

Preparing for a Special Pathogens Drill

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Huntington Health | Level 4 Facility | Pasadena, CA



An Affiliate of



Presenter



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Katie Jones Stathatos is the Director of Infection Prevention & Control at Huntington Health. She has been working at Huntington Health for 7 years and has been working in infection prevention and control for over 12 years. She studied epidemiology with a focus on maternal and child health in Houston, Texas and has worked in hospitals in Louisiana, Texas, and California.

Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

Katie Jones Stathatos, MPH CIC reports no relevant financial relationships or relationships she has with ineligible companies of any amount during the past 24 months.

Objectives

Formulate your plan to:

- Perform a readiness assessment
- Inventory current state of equipment, policies, and training program
- Identify key stakeholders for your facility
- Evaluate your current state with a tabletop exercise
- Connect with your peers
- Schedule a live drill
- Revise your training materials and other documents



The Joint Commission Standard IC.07.01.01

Requirement

Standard IC.07.01.01

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

EP 1. The hospital develops and implements protocols for high-consequence infectious diseases or special pathogens. The protocols are readily available for use at the point of care and address the following:

Identify: Procedures for screening at the points of entry to the hospital for respiratory symptoms, fever, rash, and travel history to identify or initiate evaluation for high-consequence infectious diseases or special pathogens Note: Points of entry may include the emergency department, urgent care, and ambulatory clinics.

Isolate: Procedures for transmission-based precautions

Inform: Procedures for informing public health authorities and key hospital staff

Required **personal protective equipment** and proper donning and doffing techniques

Infection control procedures to support continued and safe provision of care while the patient is in isolation and to reduce exposure among staff, patients, and visitors using the hierarchy of controls

Note: See the Glossary for a definition of hierarchy of controls.

Procedures for waste management and cleaning and disinfecting patient care spaces, surfaces, and equipment (See also EC.02.02.01; EC.02.05.01, EP 15)

EP 2. The hospital develops and implements education and training and assesses competencies for the staff who will implement protocols for high-consequence infectious diseases or special pathogens. (See also EC.03.01.01, EP 1)

Identify

Patient with signs/symptoms and/or reported exposure to a special pathogen

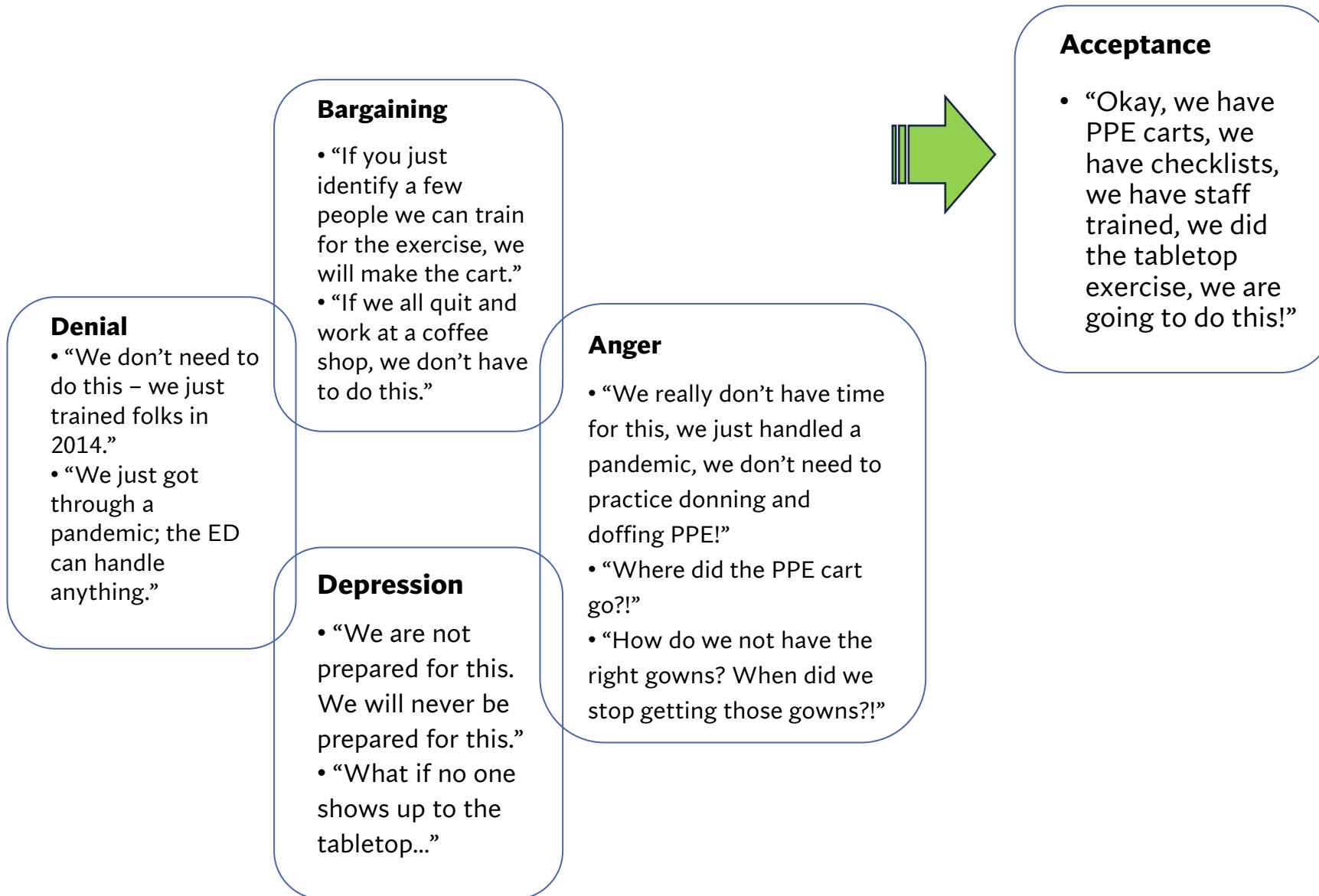
Isolate

As soon as patient has been identified as a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for special pathogen, don PPE, remove any nonessential personnel or other patients from the space to limit exposure, and move patient to an isolation room (in ED D38/D37 designated)

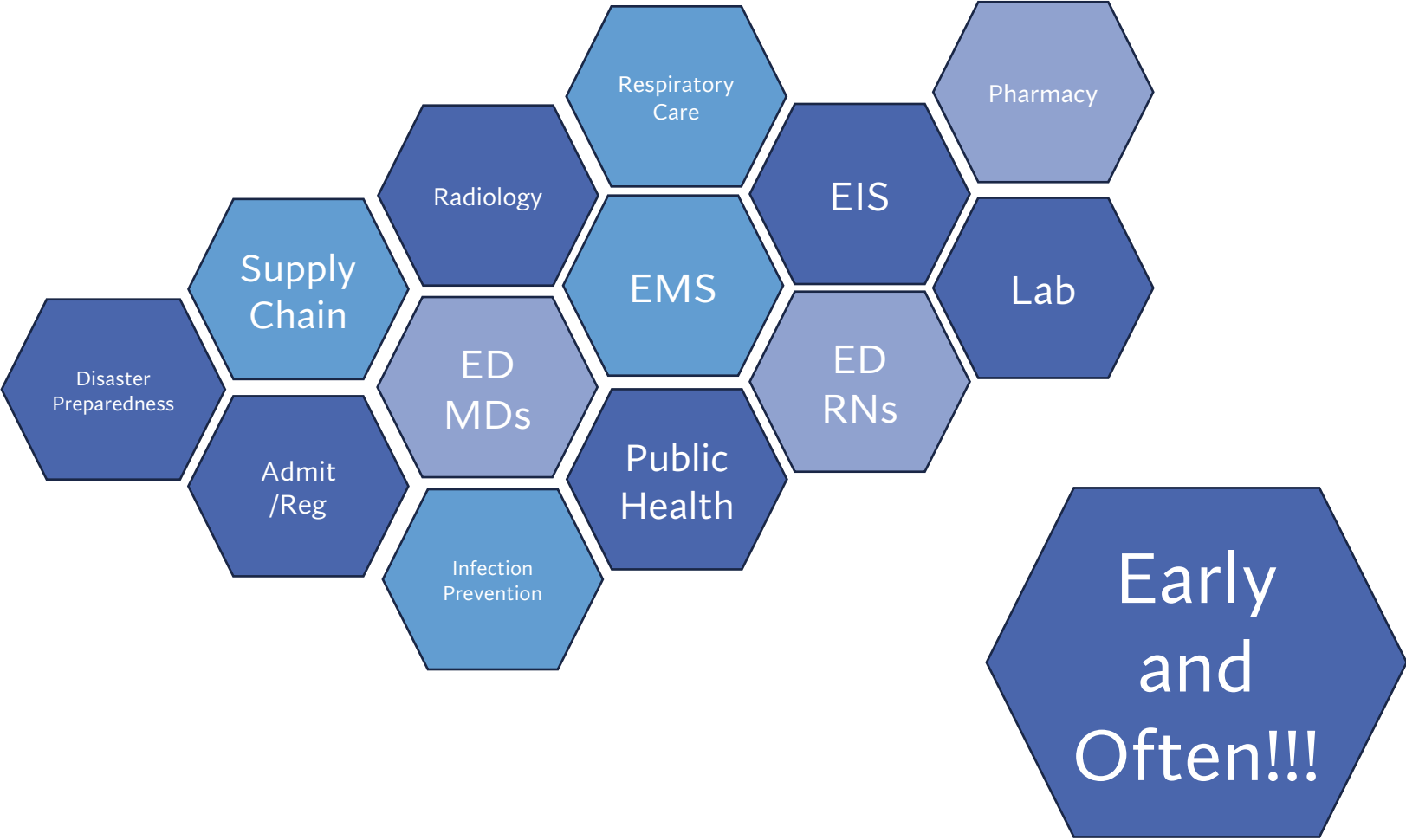
Inform

Notify the Infection Prevention team
X5138 during business hours
X5345 for Infection Prevention (IP) Director (rolls over to cell phone)
Can also contact IP Director via Operator

Preparing for a Special Pathogens Drill



Engage your local stakeholders



Complete the SPORSA

Don't do it alone!

Provides a framework to start inventorying your policies and training materials.

Completing the survey is an excellent tool for completing an initial gap analysis and you don't need to wait for the reviewer feedback to benefit from the process.



Special Pathogens Operational Readiness Self-Assessment
for Hospital Medical Services (SPORSA)

HBS D0 - Facility Profile

Huntington Health (Pasadena, California)

Report prepared on November 21, 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC) Special Pathogens Operational Readiness Self-Assessment (SPORSA) for hospitals.

The SPORSA is a tool developed by NETEC, funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), to evaluate the maturity of a facility's special pathogen program. The SPORSA is comprised of 13 Domains and 38 Capabilities inclusive of the critical elements of a comprehensive special pathogens program. This tool is designed to capture a wide range of data related to your facility's preparedness and response efforts to manage and care for patients with special pathogens. These data will be reviewed by NETEC subject matter experts and used to generate a summary report inclusive of recommendations and resources for programmatic advancement and to guide discussions during any follow-up consultations with NETEC.

Assisted with SPORSA completion at Huntington:

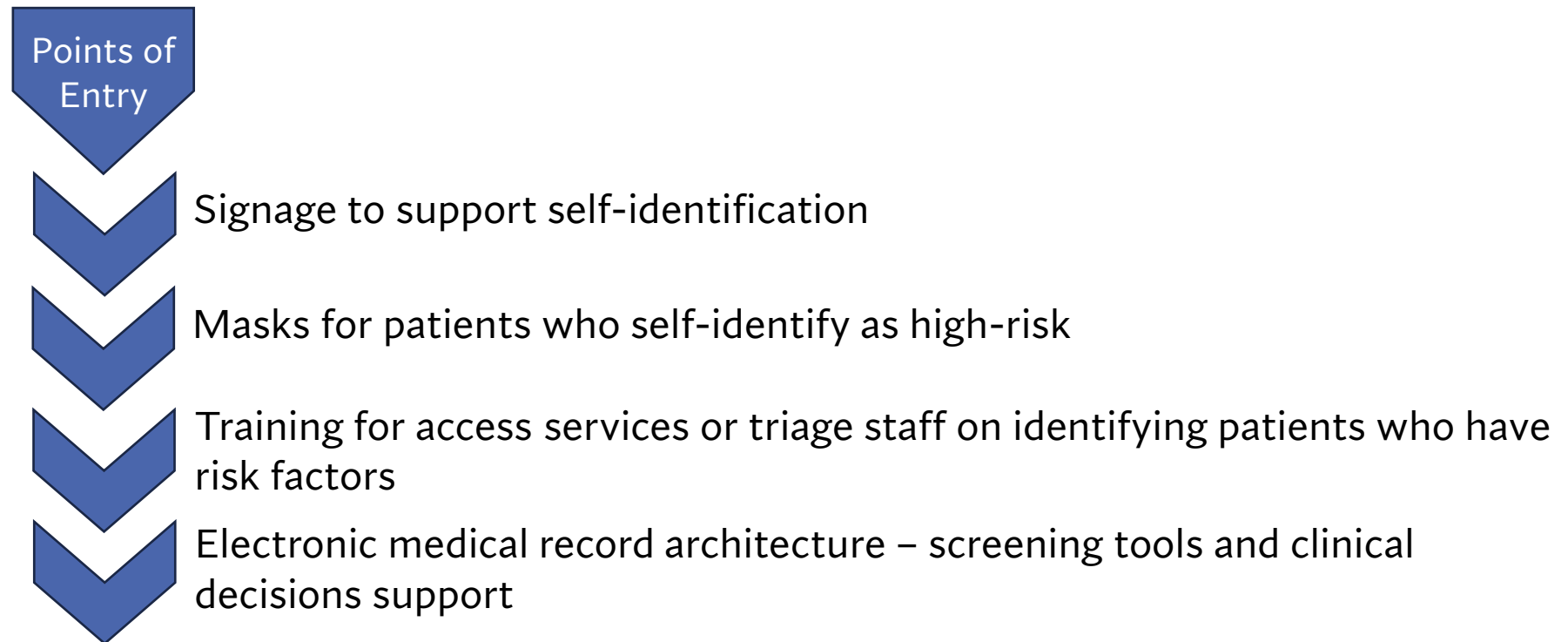
- *Disaster Preparedness Coordinator*
- *EMS Liaison*
- *Director – Nursing Operations and Clinical Education*
- *Manager – Microbiology*
- *Environmental Health and Safety Officer*
- *Manager – Clinical Research*

SPORSA Domains

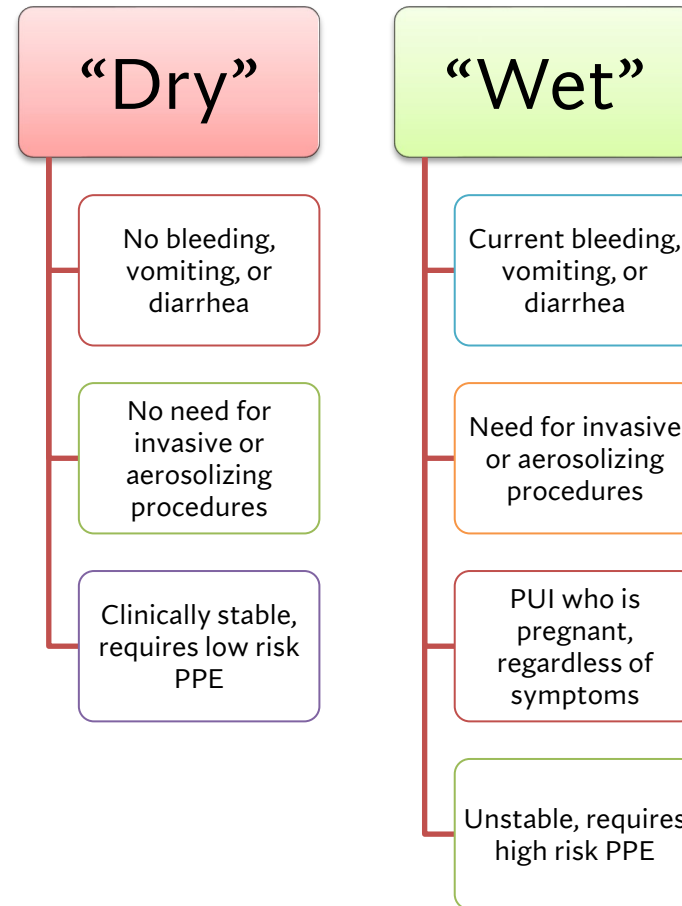
- Physical Infrastructure
- Environment and Infection Control
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Training and Exercises
- Emergency Management
- Pre-Hospital
- Intake and Internal Transport
- Personnel Management
- Laboratory
- Waste Management
- Decedent Management
- Research

Gap Analysis: IDENTIFY

What is your screening process for identifying patients who may have a communicable disease (e.g. measles or influenza) or other special pathogen infection (VHF, H5N1)?



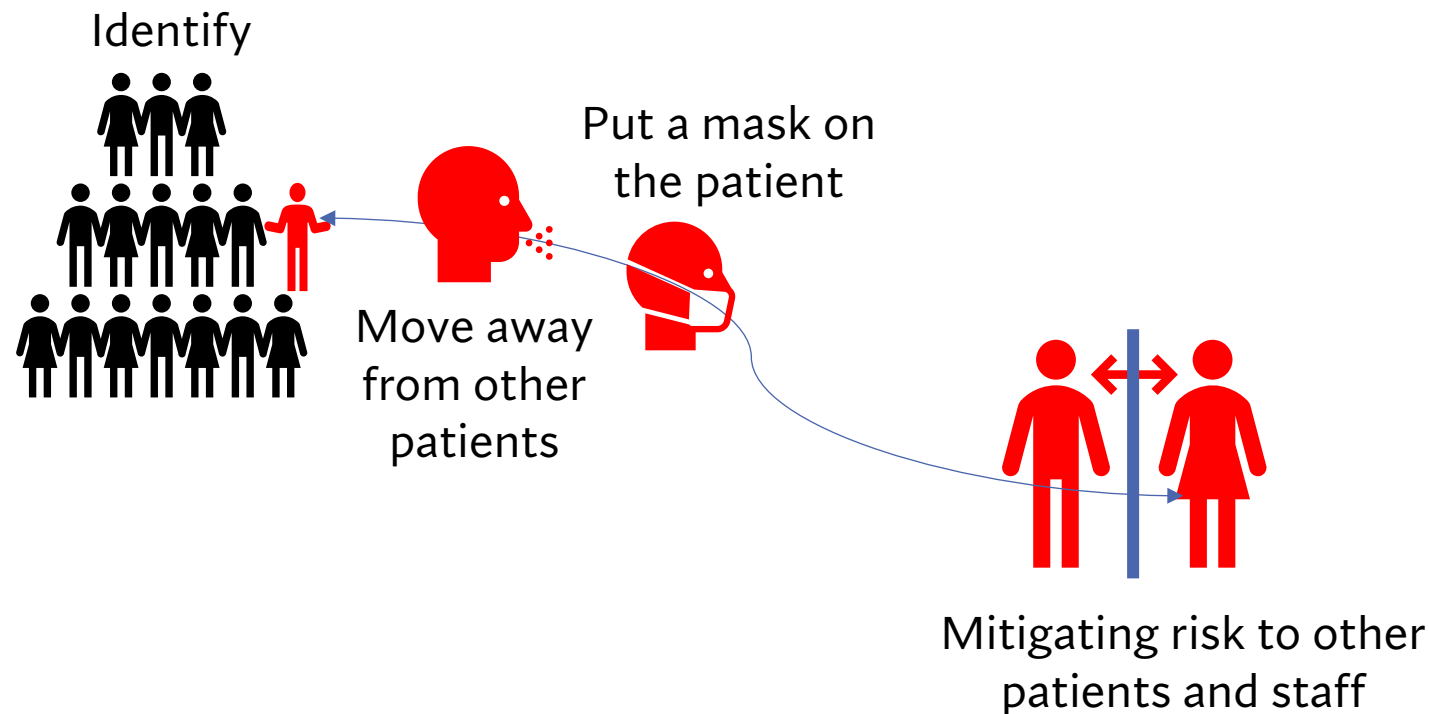
How to Classify Dry vs. Wet Patient



PUI/PUM = Person Under Investigation/Monitoring

Gap Analysis: ISOLATE

What is your plan for immediately isolating patients suspected to have a communicable disease (e.g., measles or influenza) or other special pathogen infections (VHF, H5N1)?

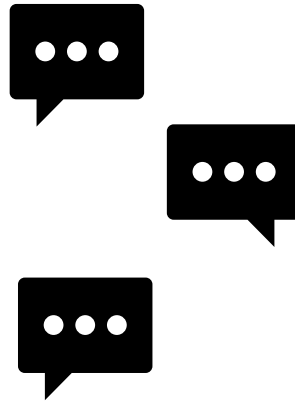


Gap Analysis: ISOLATE

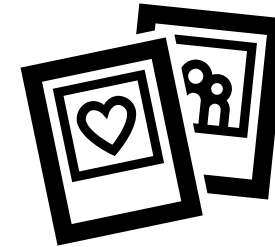
Once the PUI is identified, who can notify and mobilize the appropriate staff members?



Notify Chain
of Command



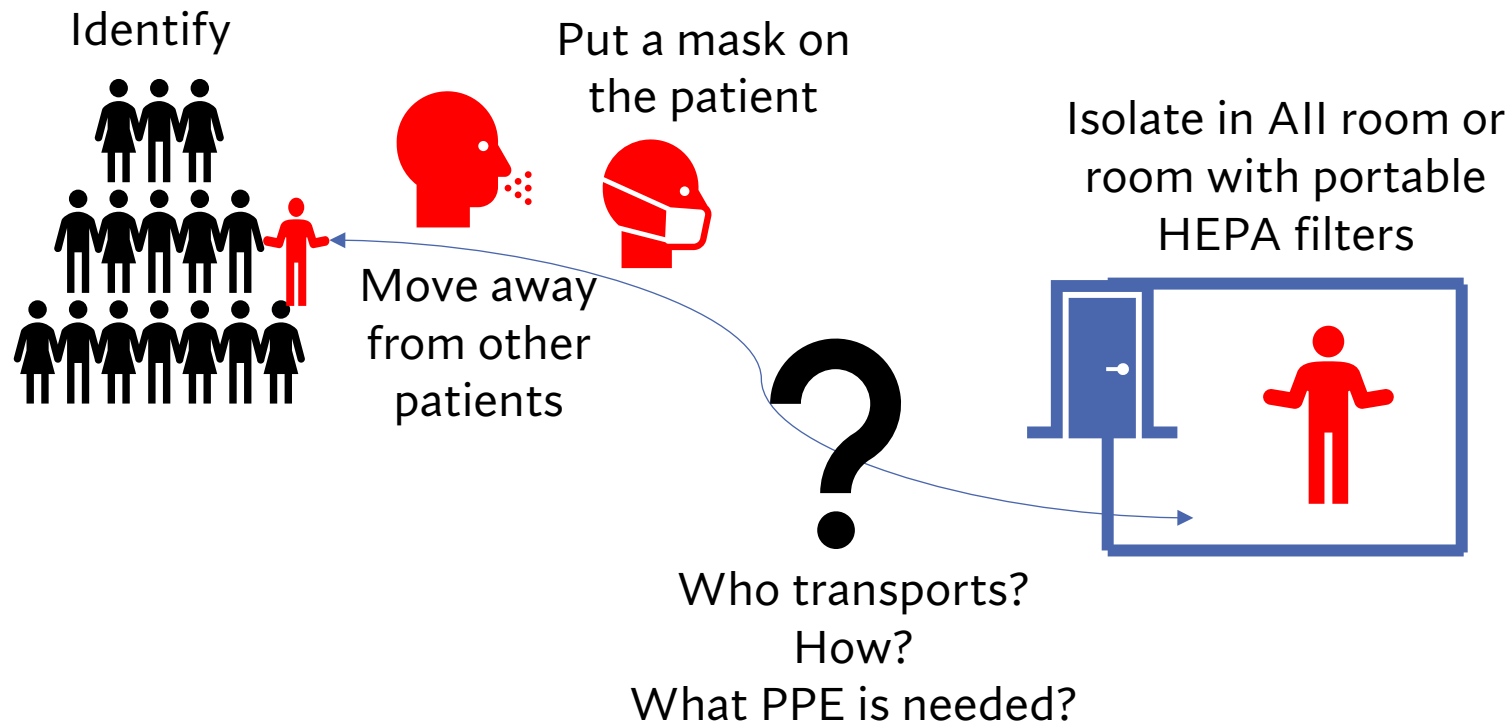
Mobilizing
Staff



Notify Family
and Friends of
PUI

Gap Analysis: ISOLATE

How will the PUI be transported/escorted to the designated isolation room?



Patient Care Considerations

- Isolate but don't abandon! Initiate supportive care and **COMMUNICATE with the patient**
- IV start for fluids and antibiotics if indicated
- Consider malaria testing
- Limited specimen collection – Public Health will request specimens
- Avoid aerosol-generating procedures, if possible
- Assessment and communication via phone/tablet
- Family and visitor management

Specimen Collection

- Perform a laboratory risk assessment to determine what testing can be performed
- Consider using point-of-care instruments (rapid diagnostic tests – malaria) that can be *dedicated to the patient's room*

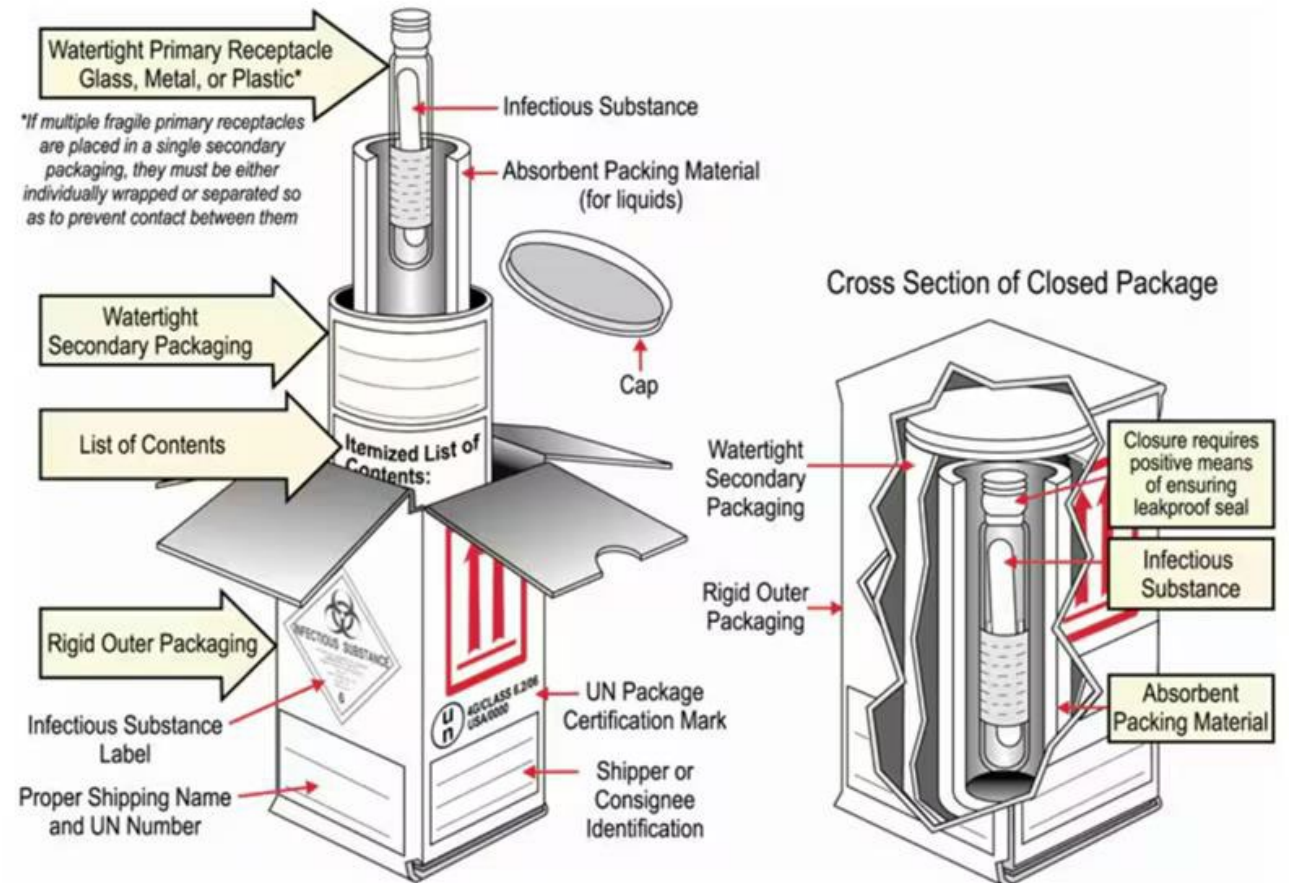


For guidance on HCID specimen collection, see NETEC Resources: [Specimen Collection · NETEC Resource Library](#)

Specimen Transport – Category A

What are the shipping considerations?

- **Category A**
 - *Category A infectious substance affecting humans (UN 2814)*
- **Personnel must be trained & certified to ship Category A specimens**
 - **Online trainings available**
 - **Check with your facility or State Public Health Department**
- **Identify couriers**
 - **Courier's may have different requirements**
 - **Ground courier vs air courier**
- **Do you have the correct shipping supplies?**
 - **Category A box for required shipping condition & appropriate labels**
 - **Appropriate packaging material**
- **What days can you ship?**
 - **Is your courier available 7 days a week?**
 - **Is your testing facility available 7 days a week?**



Waste Management – Category A

Category A infectious substances are regulated as a hazardous material under the US DOT Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR, Parts 171-180) until it has been inactivated (by autoclave or incineration)

In the unlikely event the patient is confirmed to have a special pathogen, a plan to transport the waste via a commercial waste vendor with Category A Waste permits for off-site inactivation

- [Hazardous Materials Special Permits Search | PHMSA \(dot.gov\)](#)

Other key points:

- Do not overfill waste containers
- Double bag waste in biohazardous bags
- Do not “burp” bags or handle in a way that aerosolizes contents
- Secure in a way that ensures contents remain contained and segregated from other facility biohazardous waste

[Planning Guidance for Handling Category A Solid Waste](#)

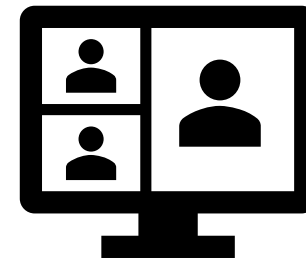
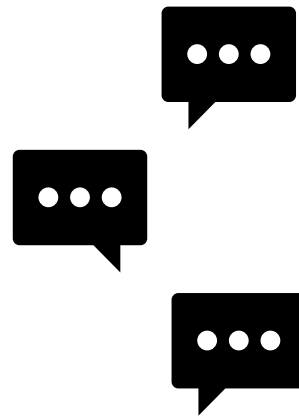
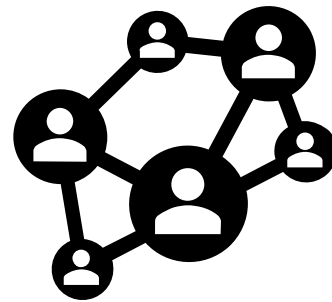


Gap Analysis: INFORM

- What is the process for notifying internal and external stakeholders of patients suspected to have a communicable disease (e.g. measles or influenza) or other special pathogen infection (VHF, H5N1)?
- When is your public health department notified?



1st Point
of Contact



HICS
Activation

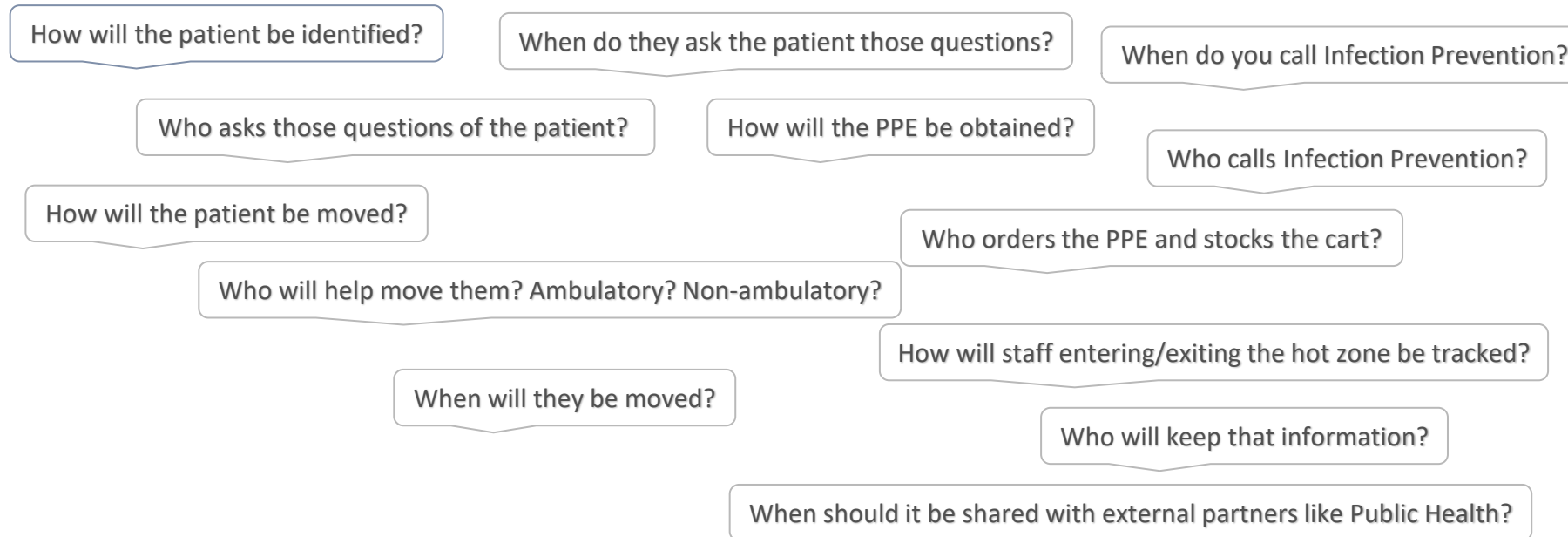
Have a Tabletop Exercise

Acknowledge the artificialities of the exercise ... BUT interrogate each step to determine how it will be operationalized in reality

“How?”

“Who?”

“When?”



Use your network

In Person

- Attend symposiums and trainings when available
- Ask if you can be an observer at another facility's drill

Online

- Attend webinars (or listen to the recordings)
- Download materials from NETEC so that you can revise and adapt for your facility

Get Social

- Talk to IPs and Emergency/Disaster Preparedness coordinators at facilities that are a similar size as your organization
- Can compare protocols based on similar resources/capacity



Welcome to the NETEC Resource Library

Choose a button below to [Explore NETEC created resources](#), or selections from the entire resource library of Special Pathogens education and resources. For instructions go to the [How to Use the Resource Library Page](#). To search all Resource items, go to [Advanced Search](#) or [Search by Topic](#).

→ [See the NETEC Exercise Templates](#)

→ [See the Most Recently Added Resources](#)

Explore the resources



Search and Browse

Do you have a question or just want to browse? Find various ways to



Discover

If you are just starting out or doing background research, browse



Develop

If you are developing a plan to prepare your team, browse a



Deploy and Test

If you already have a prepared plan, browse exercise templates, drills, and

Training and Exercises/Drills

- Consider having your drill FIRST and finalizing your training materials and education plan AFTER

Benefits:

- You won't have to revise training materials with lessons learned from the exercise/drill
- You can get pictures of staff during the drill/exercise in the PPE available at YOUR facility
- Drills are not “one and done” – trying to train everyone to be “perfect” during the drill doesn't eliminate the need for repeating the exercise on a regular basis

Challenges:

- You may feel pressured to train everyone fully before the drill – and you **will** need to do some training (e.g., refreshers for involved staff) and just-in-time training on the day of the drill
- People may feel like the drill is a “test” that everyone just needs to pass so that you never have to do it again – but **practice makes prepared!**



Resources

CDPH

- [CDPH Information for Health Professionals: Ebola](#)

CDC

- [Ebola Donning and Doffing](#)
- [Ebola Virus Disease](#)
- [Category A Waste](#)

EPA

- [Approved Disinfectants](#)

NETEC

- [Doffing Considerations](#)
- [How Frontline Health Care Workers Can Prepare for an Ebola Outbreak](#)
- [Preparing Frontline Health Care Workers for Ebola](#)
- [Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers \(VHFs\) Matrix](#)
- [Space Recommendations for Donning/Doffing PPE](#)

2025 | DISASTER PLANNING CONFERENCE | SACRAMENTO

Questions?

Thank you!

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