

Region 5 Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) Newsletter

[June 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 HHS Region 5.

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](#).

Region 5 Special Pathogen Outreach

Our hospital recently had the opportunity to consult with the NETEC team virtually and onsite, which was an experience that significantly enhanced our special pathogen preparedness. The team from Corewell Health conducted an on-site visit and worked closely with our staff to develop a tailored workflow for safely and efficiently handling potential special pathogen cases. Their walk-through of the emergency department was instrumental in identifying critical areas for improvement and helping us create protocols that align with national standards for HCID preparedness.

In addition to helping us refine our clinical workflow, the consultants provided hands-on training in the proper application and removal of PPE for patients in ultimate precautions and helped with proper set-up of our isolation room. As a novice Infection Preventionist, this collaboration was an invaluable learning experience and helped increase my confidence in managing these high-risk scenarios. I am sincerely grateful for the support provided by NETEC and Corewell Health and for the opportunity to strengthen our facility's ability to respond to emerging infectious threats. A special thank you to Kristin Sternhagen and Ryan Thatcher for coming onsite and sharing your expertise; you have been wonderful to work with!

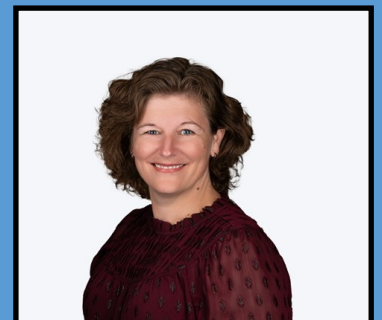
Amanda Baldwin MSN, RN, CEN
Infection Preventionist
McLaren Central Michigan



Welcome Sara Thul! NEW Regional Outreach Coordinator at UMMC

Sara Thul has been a Registered Nurse since 2006. She has worked at the University of Minnesota Medical Center for 19 years with roles ranging from bedside nurse to Administrative Nursing Supervisor, as well as Nurse Manager. Sara currently supports outreach for the Special Pathogen Unit at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, which is one of the two Region 5 RESPTCs.

Prior to becoming a nurse, Sara worked in a Level 1 Trauma Center as a ER Technician, and also spent several years as a Police Dispatcher and 911 Operator, and she is very excited to be working alongside the Emergency Management and Public Health team members again.



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Education Spotlight

The PPE Ensemble – Respiratory Protection

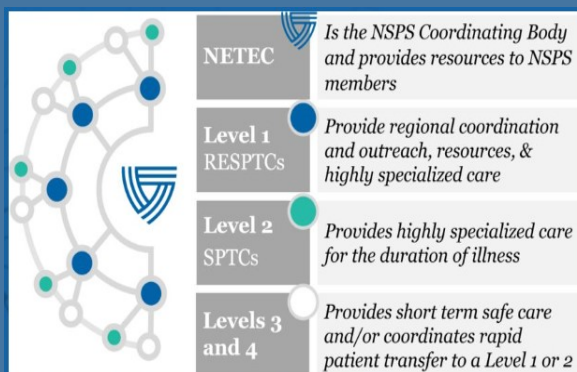
It seems like everyone that worked in healthcare through the Covid pandemic should be well versed on respiratory protection. During the pandemic many people become “pros” at wearing respirators and surgical masks to protect themselves and their patients. It is important that healthcare workers do not become lax on when to wear the appropriate PPE and how to apply and remove it safely. A patient that has an illness such as measles, tuberculosis, covid, etc. requires a respirator. Often, we think of respirators in the form of PAPRs and CAPRs but N95 masks are also respirators. These devices prevent the wearer from inhaling minute particles into the respiratory track. They require fit testing, donning training, and doffing training to ensure the team member is safe to use them. OSHA has also published additional requirements for training of team members who wear PAPRs and CAPRs. Surgical masks work to decrease the inhalation of larger particles and droplets. Surgical masks can also decrease the expiratory bloom of germs around a potentially infectious person. This is one reason surgical masks are worn during surgical procedures; they decrease the number of germs spread from team members into surgical sites. Surgical masks require less training for donning and doffing. They also have no fit testing requirements because they do not create a complete seal around the respiratory track. Respiratory protection is one of our favorite touch points with all new team members. It is so vital in decreasing the spread of germs.

Ryan A. Thatcher MSN
Clinical Educator, Corewell Health RESPTC
NETEC PPE Workgroup SME
[NETEC PPE Resource Library : PPE 101](#)



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.

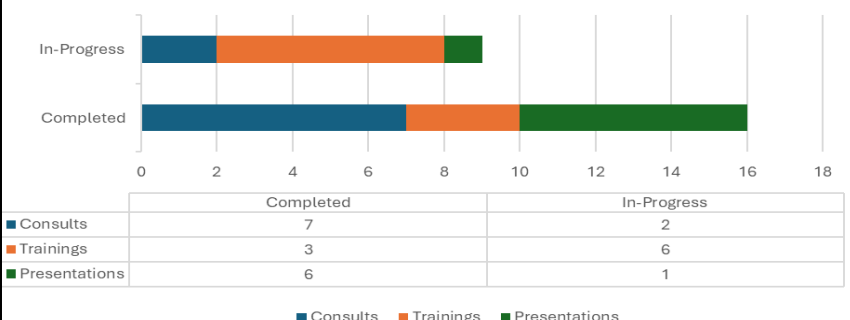
[\(NSPS: National Special Pathogen System | NETEC\)](#)



News from UMMC

In May, the University of Minnesota Medical Center completed its annual Readiness Consultation (ARC) with the National Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment and Education Center (NETEC). The ARC provides an opportunity for the RESPTC program to strengthen programmatic and operational preparedness for high-consequence infectious diseases through a structured exercise and expert consultation with NETEC. During the consultation, NETEC commended Fairview’s collaborative relationship with the state’s Level 2 Special Pathogen Treatment Center, Mayo Clinic in Rochester. NETEC also highlighted Fairview’s effective use of wireless communication headsets, which enhanced team communication both inside and outside patient care areas—contributing to a more cohesive, agile response team. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the UMMC RESPTC is actively implementing recommendations based on valuable feedback received from NETEC.

Region V Outreach Summary January-May



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This month’s featured Funky Bug—Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever

Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) is a viral hemorrhagic fever illness cause by the CCHF virus. The CCHF virus is found in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and East and West Africa. It is transmitted by ticks that feed on both domestic and wild animals; adult ticks can also bite humans and transmit the virus.

Methods of spread:

- Bite from, or crushing of infected tick
- Contact with infected blood or tissues of infected livestock
- Contact with infected patients, their blood or body fluids

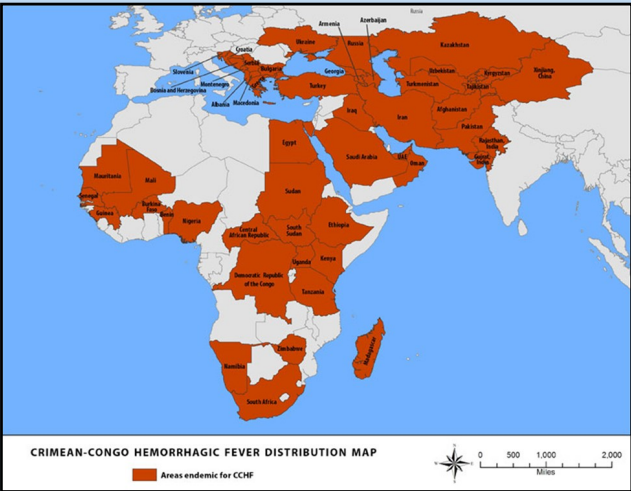
Length of the incubation period:

- Tick bite = 1 – 3 days, maximum of 9 days
- Contact with infected blood or tissues = 5 – 6 days, maximum of 13 days

Symptoms:

- Sudden onset of fever, myalgia, dizziness, neck pain and stiffness, backache, headache, sore eyes and photophobia
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and sore throat early on, followed by sharp mood swings and confusion
- Agitation may be replaced by sleepiness, depression and lassitude, and the abdominal pain may localize to the upper right quadrant, with detectable hepatomegaly
- Tachycardia, lymphadenopathy, and a petechial rash on internal mucosal surfaces, such as in the mouth and throat, and on the skin
- Petechiae may give way to ecchymoses, and other hemorrhagic phenomena
- Severely ill patients may experience rapid kidney deterioration, sudden liver failure or pulmonary failure after the fifth day of illness

Mortality rate = Approximately 30%



Current Countries of Concern for Travel Screening Current Outbreaks per CDC	
Location	Disease Outbreak
Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Somalia, Sri Lanka	Chikungunya
Global	Polio, Dengue, Measles
South America	Yellow Fever
Central/Eastern Africa	Mpox— Claude 1
Brazil, Panama, Americas	Oropouche
Guinea, Niger, Nigeria	Diphtheria

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

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For more information about our outreach program or to request support, please use this link to complete the intake form and our team will reach out to you soon:

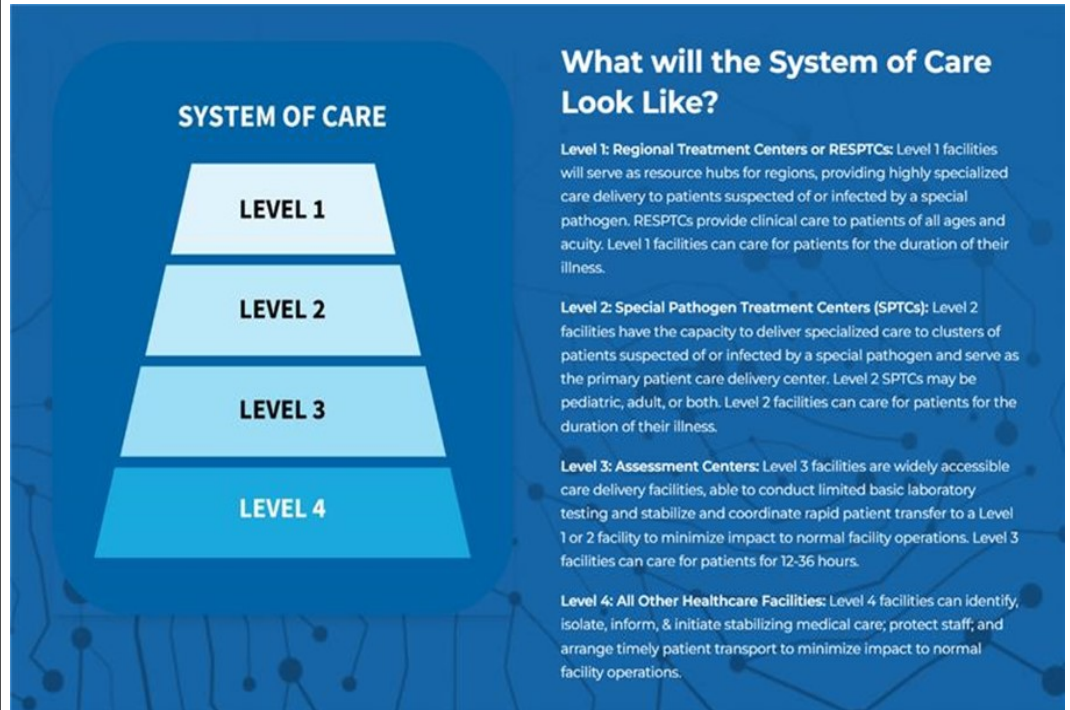
[Regional Outreach Intake Form](#)

Contact our Regional Outreach Coordinators, directly at:

Kristin Sternhagen (MI, OH, IN, IL)
Kristin.sternhagen@corewellhealth.org

Sara Thul (MN, WI)
sara.thul@fairview.org

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 ready? WE CAN HELP!

Hospital and EMS Consult Examples:

Inclusive Program Review	Customized Training Development
Standard Work Feedback	PPE Ensemble Considerations
Category A Waste Planning	TJC Accreditation Strategies
In-Person Site Consultation	NETEC SPORSA Guidance

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