

Thursday, April 24, 2025

## April Region 2 RESPTC Newsletter

### 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](#).

### SPECIAL PATHOGEN NEWS

#### National situation summary

##### Person-to-person spread

**NONE**

There is no known person-to-person spread at this time.

##### Current public health risk

**LOW**

The current public health risk is Low.

##### Cases in the U.S.

**70** cases

##### Deaths in U.S.

**1** death

*CDC Situation Summary of human bird flu cases since 2024. Source: [H5 Bird Flu: Current Situation](#) | [Bird Flu](#) | [CDC](#)*

### H5N1 Avian Influenza

Two pediatric deaths from H5N1 were reported abroad in April – with one death in Mexico and a second in India. [70 human cases](#) of H5N1 Avian Influenza have been reported in the U.S. since early 2024. No new human cases have been reported

since our March newsletter. The current public health risk remains low and the situation is being closely monitored. Review the recent CDC HAN [here](#).

### **Measles**

A total of 800 measles cases were reported in the United States as of April 18 with an 11% hospitalization rate. Approximately 97% of cases were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status. For more information, refer to the CDC Global Measles Outbreaks [webpage](#).

You can find NJ DOH measles guidance [here](#) and NYS DOH/ NYC DOHMH guidance [here](#). Finally, this "Your Local Epidemiologist" [blog](#) includes a summary of Measles guidance.

## **RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Free Secret Shopper Exercises for your Facilities**

The Region 2 RESPTC is working to provide free secret shopper exercises, complete with an After-Action Report, to gauge facilities' preparedness to Identify, Isolate, and Inform at points of entry. The results of these exercises will be provided to your facility to better prepare for a special pathogen patient presenting to your site. The information will remain private to you, but you will be given the tools and reports to assess your own readiness and meet regulatory requirements. If you are interested as we begin to roll out this initiative, please email us at [BellevueSPP@nychhc.org](mailto:BellevueSPP@nychhc.org).

### **April Travel Screening Country List**

The New York City Health + Hospitals Travel Screening List reviews current special pathogen disease outbreaks that require prompt identification, isolation and/or specialized evaluation and management. 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](#).

### **Special Pathogen Readiness Tracer**

The NETEC Special Pathogen Readiness Tracer is a standardized assessment tool designed to evaluate frontline staff preparedness for identifying and responding to special pathogens. It covers key areas like infection control, screening, isolation, and notification—and aligns with Joint Commission standards. Download the tool: <https://repository.netecweb.org/items/show/1919>

### **HHS/ASPR Project ECHO Clinical Readiness Rounds Session**

Tuesday, April 22, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET (UTC-5).

Everyone in the health care workforce must be ready to respond to disasters and emergencies, sometimes with little or no notice. Clinicians and others in the health care workforce can continuously prepare for disasters and emergencies by training, identifying and mitigating risks, and developing plans and protocols. These efforts improve readiness, enabling health care entities to effectively respond and save lives.

Please join us as Phoebe Yager, MD; Abbey Lowe, PhD, MA; and John Hick, MD share key clinical readiness principles for the health care workforce. Speakers will discuss how the health care workforce can adapt skills to new settings, understand downtime procedures, and use ethical principles to support crisis care.

You can sign up for this Clinical Readiness Rounds session (and all future sessions) by [registering in the iECHO system](#).

### **NETEC Transmission Interrupted Podcast | Spring Break Fever**

In this episode, host Jill Morgan, a nurse and member of the Serious Communicable Disease Program at Emory University, sits down with Dr. Henry Wu, director of the Emory Healthcare TravelWell Center, and Dr. Laura Dickson, assistant professor in microbiology and immunology at the University of Texas Medical Branch, to discuss essential travel health tips to keep you safe on your journey. Listen now on your favorite podcast platform, and don't forget to subscribe for more insightful discussions on emerging pathogens and preparedness strategies.

### **REGION 2 NEWS**





### **Bellevue signs a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to Establish a Special Pathogen Preparedness Twinning Relationship with Korea's NMC**

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue has entered into an international strategic partnership with the National Medical Center of Korea to bolster global infectious disease preparedness. This collaboration aims to enhance training, share best practices, and strengthen response strategies for high-consequence pathogens. By combining expertise and resources, both institutions seek to improve the healthcare systems' ability to manage emerging infectious threats effectively. This partnership underscores Bellevue's commitment to global health security and its leadership in special pathogens preparedness.

Read the NYC Health + Hospitals | Bellevue Press Release [here](#).

Learn more about NETEC's international partnerships [here](#).





### **National Special Pathogen System Laboratory Training**

The Region 2 RESPTC and the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC) recently led a regional training focused on enhancing laboratory skills related to special pathogens. The program, aimed at improving the preparedness of laboratory professionals to handle infectious diseases such as Ebola, MERS, and COVID-19, brought together laboratory personnel from across the

region to strengthen response capabilities in case of future outbreaks, ensuring better protection for both healthcare workers and patients. Over 90 trainees attended the training, with 60 attending virtually and 30 attending in person. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of continuous education and readiness in the face of emerging public health threats. Read more [here](#).



*(LEFT) Florence Douyon (far left), Bellevue Hospital's Assistant Director of Microbiology, and Crystal Evans, Regulatory Coordinator at Emory University, instructed trainees on how to safely handle special pathogens in a laboratory setting.*

*(RIGHT) Vicki Herrera, Research Coordinator at University of Nebraska Medicine and NETEC's Laboratory Work Group lead, demonstrated proper waste management practices.*

### **NSPS World Cup Preparations Featured in NJ Spotlight News**

In an article from *NJ Spotlight News*, Shelly Schwedhelm, Associate Director of Emergency Management and Clinical Operations at University of Nebraska Medical Center Global Center for Health Security and Executive Director of the National Special Pathogens System (NSPS), was interviewed about the need for proactive, coordinated public health planning ahead of the 2026 World Cup. She discussed a national tabletop exercise led by NSPS in January 2025 that brought together more than 500 participants to address potential health challenges—including lab capacity for special pathogen testing, patient transport, and interagency coordination. Read the article [here](#).

### **Tranquil Passport Full Scale Exercise Midterm Planning Meeting**



Jory Guttsman, Mike Thompson, and Laura Hillard of the Region 2 RESPTC Team attended the HHS ASPR meeting in Washington DC to discuss the upcoming Tranquil Passport Full Scale Exercise.

## OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

### H5N1

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.

### **Sudan Ebola Virus**

Cases of Sudan virus disease (SVD) have been reported in Uganda since the start of their outbreak in January. Symptoms usually appear 8-10 days after exposure and can include:

- fever,
- vomiting,
- diarrhea,
- rash, and
- severe bleeding.

Source: [CDC](#)

### **Resources**

- [NETEC Ebola resource library](#)
- [CDC Qualitative Assessment](#)

**PARTNER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | THOMAS CALIMANO, CEM, MA, NHDP - BC**





Thomas Calimano is a highly experienced professional in the field of emergency management, and healthcare preparedness with a proven track record of curriculum development, leading emergency preparedness initiatives, conducting training programs, and consistently prioritizing advancing the industry while maintaining a strong focus on his agency's success.

Over the last 25 years, Tom has held positions in Private, Local and Healthcare Emergency Management. Currently, Tom serves as an Emergency Management Director at Hackensack Meridian Health, overseeing emergency management programs at four acute care hospitals, a medical school, and a research facility.

A recognized leader in the field, he has played a key role in moving emergency management forward in the following committee assignments

- Chairman of the Content Expert Panel, American Nurses Credentialing Center (NHDP-BC)
- Appointed as Healthcare Representative to Bergen County Emergency Management Homeland Security Work Group
- Appointed to Joint Commission Standards Review Panel
- Appointed to the Association of Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Professionals Standards Review Taskforce
- Co-Chair of NJ DOH Healthcare Emergency Management Coalition. (ASPR HPP)
- Member of International Public Safety Associations Rescue Task Force Committee

Tom holds a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership, and numerous Instructor certifications for the Department of Homeland Security and has his CEM from the International Association of Emergency Managers. Outside of work, Tom enjoys travel, audiobooks, podcasts, and ATV riding.

**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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