

Thursday October 31, 2024

October Region 2 RESPTC Newsletter

REGION 2 RESPTC PARTNER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Don't get spooked by special pathogens – the Region 2 Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) is here to help.

The Region 2 RESPTC at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue Hospital 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 below:

OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

Bellevue Celebrates the Ten-Year Anniversary of Treating an Ebola Patient

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of successfully treating an Ebola patient, NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue hosted an emotional reunion last week with Dr. Craig Spencer and the medical team who cared for him.

The event brought together key experts to discuss the evolution of special pathogen preparedness strategies since the Ebola outbreak ten years ago. Due to Bellevue Hospital's role leading the Ebola response, it was one of three institutions selected to form the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center ([NETEC](#)), a consortium to enhance national special pathogen preparedness. The hospital was also selected as the



Dr. Craig Spencer and the Bellevue staff members who supported his recovery 10 years ago.

"In keeping with Bellevue's mission of never turning anyone away, our doors are open to any patient with any disease at any time," – Trish Tennill, RN, Director of Nursing for

Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Centers (RESPTC) for our region.

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue Special Pathogens Program

The event welcomed speakers from the White House, CDC, HHS Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), New York State Department of Health, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and NETEC. Discussions focused on the importance of creating equitable, high-quality patient care and protecting the healthcare workforce. Learn more about the event [here](#).



"A team of remarkably dedicated professionals took care of me, treated me like family, and helped carry me through 19 days in isolation...I was grateful that all these providers at Bellevue were there for me. And almost every day since, I've wished similar resources existed for the people I took care of in West Africa." –Dr. Craig Spencer

Bellevue welcomed guest speakers from local and national partner organizations to mark this occasion.

October 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 advisories for current outbreaks.

Travel Screening Country List – October 2024



This document is not meant to be an exhaustive list but is focused on select, current special pathogen disease outbreaks that require prompt identification, isolation and/or specialized evaluation and management.

Country	Diseases with Active Cases	Surveillance Window (max time from exposure to symptom onset)	Case Definition and Guidance	PPE/Precautions
Numerous Countries*	Measles	21 days	Measles Clinician Fact Sheet	Airborne + Contact + Standard
Numerous Countries • Burundi • Democratic Republic of the Congo • Republic of the Congo • Central African Republic • India • Rwanda • Uganda	MPox, Clade Ia & Ib	21 days	Mpox Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 1
India	Nipah Virus	14 days	Nipah Virus Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 1
Iraq	Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever	21 days	Crimean Congo HF Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 2 VHF
Nigeria	Lassa Fever	21 days	Lassa Fever Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 2 VHF
Pakistan	Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever	21 days	Crimean Congo HF Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 2 VHF
Rwanda	Marburg	21 days	Marburg Clinician Fact Sheet	Special Pathogens Level 2 VHF
Recent Health Alerts/Advisories		General Notes and References for Local & National health alerts/advisories		
National	H5N1/Bird Flu	The CDC continues to address a multistate outbreak of avian influenza A(H5N1) in dairy cows, poultry, and other animals in the U.S. Since April 2024, 14 human cases have been reported, including one in Missouri with no known animal exposure. Seven individuals who had contact with this case, including a household member and six healthcare workers, fell ill, though it's unclear if any were infected with H5N1. Clinicians should consider H5N1 infection in patients with		

Developed by NYC Health + Hospitals System-wide Special Pathogens Program

New Release! The Covid-19 Response in New York City: Crisis Management in the Epicenter of the Epicenter

Published earlier this year, the 400-page book *The Covid-19 Response in New York City: Crisis Management in the Epicenter of the Epicenter* covers the pandemic from the frontlines of the response, in the nation’s largest city and the first major city hit by Covid-19. The book covers how to respond to an unprecedented influx of inpatients, stand up a 24/7 contact tracing operation, distribute hundreds of thousands of vaccine doses, and manage provider burnout during a historic crisis. The book was written by nearly 100 staff across the health system who participated in the response. Each chapter includes lessons learned, so healthcare leaders and public health professionals can learn best practices for the next large-scale emergency response, and a vignette from a frontline staffer. The book is available to purchase from Elsevier and Amazon. 100% of the proceeds will go to the NYC Health + Hospitals Helping Healers Heal program to support frontline staff through emotional and psychological trauma, second victimization, vicarious trauma, and burnout.

The Region 3 Symposium

Representatives from Region 2 joined our Region 3 colleagues at their annual symposium in Washington D.C. The symposium shared promising practices for special pathogen preparedness, including how to handle Category A Waste, implement the new Joint Commission standards, and plan for effective exercises.

Trish Tennill -- the Region 2 RESPTC's Director of Nursing -- presented on "Integrating Infection Prevention into Your HCID Preparedness and Response Planning".

Thank you to our Region 3 colleagues!



Michelle Pedrani and Johanna Biddle from Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital as well as Laura Hillard and Trish Tennill from NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue represented Region 2 at the symposium.

NETEC Podcast: Marburg Virus Disease Update

Dr. Nahid Bhadelia joins podcast host and co-chair of NETEC's PPE workgroup Jill Morgan, RN, from Emory University Hospital for a conversation about the current outbreak of MVD in Rwanda, including the risk of transmission, treatment challenges, and the complexities of emerging infectious diseases. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

OUTBREAK ADVISORIES AND RESOURCES

Marburg

Marburg is a highly infectious viral hemorrhagic fever that is clinically similar to Ebola. MVD is spread through contact with blood or bodily fluids of an infected individual. Learn more about transmission [here](#). The Rwanda Biomedical Centre posts regular outbreak updates [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](#)
- [CDC Health Alert Network | First Marburg Virus Disease Outbreak in the Republic of Rwanda](#)
- [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

Cases of mpox clade II continue to occur in our region. 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](#)

New York City Department of Health and Mental Health (NYCDOHMH) Advisory

- [2024 Health Advisory #12: Updates on Mpox in New York City](#)

NETEC 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](#)

Lassa Fever

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC announced the death of an Iowa resident suspected of Lassa fever this week. It is believed the individual contracted the virus on a recent visit to West Africa. NETEC, CDC, and public health partners are assisting with the response.

Source: [Iowa Health and Human Services](#), [CDC](#)

Lassa Fever signs and symptoms typically occur within 1 to 3 weeks. Approximately 80% of people who are infected with Lassa fever experience mild symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

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

Source: [CDC](#)

Resources

- [CDC Statement](#)
- [NETEC Clinician Reference Guide to Lassa Virus](#)
- CDC [What you need to know about Lassa Fever](#)
- CDC [Lassa Fever Factsheet](#)

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

Six more human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus infection were reported in the United States last week, bringing the national total to 36 cases. A majority of cases are associated with exposure to infected poultry or dairy cows. However, the source of exposure could not be determined for one case in Missouri.

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](#)

NETEC Resources

- [NETEC Webinar Series \(8/14/2024\): H5N1 Town Hall: Updates for Frontline Staff](#)
- [Laboratory Resources: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\)](#)

CDC Resources

- [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.

Oropouche

There has been an increase in Oropouche virus disease in endemic areas in the Amazon basin and new areas in South America and the Caribbean. Travel-associated Oropouche virus disease cases have been identified in the United States. Providers should evaluate and test patients who recently traveled to impacted areas and have signs and symptoms consistent with Oropouche virus infection, including:

- fever,
- headache,
- myalgia,
- arthralgia,
- photophobia,
- retroorbital/eye pain, or
- signs and symptoms of neuroinvasive disease (e.g., stiff neck, altered mental status, seizures, limb weakness, or cerebrospinal fluid pleocytosis); AND
- no respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, rhinorrhea, shortness of breath)

Testing can be arranged through your local or State health department. CDC is now able to provide clinical diagnostic testing for patients with suspected acute Oropouche virus disease.

Source: [CDC](#)

CDC Resources

- [Interim Guidance for Evaluating and Managing Infants Born to Pregnant People with Confirmed or Probable Oropouche Virus Disease | Oropouche | CDC](#)
- [Clinical Overview of Oropouche Virus Disease | Oropouche | CDC](#)

REGION 2 TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

NETEC's recent webinar overviews PPE strategies for the new Joint Commission standards. Watch the webinar [here](#).

OCTOBER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | REGIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COUNCIL (REMSCO)



**THE REGIONAL
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
COUNCIL OF NEW YORK CITY**

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) play a crucial role in the early identification, response, and isolation of emerging infectious diseases that pose significant public health threats. New York City has the largest and most diverse EMS system in the country, consisting of over 60 EMS services and 13,000 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics responding to over 4 million calls annually. As frontline responders, EMS personnel are often the first to encounter patients displaying unusual symptoms or patterns that may indicate an infectious outbreak, making EMS a critical chain in special pathogen preparedness.

The Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City (REMSCO) was established in 1974 as the coordinating body for EMS in New York City. The REMSCO plays a crucial role in the city's emergency preparedness and response framework by ensuring that EMS personnel are appropriately trained and equipped to identify, respond to and isolate patients potentially carrying high-consequence infectious diseases. Through collaboration with the physicians on its Medical Advisory Committee, hospitals, local and state health departments and other stakeholders, the REMSCO develops guidelines and protocols for EMS providers to follow when encountering special pathogens in the field. The REMSCO participates in city and statewide emergency preparedness planning meetings to provide the EMS perspective.

Throughout the years, REMSCO has worked to improve the preparedness of EMS within the region. Through its' partnership with the NYC DOHMH's Hospital Preparedness Program it has trained thousands of EMS providers in infection control, distributed over 20,000 units of PPE and developed specialty guidelines for special pathogen encounters. In 2015, REMSCO worked with regional partners to establish procedures for isolating Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) patients in the field and safely transporting them to treatment centers. In 2009, in response to H1N1, it developed the NYC EMS POD Plan to establish a system for distributing PPE, medications and vaccinations to NYC EMS providers. During COVID19, this plan was critical to distributing much-needed PPE and giving EMS personnel early access to the COVID19 vaccine.

Through its proactive approach to emergency preparedness, REMSCO not only enhances the capabilities of EMS providers, but also ensures that the community is better prepared for unforeseen events -- ultimately saving lives and improving outcomes in times of crisis.

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 Marburg response. You can also read or re-read past newsletter issues [here](#).

[SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER](#)