



HEALTH SECURITY HEADLINES

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Center for Health Security

Today's Headlines: December 17, 2014

Ebola

Health Teams Scour Sierra Leone Capital in Ebola Drive (*Reuters*) Health workers in Sierra Leone began combing the streets of the capital Freetown for Ebola patients on Wednesday, moving house-to-house as the government launched a major operation to contain infection in West Africa's worst-hit country. [Go to article](#)

Identification of 53 Compounds That Block Ebola Virus-like Particle Entry Via a Repurposing Screen of Approved Drugs (*Nature: Emerging Microbes & Infections*) In light of the current outbreak of Ebola virus disease, there is an urgent need to develop effective therapeutics to treat Ebola infection, and drug repurposing screening is a potentially rapid approach for identifying such therapeutics. [Go to article](#)

UN Secretary General to Visit Ebola-plagued Nations (*New York Times*) The UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, plans to visit the 3 West African countries that have been hit the hardest by the Ebola outbreak, according to a senior UN official. [Go to article](#)

UN Says Health Workers in Sierra Leone to Receive Hazard Pay Using Mobile Money (*UN News Centre*) Response workers battling the Ebola outbreak in West Africa will receive "hazard pay" for the first time in Sierra Leone using mobile money because "unless there is a certain element of incentives, or danger pay, it's very difficult to attract and retain people," the UN Development Programme announced today. [Go to article](#)

Federal Employees Are Heavily Involved in the Fight Against Ebola (*Washington Post*) If the participation of the relatively few federal employees who tortured terrorist suspects shocked Americans, the efforts of many more feds in the fight against Ebola should make taxpayers proud. [Go to article](#)

Inside the Cultural Struggle to Stamp Out Ebola (*Nature*) A front-line report from Sierra Leone examines efforts to change hearts and minds in West Africa's villages. [Go to article](#)

Challenges in Responding to the Ebola Epidemic--Four Rural Counties, Liberia, August-November 2014 (*MMWR*) During August 27-September 10, 2014, CDC in collaboration with the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare assessed county Ebola response plans in four rural counties (Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, and Sinoe), to identify county-specific challenges in executing their Ebola response plans, and to provide recommendations and training to enhance control efforts. [Go to article](#)

CDC's Worst-case Scenario for Ebola Unlikely to Appear, Study Finds (*The Hill*) The Ebola epidemic in West Africa is unlikely to reach the worst-case scenario projected by the US earlier this fall, according to a new study by Yale University. [Go to article](#)

Biological Agents & Infectious Diseases

The Debilitating Outbreak Sweeping the Americas (*CNN Health*) Its name means "bending over in pain."

It has no treatment or vaccine. Its symptoms resemble Dengue fever. And it has infected more than 1 million people--155 of them fatally-- since spreading to the Americas one year ago. [Go to article](#)

H5N2, H5N8 Avian Flu Viruses Surface in US (*CIDRAP*) US authorities today reported finding wild birds in Washington state infected with two different highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses, H5N2 and H5N8, raising questions about possible connections with recent H5N2 outbreaks across the border in Canada and with an Asian H5N8 strain that is now hitting European poultry farms. [Go to article](#)

Epidemic Status Unlikely to Be Reached by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (*Medical News Today*) In 3 new studies in the *International Journal of Infectious Disease*, researchers reported on clinical outcomes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, how long patients will shed virus during their infections, and how the Sultanate of Oman is dealing with cases that have appeared there. An editorial in the same issue discusses how the relatively high percentage of infections has been hospital-acquired, which reduces the possibility that MERS-CoV will reach pandemic or even epidemic status. [Go to article](#)

Domestic Preparedness & Response

White House Launches Open Data Disaster Portal (*Emergency Management*) The White House launched a new open data portal on Dec. 15, targeting the needs of first responders and emergency survivors. [Go to article](#)

U.S. Spending Bill Includes Funding for California's Early Warning Earthquake System (*Emergency Management*) California has received congressional funding to begin rolling out an earthquake early warning system next year, capping nearly a decade of planning, setbacks and technological breakthroughs, officials said Sunday. [Go to article](#)

Global Health & Security

Economic Optimization of a Global Strategy to Address the Pandemic Threat (*PNAS*) Emerging pandemics are increasing in frequency, threatening global health and economic growth. Global strategies to thwart pandemics can be classed as adaptive (reducing impact after a disease emerges) or mitigation (reducing the causes of pandemics). [Go to article](#)

Russian Vaccines Against Especially Dangerous Bacterial Pathogens (*Nature: Emerging Microbes & Infections*) In response to the epidemiological situation, live attenuated or killed vaccines against anthrax, brucellosis, cholera, glanders, plague and tularemia were developed and used for immunization of at-risk populations in the Former Soviet Union. [Go to article](#)

Drug Resistant 'Super Bacteria' Found in Rio's Olympic Waters (*Pharmaceutical Processing*) A drug-resistant "super bacteria" that's normally found in hospitals and is notoriously difficult to treat has been discovered in the waters where Rio de Janeiro's Olympic sailing events will be held, scientists said Monday. [Go to article](#)

Science & Technology

Officials Finish Sweep of Federal Labs, Find Handful of Misplaced Microbes (*Washington Post*) Investigators poring through thousands of government labs turned up another two dozen potentially dangerous biological materials that were not properly accounted for, including the toxin ricin and a deadly form of avian flu, during a far-reaching inventory this fall, according to documents released Tuesday. [Go to article](#)

Other 21st Century Threats

Sentinel Radar Satellite Tracks Continued Napa Slip After Quake (*BBC: Science & Environment*) The creeping movement of the ground across California's Napa Valley following its 24 August earthquake has been observed from space. [Go to article](#)

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