October 29, 2026

REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The Region 2 Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (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.



NYC H+H Bellevue and NYC H+H Central Office hosted a special pathogen training for NSPS STAND awardees at NYC H+H Jacobi, Harlem, and Elmhurst. In addition, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital special pathogen trainers joined to share their expertise.

OUTBREAK AND SPECIAL PATHOGENS NEWS

The Ebola outbreak caused by Bundibugyo virus continued to expand during October, with sustained transmission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and imported cases reported in Kenya and Nigeria. As of October 24, the **DRC had reported 9,964 confirmed cases and 4,841 deaths**, representing a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 48.3%. Cases occurred across eight provinces, with Ituri and North Kivu among the most affected.

Kenya reported its first laboratory-confirmed case in early October. Eight known contacts of the imported case have tested positive, leading to a total of **nine confirmed cases and two deaths in Kenya** as of October 20.

Nigeria confirmed one imported case in Abuja on October 20, involving a woman with recent travel from Uganda. The patient was transported to Switzerland for treatment on October 26. WHO reported 44 contacts under monitoring at this time.

Avian Influenza A (H5N1)

Washington reported **one confirmed human H5N1 case** in October 2026, involving an adult worker at a commercial dairy cattle farm in Yakima County. The individual experienced mild illness. Nationally, the CDC reported 72 human A(H5) bird flu cases in the United States since February 2024

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Register Now! Free Special Pathogen Patient Transport Course in New Jersey

Session: From Planning to Practice: Transport and Care of Special Pathogen Patients

When: Tuesday, November 17th (Preconference)

Description: The R2 RESPTC @ Bellevue is leading an interactive pre-conference workshop that prepares EMS practitioners to safely manage the transport and care of patients suspected of or confirmed with high-consequence infectious diseases. Through a combination of expert-led didactics and hands-on skills stations, participants will learn principles and concepts of EMS biosafety transport, infection prevention, personal protective equipment (PPE) concepts (donning and doffing), ambulance preparation and decontamination, spill management, airway management, and interagency coordination to improve operational readiness for special pathogen response.

Register: National Conference on EMS

Cost: Free for preconference attendees

Sign up for Bellevue's in-person Special Pathogen Train-the-Trainer Course

The Region 2 RESPTC is now offering a free, in-person Train-the-Trainer course at NYC Health + Hospitals / Bellevue every month. The course is designed for healthcare workers at National Special Pathogen System (NSPS) Level 4 facilities, including frontline facilities, urgent cares, and clinics. The course is a Train-the-Trainer format that will review how to don/doff the CDC Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recommended for wet Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (VHF) patients, Identify/Isolate/Inform best practices, and other essential skills for patients suspected of or confirmed with a high-consequence infectious disease such as Ebola.

Please sign up here to join the waitlist for the November 5th course and for updates on future course dates. Email BellevueSPP@nychhc.org with any questions. This course will be offered on a monthly basis and please monitor this newsletter for future training dates.

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, Korea's National Medical Center, and the Japan Institute for Health Security. This list, which may be found here, can serve as a resource while screening patients.

Register for the Special Pathogens 2026 Course

Course Date: November 13, 2026

Location: NYU Langone Health (In-person and live streamed)

Course Description: Special pathogens, such as Ebola virus, pose an ongoing threat to global health security. These pathogens are capable of spreading in communities and

health care settings, cause severe illness and high fatality rates, and have few effective treatment or prevention options. As the 2024 fatal case of Lassa fever in Iowa demonstrated, US frontline clinicians, health system leaders, public health officials, and regulatory agencies must stay informed and coordinated in their preparedness and response to special pathogen threats. The goal of this course is to provide healthcare professionals with a comprehensive update on the epidemiology, care and management of patients infected with special pathogens. We will also review regional and national systems of care, ethical challenges, and practical skills through lectures, expert panel discussions, facilitated case-based discussions, and hands-on training sessions. Led by the Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) team at Bellevue, this course will deliver content from national and international experts in the field, and provide attendees with the latest knowledge and skills essential for the dynamic field of special pathogens preparedness and response.

Register here.

View the full agenda here.

Point-of-care routine laboratory testing for patients with suspected viral hemorrhagic fevers

The Region 2 RESPTC team and Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA) collaborated to offer frontline acute care hospitals with a potential solution to safely provide a minimum set of routine laboratory tests for patients with suspected viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF). This manuscript discusses guidance on laboratory risk assessment, equipment considerations, space requirements, staffing solutions, waste management, and cost estimates. Review the manuscript here.

Project ECHO Healthcare Preparedness Virtual Learning Sessions for HHS Region 2

Did you attend a Bellevue Project ECHO session this year? Please take our short survey here to help us improve this offering.

To access prior sessions please visit the Region 2 RESPTC webinar library at https://www.r2resptc.org/tools.php.

REGION 2 NEWS

Recent CDC Report Highlights the Region 2 RESPTC And NYC DOHMH Mystery Patient Drill Initiative

A new CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) discusses 73 unannounced "mystery patient" drills conducted from January through June 2026 across 69 emergency departments, outpatient clinics, and urgent care centers in New York, New Jersey, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In the simulated scenario, trained patient actors presented with signs and symptoms compatible with avian influenza A(H5).

The exercises underscore the importance of preparing all staff who may first encounter a patient, including security, reception, registration, and other public-facing personnel. Ensuring all relevant staff know how to "identify, isolate, and inform" can strengthen readiness and help reduce potential exposures.

Preparedness is strengthened through ongoing practice. Realistic drills build on the work health care facilities already do, helping teams refine protocols, reinforce effective practices, and remain ready as infectious disease threats evolve.

Read the report here.

Region 2 RESPTC Leads In-Person Training for NYC H+H System STAND Awardees

The Region 2 RESPTC at NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H)/Bellevue, in collaboration with NYC H+H Central Office, hosted 50+ health care workers from the NYC H+H Special Pathogen Treatment and Network Development (STAND) awardees at Elmhurst Hospital, Harlem Hospital, and Jacobi Hospital for a specialized hands-on training in special pathogens preparedness. The all-day session was designed to strengthen the public health care system's capacity and coordination across its hospital facilities to safely respond to special pathogens such as Ebola and other high-consequence infectious diseases.

The three NYC H+H facilities received STAND awards in January 2026. Administered nationally by the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC), with support from the federal Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the STAND program supports the hospitals' efforts to build the workforce, infrastructure, and operational capabilities needed to prepare for and respond to special pathogen threats.

Colleagues from Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital joined the Region 2 RESPTC as co-trainers, highlighting cross-regional collaboration to share special pathogen preparedness expertise.

Learn more about the training and view photos here.



NYC H+H Elmhurst Hospital Special Pathogens Program Team



NYC H+H Harlem Hospital Special Pathogens Program Team

OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

Ebola Disease

Ebolaviruses are members of the family Filoviridae, single-stranded negative-sense viruses that cause viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) in humans and non-human primates. Although infection with an ebolavirus is rare, outbreaks occur with increased frequency, and case fatality rates can be as high as 90%. Ebola virus (Zaire ebolavirus) was first discovered in 1976 during an outbreak close to the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (previously known as Zaire). Since then, six species of ebolavirus have been identified, four of which have been documented to cause disease in humans (Ebola virus, Sudan virus, Bundibugyo virus, Tai Forest virus).

The virus is highly transmissible with an infectious dose of 1-10 viral particles. **Transmission occurs after direct contact with body fluids** (blood, sweat, tears, saliva, feces, urine, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, and semen) through broken skin or mucous

membranes of a live or dead infected animal or human. Transmission can also occur through contact with objects contaminated with the body fluids from an infected animal or human including clothing, bedding, medical instruments, and more. **The average incubation period is 8-10 days with a range from 2 - 21 days but may vary based on species.** An infected person is not considered contagious until they exhibit symptoms.

There are 2 FDA-approved therapeutics, Inmazeb and Ebanga, available to treat EVD caused by Zaire ebolavirus. There are no approved therapeutics for other ebolavirus species, although investigational therapeutics may be available. Aggressive supportive care is essential in treating patients with EVD. There is 1 FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of EVD caused by Zaire ebolavirus, Ervebo. It is unknown if this vaccine will provide cross-protection against the other species. Other investigational vaccines against the other species may be available.

Dry symptoms can include:

- fever,
- severe headache,
- fatigue,
- weakness,
- sore throat, and
- loss of appetite.

Symptoms can progress to:

- unexplained bleeding,
- nausea,
- abdominal pain,
- diarrhea, and
- vomiting.

Resources

- NETEC Ebola Virus Disease Repository
- CDC "Ebola Disease Basics"
- WHO Ebola Virus Disease Fact Sheet

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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