

Region V Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) Newsletter

[February 2025]

Corewell Health and the University of Minnesota Medical Center (UMMC) are two of the 13 federally funded Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Centers (RESPTCs). Our RESPTC Programs work to enhance and support the National Special



Corewell Health and the UMMC are a part of FEMA Region V.

Pathogen System of Care (NSPS) to safely and effectively manage special pathogen response.

To learn more about the Corewell Health RESPTC, contact Tim Scholten, Program Manager, at

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If you want to learn more about Special Pathogens, check out [NETEC's Podcast](#):

You can also take a look at NETEC's most recent [News & Blog](#).



Region V Special Pathogen Response Updates Game Plan for Pathogen Preparedness

On January 10th, 2025, the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC) and the Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Centers (RESPTCs) facilitated a nationwide tabletop exercise to explore coordination should a special pathogens outbreak occur during the 2026 FIFA World Cup hosted in North America.

Over 600 participants from across all 10 HHS regions gathered virtually to exercise the National Special Pathogens System (NSPS). The event brought together experts from NETEC, CDC, ASPR, city and state public health departments, front-line health facilities, and EMS agencies.

Although Region V will not have a host city for the actual 2026 FIFA world cup, Region V role-played a "friendly game" scenario based in Columbus, Ohio with local participation from teams at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center (Level 3 – Assessment Center), MedFlight MedCare (EMS – ground transport), and Ohio Department of Health.

Participants broke into virtual breakout sessions by HHS Region to review regional plans for special pathogens coordination and transportation. For Region V, the scenario included patient presentation at Wexner's ED with symptoms of fever, cough, malaise, onset 4-5 days ago and increasing in severity. During intake, the patient endorsed recent travel history in Saudi Arabia including contact with camels and disclosed attendance of the recent "friendly game" in Columbus.

The exercise examined the subjects of screening, isolation, care coordination, lab testing, operational readiness, transport request and coordination, EMS preparedness, and NSPS notification and coordination should the patient need to transfer to a Level 2 or Level 1 treatment center.

The event was a fantastic opportunity to utilize our regional GLHP Plan and examine the capabilities of our region.

Current Countries of Concern for Travel Screening

Current Outbreaks per [CDC - Travel Health Notices](#)

Location	Disease Outbreak
Central/Eastern Africa, UK	Mpox—Claude 1
United States	Global Measles
Globally	Poliovirus
Tanzania	Marburg
DRC	Ebola
CHAPV	Bolivia

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This month's featured Funky Bug—Pertussis

There has been a significant increase in whooping cough nationally, including in Michigan. Prior to the pandemic, Michigan saw about 600 cases reported each year. As of November 2024, 830 had already been reported.

Whooping cough is caused by the highly contagious bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. Nicknamed the “100 day cough”, it starts with a mild upper respiratory symptoms like the common cold (catarrhal stage), progresses to paroxysms of cough (paroxysmal stage) which is characterized by stereotypical “whoop” after a coughing fit. Vomiting after a coughing fit (post-tussive emesis) is common. Duration is typically 6-10 weeks. It is most severe in the first 6 months of life, especially in preterm infants, who can develop pneumonia, severe coughing spells, apnea, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, and death. While much milder, infection in adults and adolescents can be complicated by syncope, weight loss, sleep disturbances, rib fractures due to coughing fits, and pneumonia.

A high index of suspicion is needed, since the early stages look like any other common cold. Prolonged cough, especially with post-tussive emesis or whooping, should raise your suspicion. A respiratory PCR, both stand-alone and as part of a respiratory pathogen panel, are available.

Azithromycin is the first line therapy for whooping cough and post-exposure prophylaxis. If you are concerned, start while tests are pending. Antibiotics given during the catarrhal stage may decrease severity of symptoms. Antibiotics given during the paroxysmal stage may not make a difference in symptoms, but can limit spread to others. Alternative antibiotics for those that cannot tolerate azithromycin include levofloxacin, doxycycline, and Bactrim.

Vaccines are available. The primary series is given beginning at 2 months of age through 4-6 years and help protect our most vulnerable patients by reducing the severity of illness. Boosters are given at 11 years of age, then every 10 years after in a single vaccine that also boosts your tetanus immunity. Vaccines are also given to women in the third trimester of pregnancy regardless of when their last booster was to help increase the passive antibodies that can be transferred to the baby in utero so that they have protection before they can get their first vaccine at 2 months of age. Unfortunately, vaccination rates are waning, and we are seeing the effects of that. In addition, boosters are important as the efficacy of the vaccine wanes over time.

All individuals, regardless of vaccine status, should be monitored for 21 days after last contact with the affected individuals. Those with confirmed pertussis should be kept out of school until they've completed 5 days of antibiotics or 21 days if untreated. All household and close contacts should be considered for post-exposure prophylaxis.

For more information visit: [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\) | Whooping Cough | CDC](#)



The National Special Pathogen

System (NSPS) helps the country **prepare** the health care system, **protect** the health care workforce, and **respond** to special pathogen events by coordinating special pathogen care across the United States. ([NSPS: National Special Pathogen System | NETEC](#))

