

Infectious Disease Update for the HPH Sector – September 2018

Domestic Health Security

[ProMED Mail Update on the Quarantined Emirates Airlines Flight at JFK](#) (ProMED Mail) We have learned from a reliable source that **influenza A (H3N2)** has been confirmed in the individuals admitted to Jamaica Hospital, having arrived yesterday (Wed 5 Sep 2018) at JFK on an Emirates Airlines flight that originated in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

[Rates of three STDs in US reach record high, CDC says](#) (CNN) Rates of **syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia** have climbed for the fourth consecutive year in the United States, ... Last year, nearly **2.3 million US** cases of these sexually transmitted diseases were diagnosed, according to preliminary data.

Global Health Security

Democratic Republic of Congo – Ebola (North Kivu Outbreak)

[Fast-Growing Ebola Outbreak In Congo Has Public Health Officials Alarmed](#) (Huffington Post) More than three weeks into the latest Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 61 people have died — making this eruption among the nine largest Ebola outbreaks since the deadly hemorrhagic fever was first identified in the 1970s... “We are on an epidemiological precipice,” Peter Salama, the World Health Organization’s emergency response chief, warned last week.

[Ebola control measures seem to be working in Congo, WHO says](#) (Thomson Reuters Foundation) Efforts to halt an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Democratic Republic of Congo appear to be working, but substantial risks remain, the [WHO] said on Friday. The outbreak has so far killed 77 people in Congo's North Kivu and Ituri provinces among 116 cases. Fifteen of the cases were healthworkers.

[Merck's widely used vaccine transforms attitudes toward Ebola: WHO assistant director-general](#) (FiercePharma) Merck's Ebola vaccine rVSV-ZEBOV has been utilized in several outbreaks, including an ongoing one in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and its value has gone beyond stopping the disease to transforming people's attitudes toward Ebola as well.

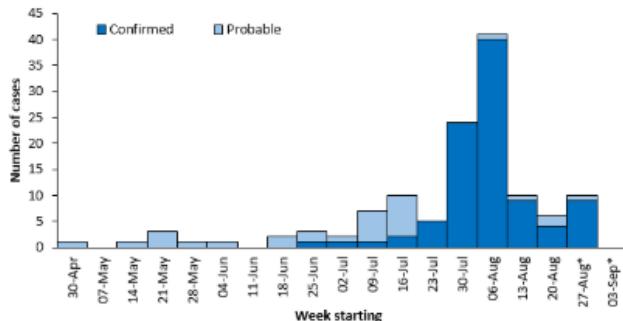
[Congo records first Ebola death in major eastern trade hub](#) (Reuters) Democratic Republic of Congo has recorded its first death from Ebola in the eastern trading hub of Butembo, a city of almost a million with links to Uganda that could complicate efforts to control the outbreak, health officials said on Wednesday.

[WHO Disease Outbreak News \(9/7\):](#)

- Cases: 129 (98 confirmed and 31 probable)
 - Cases in Healthcare Workers: 17
- Deaths: 86 (55 confirmed and 31 probable)
- Vaccine Deployment: "...6830 people consented and were vaccinated, including 1746 health care or front line workers, and 1762 children."



Figure 1: Confirmed and probable Ebola virus disease cases by week of illness onset, data as of 5 September 2018 (n=127)*



[First ever case of monkeypox recorded in the UK](#) (The Guardian) The first ever case of monkeypox has been recorded in the UK. The rare viral infection was recorded on Friday in a Nigerian national staying at a naval base in Cornwall, Public Health England said.

[Patient diagnosed with first case of Mers virus in England since 2013](#) (The Guardian) A person who was diagnosed with the first case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in England since 2013 is said to be in a stable condition. Public Health England said the patient is a resident of the Middle East, where they are believed to have contracted the infection before travelling to the UK.

[South Korean man infected by MERS virus, first case in 3 years](#) (Reuters) A South Korean man, 61, was diagnosed with the potentially deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and is being treated at a hospital in Seoul, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said on Saturday.

China - African Swine Fever

[Can China, the world's biggest pork producer, contain a fatal pig virus? Scientists fear the worst](#) (Science) A nightmare is unfolding for animal health experts: African swine fever (ASF), a highly contagious, often fatal disease of domestic pigs and wild boars, has appeared in China, the world's largest pork producer. ... Containing the disease in a population of more than 430 million hogs, many raised in smallholder farmyards with minimal biosecurity, could be a monumental challenge.

[African swine fever in China almost certain to spread in Asia: FAO](#) (Reuters) The African swine fever spreading rapidly in China is "here to stay", the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said on Friday, adding that it was almost certain to spread to other Asian countries. The fever was first detected in China in early August and has been found in **18 farms or abattoirs in six provinces**, with many cases more than a 1,000 kms (621 miles) apart, the FAO said in a statement.

[Molecular Characterization of African Swine Fever Virus, China, 2018](#) (Emerging Infectious Diseases) On August 3, 2018, an outbreak of African swine fever in pigs was reported in China. We subjected a virus from an African swine fever-positive pig sample to phylogenetic analysis. This analysis showed that the causative strain belonged to the p72 genotype II and CD2v serogroup 8.

Clinical Practice

[Novichok agents: a historical, current, and toxicological perspective](#) (Toxicology Communications) On 4 March 2018, Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal collapsed on a park bench in Salisbury, United Kingdom after eating dinner at a local restaurant. The Skripals were rapidly transported to the hospital where they received treatment for a presumed nerve agent exposure.

[Pediatrics group encourages parents to steer clear of popular FluMist in favor of shots](#) (STAT News) The American Academy of Pediatrics is recommending children be vaccinated with injectable flu vaccine for the coming season, rather than the nasal spray vaccine FluMist, unless a child will only be vaccinated if he or she can forgo a needle, or if a doctor runs out of flu shots.

[The emergence of Zika virus and its new clinical syndromes](#) (Nature) Zika virus (ZIKV) is a mosquito-transmitted flavivirus that has emerged as a global health threat because of its potential to generate explosive epidemics and ability to cause congenital disease in the context of infection during pregnancy. ...Here we describe the recent advances that have led to a new understanding of the causes and consequences of the ZIKV epidemic.

Other

[China Has Withheld Samples of a Dangerous Flu Virus](#) (New York Times) For over a year, the Chinese government has withheld lab samples of a rapidly evolving influenza virus from the United States — specimens needed to develop vaccines and treatments, according to federal health officials.

[Russian bots were used to sow divisions on vaccines, researchers say](#) (STAT News) In the lead-up to the 2016 U.S. election, Russian bots and trolls took to Twitter and other social media platforms to try to turn Americans against one another. But in addition to spreading false information and interfering in the election, a new study reports, a significant number of these malevolent actors tried to sow discord over vaccines.

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