

Region 5 Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) Newsletter

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

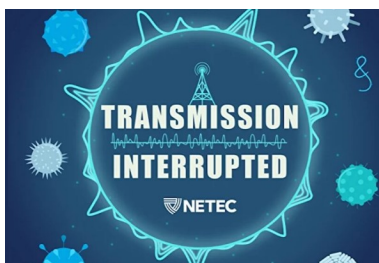


Corewell Health and UMMC are a part of FEMA Region V.

To learn more about the Corewell Health RESPTC, contact Tim Scholten, Program Manager, at Timothy.Scholten@corewellhealth.org

To learn more about the UMMC RESPTC, contact Sarah Haroth, Patient Care Supervisor, at Sarah.Haroth@Fairview.org

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](#).

Chicago Special Pathogens Workshop

A Special Pathogens Workshop was conducted in Chicago at Rush University Medical Center in July. This workshop brought together key stakeholders from throughout Region 5 to discuss special pathogen readiness, response, and coordination. Region 5 RESPTC hospitals provided a Q and A panel to cover topics of interest to Chicago SPTCs and PPE breakout sessions allowed each hospital to learn from a variety of donning and doffing techniques. In the afternoon, the ORD CDC Port Health Station presented on their role in special pathogens response and impacts of funneling operations during heightened monitoring periods. After a review of the Chicago Special Pathogens CONOPS and the Great Lake Healthcare Partnership Special Pathogen Coordination and Transportation Plan, Corewell Health facilitated a multidisciplinary tabletop exercise with a scenario depicting strain on Chicago SPTCs.

Rush University Medical Center:

"The workshop effectively enabled leaders from various hospital systems to meet in person, helping to build trust and strengthen communication. It was an important opportunity for our geographically linked Level 1 and 2 hospitals to build a foundation of cooperation."

Lurie Children's Hospital:

"As a Special Pathogen Treatment Center, our mission is to protect the health and safety of pediatric patients in Illinois while also enhancing preparedness and serving as an information hub for hospitals across our region. Regardless of whether your hospital is a Level 1 or a Level 4 System of Care, we recognize that being part of a highly specialized team presents both challenges and opportunities. Workshops like these provide valuable opportunities to bring team members together to examine existing processes, collaborate on innovative ideas, and build meaningful connections within a specialized group. By sharing our experiences and working collectively, we can develop improved standards and procedures that help safeguard the future of healthcare."



Region 5 Newsletter

Subscription



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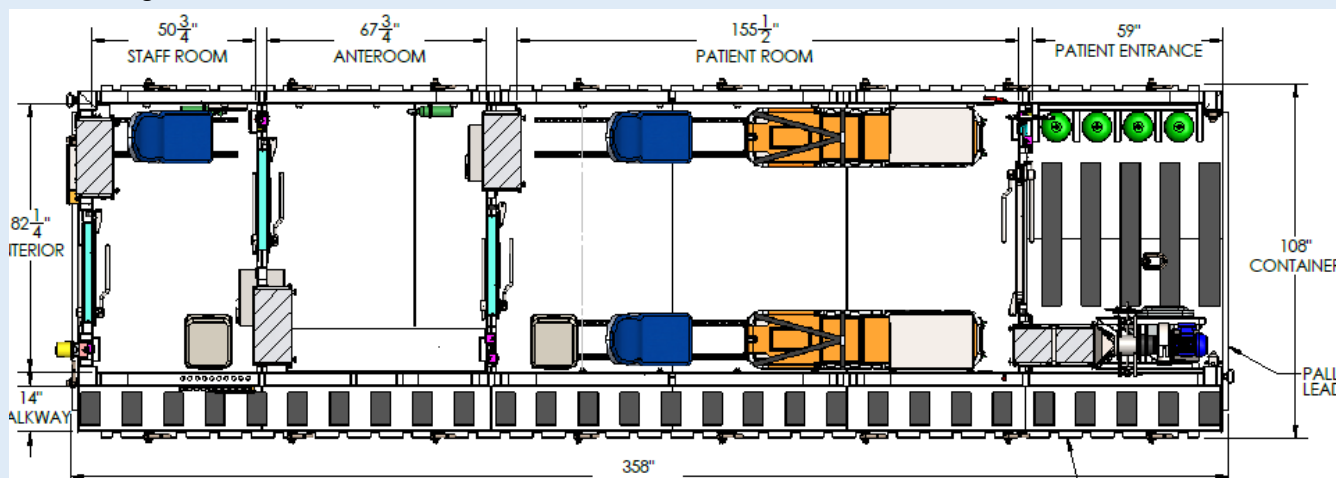
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Tranquil Passport Exercise

Following the 2015 Ebola response, HHS/ASPR began working with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to develop specialized containment equipment to safely transport high-consequence infectious disease (HCID) patients via ground and air. To test this equipment, there have been a series of four exercises beginning in 2015. In late June, I had the opportunity to participate as a lead evaluator for the fourth exercise in this series, a Federal full-scale exercise called Tranquil Passport.

The purpose of this exercise was to execute existing plans, processes, procedures, authorities, and capabilities of HHS and other local, state, federal, international, and nongovernmental partners to coordinate the movement of an HCID patient cluster from Canada to the United States. The scenario included a novel viral hemorrhagic fever (unnamed) outbreak occurring during the 2026 FIFA World Cup. There were participants from local, state, federal, international, and nongovernmental partners to support this exercise. The major focus of this exercise was to test the effectiveness of the Portable Biocontainment Unit (PBCU). This unit can be transported via air carrier (inside the cargo section) or tractor / trailer (see visuals below).

There were five locations involved in this exercise to test both the ground and air transport from Toronto, CA to Washington, DC to Queens, NY to Raleigh, NC, and to Atlanta, GA.



My role was to evaluate the receipt of the patient in the aircraft at Dulles Airport and follow them to Children's National Hospital (CNH) and then evaluate the donning, patient receipt and patient care, and doffing process. This was such a great experience with many lessons learned through all five locations. Best all-time experience was to ride with the U.S. Marshall's Service from Dulles to CNH with lights and sirens!



Julie
Julie Bulson DNP, MPA, RN, NE-BC, HcEM-M
Director, Business Assurance
COREWELL HEALTH

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Education Spotlight

The PPE Ensemble – Eye Protection

To goggle, glass, or shield? That is the question! Eye protection comes in various forms, all of which are useful but not effective for everything. When considering splash and impact, glasses can be an effective protection. When only considering splashes, face shields are a great idea. With both glasses and face shields (depending on type) it is important to consider coverage and openings. This type of protection often doesn't provide complete coverage. One option to provide the most protection is to employ a shield that is attached to a headband, wraps around the face to the ears and extends below the chin. This type of shield offers wider protection against errant splashes. When looking to protect team members from the gamut of exposures, goggles are likely the best choice. Goggles and glasses are rated by the American National Standards Institute. Ratings for impact fall under the Z87 standards. ANSI doesn't rate specifically for germs; it does rate based on splashes and droplets (D3), dust (D4), and fine dust (D5). For the most secure protection, goggles rated for splashes and fine dust are offering the highest level of protection. Eye protection is a valuable tool in protecting team members from contracting many germs, especially in situations where the patient is producing a lot of secretions!

Ryan A. Thatcher MSN

NETEC PPE Workgroup SME

NETEC PPE Resource Library PPE · <https://repository.netecweb.org/exhibits/show/ppe101/ppe>

Current Countries of Concern for Travel Screening Current Outbreaks per [CDC](#)

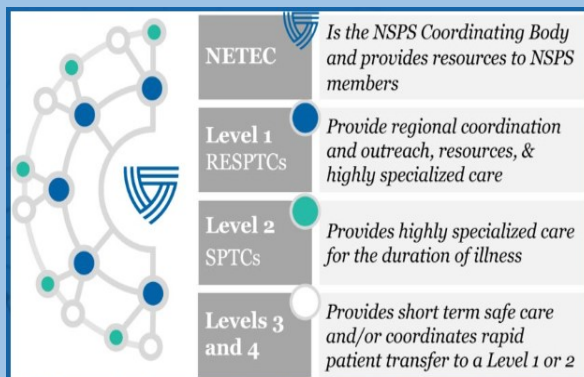
Location	Disease Outbreak
Sierra Leone	Clade II—Mpox
Bolivia, Region of the Indian Ocean	Chikungunya
Brazil, Panama, Americas	Oropouche
Global	Polio, Dengue, Measles
South America	Yellow Fever
Guinea, Nigeria	Diphtheria

Outreach Support Summary (January-July)



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.

[\(NSPS: National Special Pathogen System | NETEC\)](#)



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This month's featured Funky Bug—Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral illness caused by the dengue virus (DENV), which has four distinct serotypes (DENV-1 to DENV-4).

Signs and Symptoms

- Dengue is spread via the *Aedes* species of mosquitos.
- Typically presents with sudden high fever, severe headache (especially behind the eyes), muscle and joint pain ("breakbone fever"), rash, nausea, vomiting, and mild bleeding manifestations such as nosebleeds or gum bleeding.
- Symptoms typically occur within 2-weeks of infection, and resolve within 7-days.
- Severe dengue (also known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or dengue shock syndrome) can lead to plasma leakage, fluid accumulation, respiratory distress, severe bleeding, and death.

Mortality

- Most dengue infections are self-limiting and non-fatal. However, severe dengue can be life-threatening, especially without proper medical care.
- The global case fatality rate for severe dengue is approximately 1–5%, but it can be reduced to below 1% with timely supportive treatment.

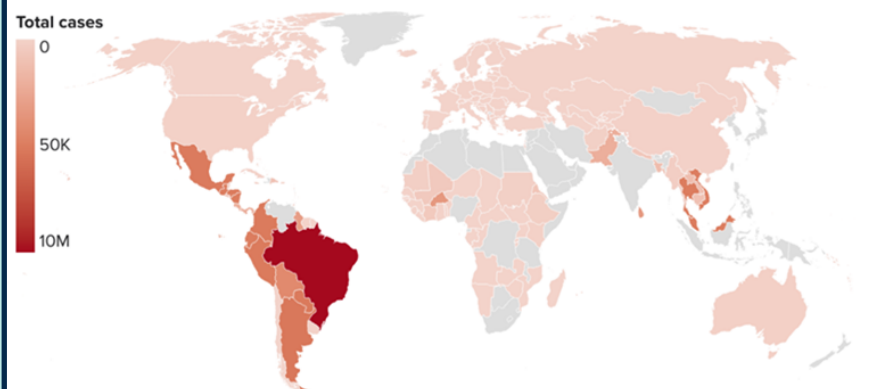
Epidemiologic Impact

- Dengue is endemic in over 100 countries, primarily in tropical and subtropical regions, with an estimated 100–400 million infections annually.
- The disease places a significant burden on public health systems, especially in Asia, Latin America, and increasingly in parts of Africa and the southern United States.

Recent Outbreaks

- In 2024 and 2025, dengue outbreaks surged in several countries due to climate-related factors such as rising temperatures and increased rainfall, which expanded mosquito breeding grounds.
- Bangladesh reported one of its worst outbreaks in 2023, with over 300,000 cases and more than 1,500 deaths. Similar spikes occurred in Brazil, Peru, and parts of Southeast Asia.
- CDC reports more than 13 million cases of Dengue throughout North, Central, and South American in 2024.
- The increasing frequency and scale of outbreaks highlight the urgent need for improved vector control, public health infrastructure, and expanded access to dengue vaccines like Qdenga and Dengvaxia in endemic regions. Mosquito control becomes critical to decreasing the spread of Dengue virus.

Global dengue cases reported in 2024



Note: Data as of September 16, 2024. Not all countries with dengue transmission are reflected.

Map: Taylor Johnston / CBS News • Source: World Health Organization

Region 5 Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) Regional Outreach Program

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How do I Request Support?
[Regional Outreach Intake Form](#)



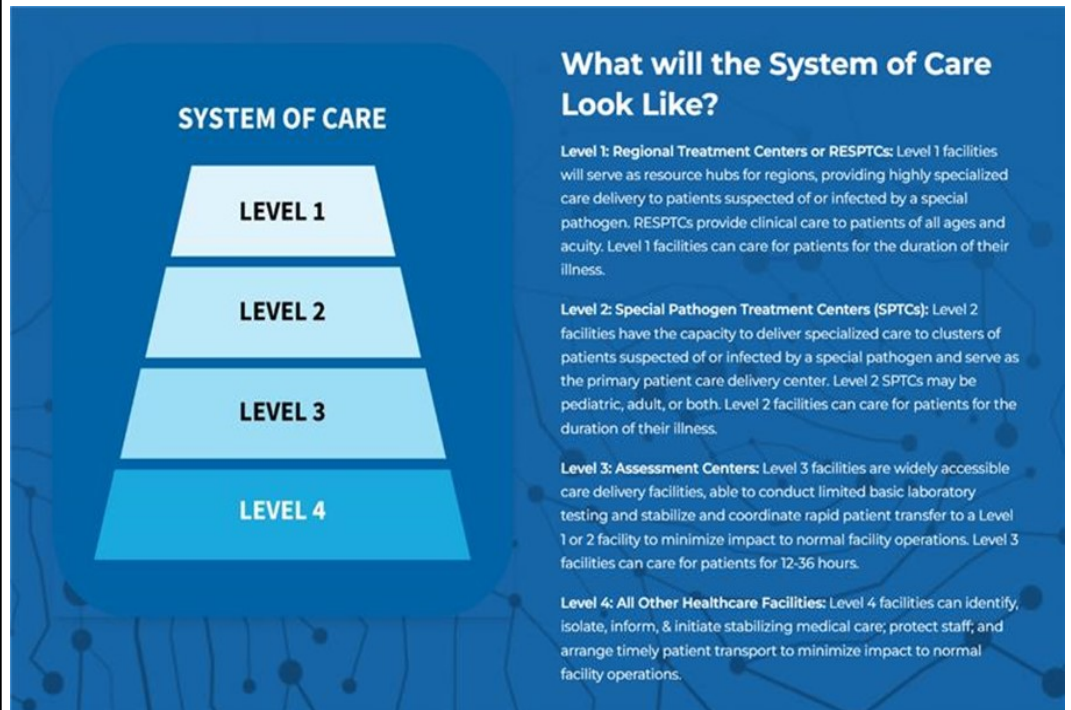
Questions?

Contact our Regional Outreach Coordinators directly:

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National Special Pathogens System of Care



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 Minimum Capabilities Resource](#)

Effective July 1, 2024 The Joint Commission Requirement Standard IC.07.01.01

The hospital implements processes to support preparedness for high-consequence infectious diseases or special pathogens.

Are you prepared? WE CAN HELP!

Hospital - EMS - Public Health

Consultation:

Inclusive Program Review • Standard Work Feedback • Category A Waste Planning
In-Person Site Consultation • PPE Ensemble Considerations • Training Development

Education and Training:

NSPS & RESPTC Overview • Special Pathogens Overview
Identify, Isolate & Inform • Waste Management • PPE Considerations
PPE Donning & Doffing • Ambulance Wrap Techniques
Wrapping a Patient for Transport • Lab Considerations • Tabletop Exercises

Miscellaneous:

Speaker requests • NETEC SPORSA Guidance • TJC Accreditation Strategies

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