

25 October 2019

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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We're sorry for the inconvenience.

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## Subscription or Comments

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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Comfort strengthens partnership following successful medical mission

21 October- The hospital ship USNS Comfort departed St. Kitts and Nevis following the completion of the ship's ninth medical mission in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, Oct. 12. "I want to say thank you to the government of the United States of America and particularly to the armed forces," said Wendy Phipps, minister of state responsible for health. "It is the first time we've had such an extensive visit, with medical intervention being offered, as an effort to extend the bilateral relations that St. Kitts and Nevis continues to enjoy with the United States of America." During the six-day mission in Basseterre, more than 800 medical professionals provided care for 3,677 patients at two separate shore-based medical sites and performed 25 surgeries aboard the ship. "For decades, St. Kitts and Nevis has been a steadfast partner for peace, stability and democracy, and I thank you all for your continued commitment to these principals," said Army Maj. Gen. Rafael Ribas, deputy commander for mobilization and reserve affairs, U.S. Southern Command. "This multinational public, private, and multi-service team is what Comfort is all about; friends and partners working side-by-side to build a stronger neighborhood together." Additionally, the multinational staff coordinated several subject matter expert exchanges with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), which focused on search and rescue (SAR) of survivors at sea, diving at a sunken shipwreck, and shipboard firefighting. [Health.mil](#)

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### TRICARE website expands to include military hospital sites

16 October- The TRICARE website is growing. As of Oct. 1, TRICARE welcomed several military hospitals and clinics to its website. These four military hospitals and clinics now have microsites under TRICARE.mil:

- Fort Belvoir Community Hospital
- Naval Hospital Jacksonville
- Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
- Womack Army Medical Center

"The goal of the new sites is for our patients and TRICARE beneficiaries to experience the same online experience with easy to find information regardless of where they live and get care," said Karen Roberts, deputy director of communications for the Military Health System, Defense Health Agency. [Health.mil](#)

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### Scrub Typhus

Scrub typhus, also known as brush typhus, is a disease caused by *Orientia tsutsugamushi* bacteria. The disease is transmitted by the bite of infected, immature mites (chiggers) primarily of the genus *Leptotrombidium*. The mites are typically found in grassy or scrubby vegetation and in areas that have undergone clearing, reforested areas, overgrown terrain, oil palm estates, and new settlements. Habitats may include sandy beaches, mountain deserts, cultivated rice fields, and rain forests. Scrub typhus is a severe bacterial disease that can cause debilitating symptoms and even result in death within 2 weeks if left untreated.



## Air pollution 'triggers hundreds more heart attacks and strokes'

21 October- Higher air pollution in the UK trigger hundreds more heart attacks, strokes and acute asthma attacks each year, research suggests. A team at King's College London looked at data from London, Birmingham, Bristol, Derby, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford and Southampton. They calculated days with above average pollution levels would see an extra 124 cardiac arrests over the year. NHS England boss Simon Stevens said it was evidence of "a health emergency". The figure is based on ambulance call data and does not count heart attacks suffered by patients already in hospital. It points to significant short-term health risks caused by air pollution, on top of contributing to almost 500,000 premature deaths in Europe every year. [BBC News](#)

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## DRC sees 10 new cases of Ebola in 3 days

21 October- After recording only a handful of cases in the past 10 days, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) confirmed 10 new cases of Ebola over the weekend, including 4 today. Twelve more people have also died from the virus. In other developments, the DRC and nine of its neighbors at a meeting in Goma today agreed on a joint framework to work together on preparedness and response to Ebola and other disease outbreaks. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Ebola dashboard, the new cases raise the case count to 3,243, including 2,169 deaths. Officials are investigating 426 suspected cases. Over the weekend, the DRC's Ebola technical committee (CMRE) provided the locations of recent cases, which included one case each in Mambasa and Mabalako, and four cases in Mandima. At least three of the recent deaths took place in the community in Mandima. Community deaths, as opposed to those that take place within Ebola treatment centers or hospitals, raise the risk of Ebola transmission. Last week, the WHO said the outbreak was still a PHEIC (public health emergency of international concern), despite recent signs the 14-month-long outbreak in eastern DRC was on the retreat. [CIDRAP](#)

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## Ebola update: Still a public health emergency? Vaccine news and current case counts

20 October- In the first Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) update in about a month, I take a look at some of the happenings at the meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee for Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 18 October 2019. Is it still a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)? I also look at current case/death counts from the DRC and some of the latest violence against Ebola health workers that continues to hamper the response. Lastly, I go over some

**The Surgeon  
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The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level on the APHC SIPRNet site:

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

interesting and good news on Ebola vaccines. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Get your flu shot now, doctors advise, especially if you're pregnant

21 October- October marks the start of a new flu season, with a rise in likely cases already showing up in Louisiana and other spots, federal statistics show. The advice from federal health officials remains clear and consistent: Get the flu vaccine as soon as possible, especially if you're pregnant or have asthma or another underlying condition that makes you more likely to catch a bad case. Make no mistake: Complications from the flu are scary, says Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., who is part of a committee that advises federal health officials on immunization practices. "As we get older, more of us get heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, asthma," Schaffner says. "Those diseases predispose us to complications of flu — pneumonia, hospitalization or death. We need to make vaccination a routine part of chronic health management." [NPR](#)

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## Glycolysis as a therapeutic target for Parkinson's disease

15 October- A drug licensed in the USA and Europe for the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia and hypertension might be neuroprotective in Parkinson's disease. This is the conclusion of a study that assessed the effects of terazosin across a range of experimental models of Parkinson's disease, and explored epidemiological associations in databases. 1 The report follows another study that identified that, in addition to blocking  $\alpha$  1-adrenergic receptors, terazosin acts on phosphoglycerate kinase 1 (PGK1) activity, increasing the product of glycolysis—ie, pyruvate. This action has downstream consequences, increasing oxidative phosphorylation, mitochondrial activity, and ATP concentrations, all of which might have direct implications for Parkinson's disease pathophysiology. [The Lancet](#)

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## Judge rules Massachusetts vape sales ban can remain in place, but requires changes

21 October- A Massachusetts judge ruled on Monday that the state's four-month ban on the sale of all e-cigarettes and vaping products can remain in effect — but only for about a week. The ruling, made by Suffolk Superior Court Judge Douglas Wilkins, came after the Vapor Technology Association and vape store owners called for the ban to be lifted in a complaint against Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Massachusetts Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel. Wilkins wrote that "while the plaintiffs have shown a likelihood of success, the balance of harms weigh in defendants' favor in some respects, and an immediate injunction against the entire Order would contravene the public

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interest." Wilkins also ruled that, when it comes to nicotine-vaping products specifically, the order "is preliminarily enjoined" from implementation and enforcement after October 28. In the meantime, the state will have to make changes to the order regarding the sale of nicotine-containing vaping products. "The court therefore allows the defendants an opportunity to cure the defects," Wilkins ruled regarding the sale of nicotine-containing products. "Nothing in this Memorandum and Order shall affect the validity of the defendants' Order as applied to products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and any other cannabinoid or to black market products." [CNN](#)

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## Juul suspends sales of flavored vapes and signs settlement to stop marketing to youth

17 October- E-cigarette maker Juul Labs announced Thursday it will suspend sales of most of its flavored products, including mango, fruit and cucumber. These types of flavors are considered an on-ramp to vaping for teenagers. The move comes as the industry faces immense scrutiny. Several states have instituted bans on flavored products, and the Trump administration has signaled that a federal ban may be in the works. Juul Labs new CEO K.C. Crosthwaite said the company is focused on "earning the trust of society" and is working to "combat underage use while providing an alternative to adult smokers," according to a company release announcing the change. At a time when 25% of high school seniors surveyed in the U.S. say they've vaped within the last 30 days, the company is also under pressure to limit marketing and advertising to youth. Juul's move to suspend flavors comes the same day that a small non-profit group, Center for Environmental Health, announced a legally-binding agreement of its lawsuit with the company that will limit Juul's marketing to kids and teens in specific ways. For instance, Juul cannot advertise at sporting events or concerts that allow people under the age 21. The company may not pay for or permit company employees to appear at schools. And, the company can't use models in their ads that are under the age of 28. [NPR](#)

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## Norovirus: 3 Aida Cruises voyages experience outbreaks

19 October- Health officials report investigating three norovirus outbreaks onboard voyages with Aida Cruises vessel, AIDAdiva. The first outbreak was on a September 5–23, 2019 voyage. 125 passengers and crew had symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting. The causative agent was determined to be norovirus. The second outbreak was on a September 28–October 12, 2019 voyage. On this trip, 95 passengers and crew were infected with norovirus. The most recent voyage was October 3–13, 2019. On this voyage, 93 passengers and crew were affected. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Teen vapers who want to quit look for help via text

23 October- It all started at the mall when a friend offered her a puff from a JUUL e-cigarette. "It was kind of peer pressure," says Beth, a Denver-area 15-year-old who started vaping in middle school. "Then I started inhaling it," she says. "I suddenly was, like, wow, I really think that I need this — even though I don't." Soon, Beth — who asked that her last name not be used because she hasn't told her parents about her vaping — had a JUUL of her own. She was vaping half a pod of e-liquid a day, the nicotine equivalent of half a pack of conventional cigarettes. She used other brands, too — a Suorin, a Novo and a modified device, which gives users custom vaping options. Beth tried to quit on her own, so her mom wouldn't find out. But it was hard and her school didn't have enough resources to help her, she says. "When you wake up in the morning, you're just like, 'Oh, I need to hit my thing. Where is it?' You can't really get it off your mind unless you distract yourself," Beth says. In a 2018 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorado had the highest rate of teen vaping of 37 states surveyed. A quarter of those students said they currently used an electronic vapor product — double the national average. Beth guesses half her classmates vape regularly. Her school does offer some tobacco education, but she says teens could use a lot more support to help them to quit. [NPR](#)

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## That last toke for the road could be a downer with pot breathalyzers coming

23 October- One toke for the road could end up being a total bummer for drivers who smoke pot, with several companies in the United States preparing to market cannabis breathalyzers as legalized marijuana spreads across the country. Law enforcement agencies will require breathalyzers to detect marijuana as they are "faced with the necessity of stopping more and more motor vehicles being operated under the influence of THC," said Brett Meade, a retired police chief and a senior program manager for Washington-based non-profit group the Police Foundation. Nearly a dozen U.S. states allow recreational marijuana consumption and 33 states permit pot for medical use. But all states prohibit driving under the influence of marijuana. Oakland, California-based Hound Labs is one of the companies developing a breathalyzer to detect THC - the component in marijuana that gets people high - and plans to market it in 2020. Construction companies could be a big part of its market, said Hound Labs Chief Executive Officer Mike Lynn. "Nobody wants a crane operator 50 stories up to be smoking a joint," he told Reuters. [Reuters](#)

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## This virus may be causing mysterious polio-like illness that's paralyzing some children

21 October- A mysterious polio-like illness that spiked in 2014, leading to paralysis in children across the U.S., may have divulged one of its secrets. Researchers have now found the most direct evidence to date of a viral culprit — the remnants of the immune cells that responded to the virus in the spinal fluid of patients. Acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM, is a rare disease of the nervous system that mostly develops in children. Symptoms include loss of muscle tone and weakness in the arms and legs, decreased reflexes and, in the most extreme cases, paralysis. This year, there have been 22 confirmed cases of AFM in the U.S.; 236 AFM cases in 41 states were confirmed in 2018, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 2014, the CDC has confirmed 590 cases. The cause of AFM has long been debated, but increasing evidence points to some kind of enterovirus — a group of common viruses that typically invade the gastrointestinal tract and cause mild symptoms but can sometimes make their way to the central nervous system, causing more serious complications. [Live Science](#)

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### INFLUENZA

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## CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

Key Updates for Week 41, ending October 12, 2019:

-Influenza-Associated Hospitalizations: The Influenza Hospitalization Surveillance Network (FluSurv-NET) conducts population-based surveillance for laboratory-confirmed influenza-related hospitalizations in select counties in the Emerging Infections Program (EIP) states and Influenza Hospitalization Surveillance Project (IHSP) states. FluSurv-NET estimated hospitalization rates will be updated weekly starting later this season when a sufficient number of hospitalizations have been reported.

-Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: Based on National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality surveillance data available on October 17, 2019, 4.7% of the deaths occurring during the week ending October 5, 2019 (week 40) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 5.7% for week 40.

-Influenza-Associated Pediatric Mortality: No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 41. No influenza-associated pediatric deaths occurring during the 2019-2020 season have been reported. [CDC](#)

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## WHO: Influenza Update

14 October 2019 - Update number 352, based on data up to 29 September 2019:

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity was low in most countries, and appeared to decrease in Chile after a second wave of influenza activity of predominately B viruses.

-In the Caribbean, and tropical South American countries, influenza activity was low overall. In Central American countries, influenza activity increased in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

-In tropical Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries except for some countries in Western Africa.

-In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries except in Bhutan where influenza activity continued to be reported above alert threshold.

-In South East Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries but appeared to increase in Lao PDR.

-In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels in most countries. Influenza season appeared to have started across the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

-Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses continued to account for the majority of detections, though the proportion of influenza B viruses increased in recent weeks.

[WHO](#)

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### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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## **Bacterial disease sickening dogs in Colorado can spread to humans, vet says**

19 October- A bacterial disease that can spread to humans is reportedly sickening dogs in Colorado, a veterinarian in the state recently said. Dr. Laura Russell, a chief emergency doctor at Colorado Veterinary Specialist & Animal ER in Littleton, told KMGH-TV that the clinic has treated six dogs for leptospirosis so far this year. On average, the facility sees one or two cases, she said. It's not clear what's behind the reported increase. Leptospirosis, according to PetMD, is an infection of bacterial spirochetes, "which dogs acquire when subspecies of the *Leptospira interrogans* penetrate the skin and spread through the body by way of the bloodstream." "Two of the most commonly seen members of this subspecies are the *L. grippityphosa* and *L. Pomona* bacteria. Spirochetes are spiral, or corkscrew-shaped bacteria that infiltrate the system by burrowing into the skin," it adds. After a dog is infected, the bacteria spread through the animal's body, multiplying in the liver, kidneys, eyes and other areas of the body. [Fox News](#)

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## **Botulism risk prompts recall of ‘previously frozen’ frozen fishballs**

21 October- Federal officials have initiated a food safety investigation after test results in Canada showed certain fishballs could be contaminated with the pathogen that causes botulism poisoning. Mannarich Foods Inc. is recalling four varieties of fishballs from the marketplace because they may permit the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*. Consumers should not consume the recalled products described below, according to the recall notice posted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The company reported distributing the recalled fishballs to the consumer level in Quebec and Ontario. “Check to see if you have the recalled products in your home. Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the store where they were purchased,” according to the recall notice. This recall was triggered by CFIA test results. The CFIA is conducting a food safety investigation, which may lead to the recall of other products. If other high-risk products are recalled, the CFIA will notify the public through updated Food Recall Warnings. The CFIA is verifying that industry is removing the recalled products from the marketplace. There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of these products. [Food Safety News](#)

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## **More beef recalled for E. coli risk; this time it’s Whole Foods Market**

20 October- Whole Foods Market brand beef products are the subject of the 14th E. coli related recall of such products since Oct. 3. The recall posted Oct. 19 by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency lists numerous beef and veal products, as have the previous recalls. Several have specifically named Ryding-Regency Meat Packers Ltd. as a source of the implicated beef. A number of grocery chain brands are included in the recalls. In yesterday’s recall of Whole Foods Market brand products, the CFIA urged consumer’s distributors, retailers and foodservice establishments such as hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, hospitals, and nursing homes to avoid using or selling the recalled products. In the United States, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has issued a public health alert for raw non-intact beef products derived from imported beef from Ontario, Canada, that has been recalled by Ryding-Regency Meat Packers Ltd. because of possible E. coli O157: H7 contamination. [Food Safety News](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### When teen drinking becomes a disorder

21 October- It's a pretty safe bet that most of our children, in high school and in college, will be in social situations in which people drink in unwise and sometimes downright dangerous ways. Even if they don't drink, they will at least be exposed to friends and classmates and roommates who do. What makes alcohol more problematic for some kids — and some adults? There's been a good deal of research on the development of what is now called alcohol use disorder, and its precursors — what do we now understand, and can that understanding help us as parents to worry less, or at least, to direct our worries in the right directions? Frances Wang, a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Pittsburgh who studies genetic and environmental causes of alcohol use disorders, said that often people blame only the home environment — that is to say, the parenting. But there are genetic risk factors that seem to be common across a number of disorders, she said, including alcohol use disorder, but also depression and conduct problems, like aggression and antisocial behavior, which can be predecessors of alcohol problems. [The New York Times](#)

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## USAFRICOM

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### Anthrax suspected in the scores of elephant deaths in Botswana

22 October- Officials with the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks say more than 100 elephants have died in recent months and anthrax is the likely culprit. According to a Reuters report, preliminary investigations suggest the elephants are dying from anthrax while some died from the effects of drought over the past two months. The wildlife authority said the latest deaths were in the Chobe River front and Nantanga areas in northern Botswana, where 14 dead elephants were found this week. Anthrax is a serious infectious disease caused by gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis*. Anthrax can be found naturally in soil and commonly affects domestic and wild animals around the world. Although it is rare, people can get sick with anthrax if they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Ethiopia chikungunya outbreak nears 50K cases

19 October- In an update on the chikungunya outbreak in Ethiopia, health officials have reported an additional 2,541 new suspected cases during the last week of September. This brings the outbreak total that began in late July to 49,616. The bulk of the outbreak has been reported in the Dire Dawa City Administration. There has been a declining trend observed since the peak of the outbreak in early September. Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes. It causes fever and severe joint pain, which is often debilitating. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, and rash. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Lebanon reports measles outbreak

22 October- Lebanon health officials are reporting a measles outbreak in the country. Since November 2018, a total of 1,171 cases have been reported and no deaths. Measles cases have been reported in all eight Lebanese governorates, with Aakar, Baalbek-El-Hermel, Bekaa North, and Mount Lebanon governorates most affected. Ninety percent of suspected measles cases were Lebanese nationals, while 10% were Syrians living in informal settlements and in residential areas. According to officials, the immunization strategy employed by the Lebanon public health sector includes both measles vaccine given at 9 months of age (introduced in 1987), and Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine given to children as two doses at 12 and 18 months of age (MMR, introduced in 1996). The private sector implements MMR vaccination, at 12 months and 4-5 years of age. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Pakistan: 19th rabies death in Sindh

18 October- Officials in Sindh province reported the death of a 55-year-old woman from rabies after being bit by a dog in September, according to a Samaa TV report today. She was admitted to the hospital on Monday and died not long after. This is the 19th human rabies death in Sindh this year. Sindh has reported a shortage of rabies vaccine this year while the number of stray dogs grow. In Karachi alone, more than 150 dog-bite cases have been reported in major city hospitals on a daily basis. It is not clear if this patient was able to get rabies post-exposure prophylaxis. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## 2nd indigenous Zika case reported in Hyères, France

23 October- In a follow-up to a report earlier this month, Paca Regional Health Agency (ARS) and Public Health France are reporting a second locally acquired Zika virus case in Hyères city, Var department. The individual lived in the same neighborhood as the first case and was found during an Oct 10 survey following the initial case. The Regional Health Agency, Public Health France and the Interdepartmental Agreement on Mosquito Control (EID) Mediterranean continue their investigations (entomological and epidemiological) to prevent the spread of the disease. Vector control actions have been implemented by the EID Mediterranean, under the auspices of the departmental council, in the neighborhood of residence of the two people affected: research of the tiger mosquito, mosquito control, and mosquito trap placement. All these actions were preceded by an information campaign of the population residing in the neighborhood concerned. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Salmonella in Sweden: Outbreak now considered over

19 October- In a follow-up on the Salmonella Typhimurium outbreak in Sweden, four additional cases have been reported. As of October 16, 75 people from 11 counties fell ill in the outbreak. The disease cases were linked using whole-genome sequencing. Most cases of illness were reported from Västra Götaland, Jönköping, Halland and Dalarna but also Örebro, Gävleborg, Kronoberg, Stockholm, Södermanland, Västernorrland and Östergötland. The affected infection protection units, the municipalities' environmental and health offices, the National Food Agency and the Public Health Authority have investigated the outbreak to identify the source of the infection. The Public Health Authority, with the help of the Health Report's web panel, conducted a case-control study to compare what the disease cases ate the week before they became ill with what healthy control persons ate. The results show that those who became ill in the salmonella outbreak had eaten small tomatoes to a greater extent than healthy control subjects. The Swedish Food Agency's investigation shows that the tomatoes were delivered to grocery stores at the end of August, but since they are fresh tomatoes, they are no longer there. Deliveries of small tomatoes to stores where the majority of the sick people have been shopping have been tracked by the National Food Agency and the assessment is that the tomatoes come from a European supplier. The country in question has been informed of the suspicion. Foods from disease cases have been analyzed but no salmonella has been detected. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## USINDOPACOM

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### **New Zealand: Wellington measles cases rise to 33**

20 October- Officials with Regional Public Health (RPH), Wellington have been notified of two confirmed cases of measles and is asking people who may have been in contact with these people to watch out for symptoms. This brings the total measles cases to 33, including four hospitalizations. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### **Taiwan: 99th local dengue case, additional Japanese encephalitis case confirmed**

20 October- The Taiwan Department of Disease Control announced a new case of local dengue fever in New Taipei City. The 70-year-old patient lives in the forested area of Penglai and has no history of travel abroad. To date, there are 99 cases of local dengue fever in Taiwan—57 cases in Kaohsiung City, 31 cases in Tainan City, 7 cases in New Taipei City, 2 cases in Taipei City, and 1 case in Taoyuan City and Taichung City. In addition, there has been 422 travel associated dengue cases reported to date. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## USNORTHCOM

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### **U.S.: Measles case visited Disneyland, 1st flu death in Los Angeles**

23 October- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reports investigating the 19th measles case of the year in a county resident. Other people may have been exposed to measles since public locations were visited by the person with measles while infectious. The potential public exposure locations, days and times were as follows:

Date, Time, and Location

-October 16, 2019, 7:50 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. – Starbucks, 3006 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90034

-October 16, 2019, 9:15 a.m. to 8:35 p.m. – Disneyland Anaheim, CA

“For those who are not protected, measles is a highly contagious and potentially severe disease that initially causes fever, cough, red, watery eyes, and, finally, a rash,” said Muntu Davis, MD, MPH, Los Angeles County Health Officer. “Measles is spread by air and by direct contact even before you know have it. The MMR immunization is a very effective measure to protect yourself and to prevent the unintentional spread of this potentially serious infection to others.” [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Comfort arrives in Dominican Republic to provide medical assistance

17 October- SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic –The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) arrived in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, for its tenth medical mission stop in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, Oct. 14. While in Santo Domingo, U.S. service members and medical professionals will work alongside partner and host nation staff to provide much-needed medical assistance in communities with urgent health care needs and demonstrate the commitment to strengthen regional medical capacity. “We are committed to increasing regional collaboration and partner nation capacity to provide medical assistance and disaster relief, a high priority for this region,” said Robin S. Berstein, U.S. ambassador in Dominican Republic. “The Comfort’s mission demonstrates the commitment of the American people to the people of Dominican Republic, that we are united in our shared responsibility to make this region stronger.” Comfort’s team consists of more than 900 personnel, including medical specialists from the U.S. military, non-governmental organizations volunteers, and personnel from partner nations. “We are very pleased to be benefitted from this initiative that will surely imprint an unforgettable mark in the memory and gratitude of all the citizens of the Dominican Republic,” said Lt. Gen. Ruben Dario Paulino Sem, minister of defense. This marks the third visit of the Comfort to the Dominican Republic and the seventh to the region since 2007. The embarked medical teams will provide care aboard Comfort and at two shore-based medical sites. This mission stop is part of U.S. Southern Command’s Enduring Promise initiative and reflects the United States’ ongoing commitment to friendship, partnership, and solidarity with partner nations in the Caribbean, Central America and South America. [Southcom.mil](http://Southcom.mil)

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