

Thursday, December 19, 2024

December Region 2 RESPTC Newsletter

REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Happy Holidays from the Region 2 Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) team!

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



Unofficial Map of H5N1 cases around the U.S. by the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Global Center for Health Security. Find the full version [here](#).

First Severe Case of Avian Influenza H5N1 in the United States

The CDC has confirmed the [first severe case](#) of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus in the United States yesterday. In 2024, the U.S. confirmed a total of 61 human cases. The majority have been linked to exposure to infected poultry or dairy cows. There have been no reported cases of person-to-person spread and the current public health risk remains low. Review the CDC Situation Report [here](#).

Severe Malaria and Malnutrition linked to Unexplained illness in Democratic Republic of the Congo

[Lab results](#) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo suggest a severe form of Malaria as the source of the unexplained illness that caused [over 400 cases](#) and over 30 deaths since late October. Symptoms included fever, headache, cough, runny nose, and body aches. The World Health Organization deployed experts to support with the response.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

December 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.

Please see below for resources and symptom lists for current outbreaks.

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 | Dengue for Health Care Providers

Host Jill Morgan discusses Dengue with Dr. Joshua Wong, an officer with the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and a medical officer at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Dengue Branch. Read key takeaways on the [NETEC blog](#).

Listen to Transmission Interrupted on your favorite podcast platform and subscribe for more in-depth discussions on emerging pathogens and preparedness strategies. A new episode will be released on the first Wednesday of each month.

NETEC Infection Preventionist Job Action Sheet

NETEC offers free job action sheets to inform special pathogen preparedness. Check out the Infection Preventionist resource [here](#).

HHS/ASPR Project ECHO Clinical Readiness Rounds | The Case of Lassa Fever in the Heartland

DATE: January 14, 2025

TIME: 12:00-1:00 PM

DESCRIPTION: Speakers will overview the National Special Pathogen System

(NSPS) and lessons learned from the Lassa scenario.
[REGISTER HERE](#)

ASPR TRACIE Webinar | Crisis Standards of Care: Insights from COVID-19 and Recent Pharmaceutical Supply Challenges

DATE: January 15, 2025

TIME: 1:30 – 2:30 pm

DESCRIPTION: Dr. Vikramjit Mukherjee and additional expert speakers will cover topics including how to recognize when your healthcare facility/system is operating under crisis standards of care and indicators that signal this transition, considerations for effectively managing care to ensure ethical and efficient decision-making, and lessons learned from staffing and supply challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and other critical incidents.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

REGION 2 NEWS

Preparedness Leadership Council | Lessons From COVID Challenges and Strategies for the Future White Paper

The Preparedness Leadership Council (PLC) published a white paper overviewing lessons learned from the COVID-19 response. Dr. Mary Foote, Medical Director for the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response at NYC DOHMH and a Region 2 RESPTC Steering Committee member, discussed the importance of equity in emergency preparedness. She stated: "Equity needs to be built into the plan. But you can't just say it; you need buy-in." Find the full white paper [here](#).

Region 2 RESPTC Discusses Special Pathogen Preparedness Lessons Learned with International Colleagues

Dr. Vikramjit Mukherjee, the RESPTC's Medical Director and a Co-Principal Investigator for NETEC, traveled to South Korea to speak at the Emerging Infectious Diseases Summit Seoul 2024 (EIDSS 2024) in November. The summit, hosted by Seoul's National Medical Center (NMC), brought together international experts to share lessons learned from past outbreaks and establish a cooperative framework for tackling future emerging infectious diseases.



Dr. Mukherjee speaking at EIDSS 2024 in November.

New York City Health + Hospitals H5N1 Training Exercise

NYC Health + Hospitals tested the system's ability to screen and isolate a "patient" with simulated H5N1 symptoms, also known as bird flu, in a recent training exercise. The exercise safely transported the patient from NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County to NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue. The exercise was a coordinated effort between NYC Health + Hospitals and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



"This exercise underscores our commitment to ensuring that our health system is prepared to respond to infectious disease threats, including H5N1," said Dr. Syra Madad, Chief Biopreparedness Officer at NYC Health + Hospitals.

OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

Marburg Virus Disease (MVD)

Rwanda is counting down the requisite [42-days](#) to declare the end of their Marburg outbreak after the country discharged their last known Marburg patient on November 8th. Marburg is a highly infectious viral hemorrhagic fever that is clinically similar to Ebola. Marburg 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](#)

Mpox

The first U.S. case of Clade I mpox was identified in California in November and cases of mpox clade II continue to occur in our region. Historically, Clade I mpox causes more severe illness than Clade II. Providers should test for mpox in any patient with compatible rash and symptoms and screen for recent travel to or close contact with someone who recently returned from the affected region. Please contact your local health department to arrange for Clade I testing if indicated.

Symptoms include:

- rash,
- fever,
- chills,
- swollen lymph nodes,
- exhaustion,
- muscle aches,
- headache, and/or
- respiratory symptoms

Source: [CDC Health Alert](#)

Resources

- [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene \(NYCDOHMH\) mpox data and resources](#)

- [NETEC Webinar Series \(6/228/2024\)/Online Course: Mpox in 2024: Updates and Considerations for Frontline Staff](#)
- [Mpox in 2024: 10 Takeaways for Frontline Health Care Staff](#)

Measles

Measles cases are continuing to occur in our region. Please be aware of patients who have recently traveled abroad and who have symptoms consistent with measles, including:

- febrile rash illness,
- cough,
- coryza, and/or
- conjunctivitis

CDC Resources

- [Measles Symptoms and Complications](#)
- [CDC Resources for Public Health Professionals](#)

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

- [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.

REGION 2 TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

Remember to hand hygiene anytime you touch equipment, the patient, or change PPE in patient care area.

DECEMBER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | DARIO GONZALEZ MD, FACEP



Dr. Dario Gonzalez is the Division 7 Medical Director for the Fire Department City of New York (FDNY) and a member of the Region 2 RESPTC Core Advisory Group. Dr. Gonzalez brings his special pathogen expertise to advise on the RESPTC's patient transport planning activities. He has responded to countless disasters over the years, including the Oklahoma City bombing, Haiti Earthquake, Miami

Champlain Towers Collapse, Maui Wildfires, and September 11th. In 2014, Dr. Gonzalez traveled to Liberia to direct patient care to Ebola victims at the height of the Ebola outbreak. He served in Liberia for three months where he served as the ETU Medical Director, delivered patient care, and supported coordination efforts with the WHO and DOD. Today, Dr. Gonzalez leads as the FDNY Medical Director in the North Bronx, overseeing prehospital patient care, conducting the North Bronx Quality Assurance oversight program, and coordinating with Bronx medical facilities. He is also the Medical Director for NYC Office of Emergency Management (NYCEM) to assist in planning and development of response and disaster plans. Dr. Gonzalez received his MD from the Stony Brook School of Medicine and his BS from Columbia College of Columbia University of New York in Mathematics. Additionally, he is a Navy veteran who served in the submarine (both conventional and nuclear) service for 6 years. He is board certified in Emergency Medicine and a Fellow of the American Board of Emergency Medicine (FACEP).

FDNY provides key special pathogen EMS capabilities to New York City. As a critical partner, FDNY regularly exercises with NYC Health + Hospitals / Bellevue and NYC DOHMH to ensure the city is ready for special pathogen threats. FDNY Office of Medical Affairs, in conjunction with EMS Operations, has committed to support regional and national efforts to strengthen the prehospital management of patients suspected of or confirmed with High Consequence Infectious Diseases. FDNY provides necessary assistance to the health system's special pathogen response, including the provision of specialty resources of FDNY HazMat

decontamination resources and HazTac Paramedic/Emergency Medical Technician participation.

We want to highlight your work to prepare for and respond to special pathogen threats. If you have a special pathogen preparedness or response story, person, or team to spotlight, please send it to BellevueSPP@nychhc.org.

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](#).

[SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER](#)