

Thursday, May 29, 2025

## May Region 2 RESPTC Newsletter

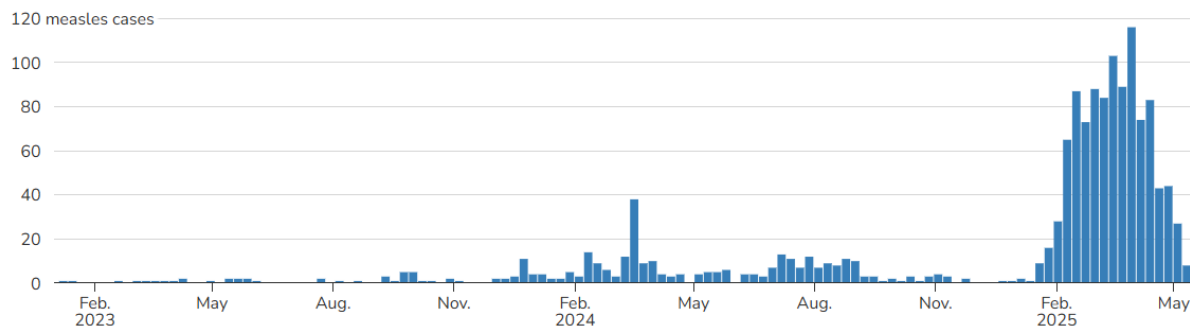
### REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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

#### Weekly measles cases by rash onset date

2023–2025\* (as of May 22, 2025)



[CDC](#) visualization of the weekly measles cases since 2023.

### Measles

Over 1000 measles cases were reported in the United States as of May 23 with an 12% hospitalization rate. Approximately 96% of cases were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status. [New York City](#) reported six Measles cases in 2025. 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.

### H5N1 Avian Influenza

70 human cases of H5N1 Avian Influenza have been reported in the U.S. since early 2024. No human cases have been reported in the last three months. Review the CDC HAN [here](#).

## **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 in applying for this free offering, please fill out our [interest form](#).

### **May 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](#).

### **NETEC Transmission Interrupted Podcast | Frontline Connections: Strengthening Our Resilience**

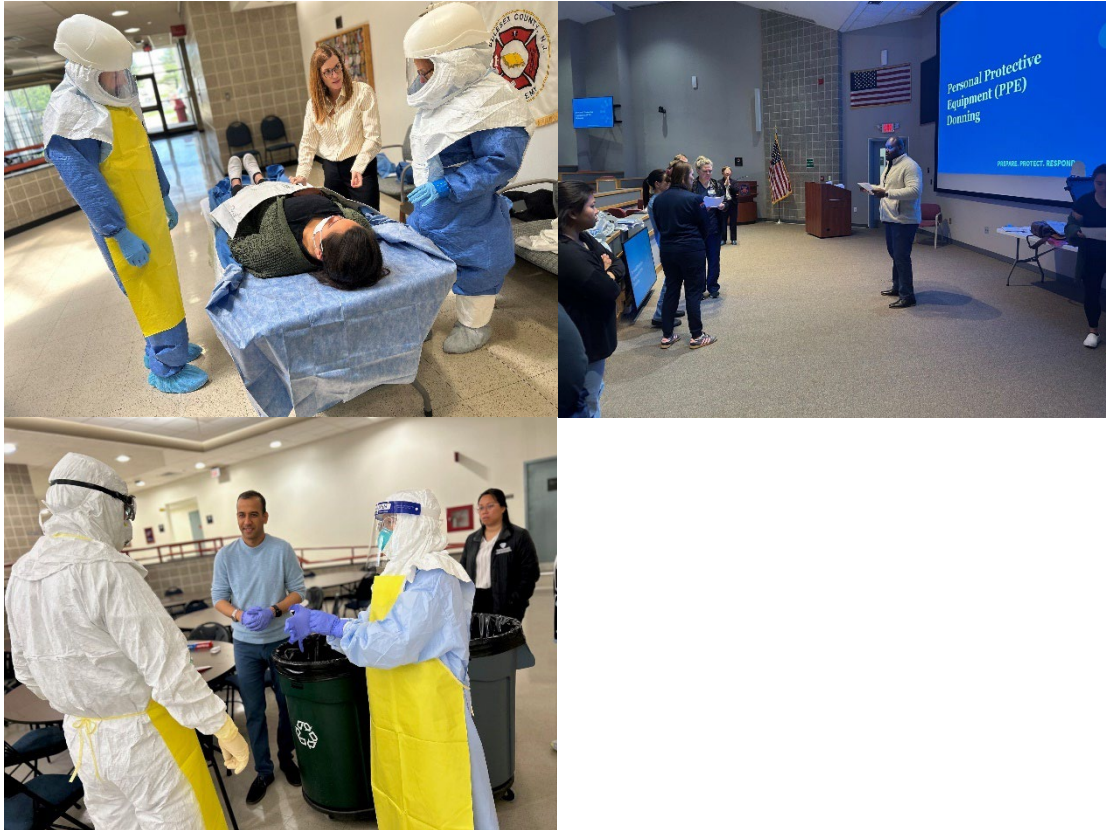
In this episode, host Jill Morgan is joined by a panel of experts from across the country: Tristan Twohig, an emergency department nurse from Spokane, Washington; Caroline Persson, who co-leads the NETEC IPC and BCU leadership workgroups and joins from Denver Health; and Stefanie Lane, co-leader of the NETEC Regional Coordination workgroup from Mass General in Boston to talk about what it takes to protect patients—and strengthen our healthcare system—against high-consequence infectious diseases (HCIDs).

## **REGION 2 NEWS**

### **New Jersey Hospital Association Training**

The Region 2 RESPTC team partnered with the New Jersey Hospital Association to offer a special pathogen skills and PPE training to health care workers in New

Jersey! The training included representatives from Cooper University Healthcare, Gloucester County EMS, Hunterdon Health, Montgomery Health Department, the New Jersey Department of Health, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, and Hackensack Meridian Health.



*Erin McGuire, Kendell Jones, and Vikram Mukherjee of the Region 2 RESPTC team leading the training.*

### **Amplifying Special Pathogen Research**

The Region 2 RESPTC had a busy month of leading special pathogen preparedness and response research! The team published the following manuscript:

#### **High-Consequence Infectious Disease Patient Transport Concept of Operations for US Department of Health and Human Services Region 2**

This manuscript, recently published in Health Security, illustrates the key components of the Region 2 High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) patient transport concept of operations (CONOPS). We outline how regional partners were engaged in revamping the CONOPS, the CONOPS workshop co-hosted by NYC H+H and DOHMH, and the important

considerations taken into account when transporting patients with HCIDs, such as Ebola Virus.

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/hs.2024.0077>

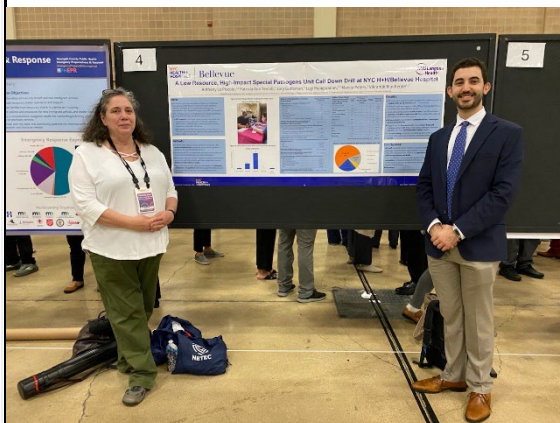
In addition, see below for highlights from our recent research poster presentations!



**A novel approach to Special Pathogen Response: The formation of a System-Wide Special Pathogen Response Team (SPRT)**

Anthony Lo Piccolo and Regan Britt presented a poster describing a novel special pathogen team model at the Preparedness and Recovery Institute (PRI) Innovation day. This team made of NYC H+H/ Bellevue Advanced Practice Providers, and NYC H+H/ Central Office Site Managers provides specialized staffing support across the NYC

H+H system to support the stabilization and initiation of care of a special pathogen patient. The SPRT model offers a framework for other large healthcare systems to enhance their special pathogen response capabilities, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

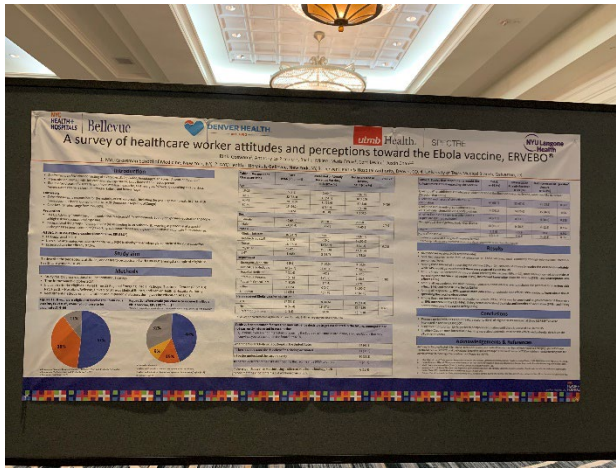


**A Low Resource, High-Impact Special Pathogens Unit Call Down Drill at NYC H+H/Bellevue Hospital**

Anthony Lo Piccolo and Trish Tennill presented a poster at the 2025 Preparedness Summit in San Antonio, Texas, describing a drill which simulated the arrival of a pediatric patient under investigation (PUI) for a viral hemorrhagic fever to NYC H+H/ Bellevue Hospital's Special Pathogen Unit (SPU). All staff reported to the

SPU on time and felt adequately prepared assuming their role on the unit. This low-resource, high-impact drill can be replicated at healthcare facilities across the country to prepare staff for special pathogen patients.





## A survey of healthcare worker attitudes and perceptions toward the Ebola vaccine, Ervebo

Justin Chan presented a poster at the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) Spring conference at ChampionsGate, Florida, describing the perceptions, attitudes, and desire to be vaccinated with Ervebo, a vaccine against Ebola Virus Zaire, amongst a sample of eligible US healthcare workers (HCWs). A

majority (51%) of HCWs surveyed were interested in receiving the vaccine. Amongst those interested, 24% preferred to time their vaccination for when there is an Ebola virus disease case in the U.S. The survey also indicated several areas of additional vaccine education that eligible HCWs are interested in.

*If you would like to learn more about any of these research findings, or are interested in learning more about research going on at Bellevue's RESPTC, contact our Senior Research Coordinator, Anthony Lo Piccolo, at [anthony.lopiccolo@nyulangone.org](mailto:anthony.lopiccolo@nyulangone.org).*



**Region 2 and 3 RESPTC Training Collaboration in Philadelphia**

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, the Region 2 RESPTC partnered with the Region 3 RESPTCs at MedStar and Johns Hopkins University to host a training on how to care for patients with high-consequence infectious diseases.



### **St. John's Episcopal Hospital Train-the-Trainer Course**

Trish Tennill from the Region 2 RESPTC team visited St. John's Episcopal Hospital to lead a Train-the-Trainer course on special pathogen preparedness and PPE on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to the St. John's team for hosting us!

*If you are interested in requesting a training for your facility, reach out to [BellevueSPP@nychhc.org](mailto:BellevueSPP@nychhc.org).*

## **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.

### PARTNER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | JOHANNA BIDDLE, BSN, RN-BC



Johanna Biddle, BSN, RN-BC, serves as the Special Pathogens Coordinator at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ- the only designated treating hospital for special pathogens in the state of New Jersey. With more than 15 years of nursing experience, Johanna has spent the past two years to strengthening institutional preparedness for high-consequence diseases.

In this role, she leads the recruitment and training of the hospital's voluntary Special Pathogens Team and oversees the development of critical policies to ensure alignment with national standards. Her efforts are central to maintaining biocontainment readiness and the operational integrity of the program.

In partnership with Region 2 colleagues at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, she rebuilt the initiative using their proven training frameworks to establish a more resilient system.

An active member of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), Johanna is deeply committed to fostering collaboration, continuous learning, and cross-regional partnerships. She is passionate about her role and finds great purpose in advancing the hospital's ability to respond to emerging infectious disease threats. She believes that shared knowledge and expertise are critical to the long-term success and sustainability of special pathogen programs.

#### **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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