do before, during and after the World Cup to prevent and respond to HCID events. Read the manuscript [here](#).

### May 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.

## REGION 2/NETEC NEWS

### Situation Report: Ebola Outbreak Declared a Public Health Emergency

WHO has declared the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak in the DRC and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. NETEC encourages healthcare facilities to stay informed, reinforce preparedness, and continue applying the “Identify, Isolate, Inform” strategy.

John F. Kennedy International Airport and three other U.S. airports outside Region 2 are designated arrival facilities for travelers to the U.S. from countries affected by the outbreak. Staff from the CDC will be present to screen passengers for any potential signs of Ebola illness. U.S. Customs and Border Protection is taking this action as a proactive measure and will allow arrivals to begin the night of May 28, 2026.

### New Podcast Episode: Summer Safety Travel Q&A

On May 20, *Transmission Interrupted* explores summer travel safety and infectious disease prevention, answers common questions about vaccines, mosquito-borne illnesses, food & water safety, respiratory etiquette, and more.

## TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

Maintaining readiness is usually harder than building it the first time. Skills fade, supplies expire, contacts change, and routines drift. The difference between a workable preparedness plan and a forgotten checklist is a maintenance system. Incorporate regular maintenance checks into your preparedness plan to keep equipment functional, supplies current, and skills sharp.

## OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

### Lassa Fever

Lassa fever is primarily found in West Africa and is spread through exposure to rats.

Symptoms typically occur within 1 to 3 weeks after infection and can include:

- fever,
- headache,
- bleeding,
- difficulty breathing,
- vomiting,
- facial swelling,
- pain in the chest, back, and abdomen, and
- shock

### Resources

- [CDC Lassa Fever Guidance](#)

### 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](#)
- [NYC and NYS DOH health advisory on Influenza A subtyping](#)

### **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).

### **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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