

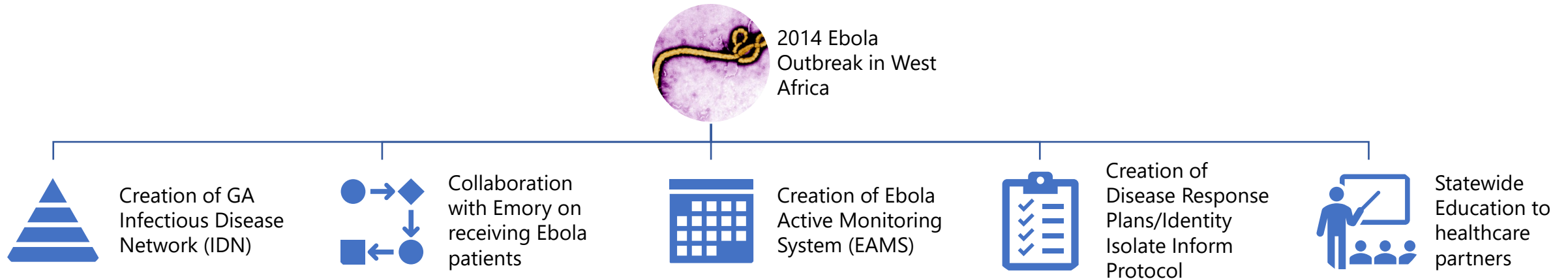
Preparing for High Consequence Infectious Disease

SCDP Project ECHO / Litty Varghese / October 23, 2025

Overview

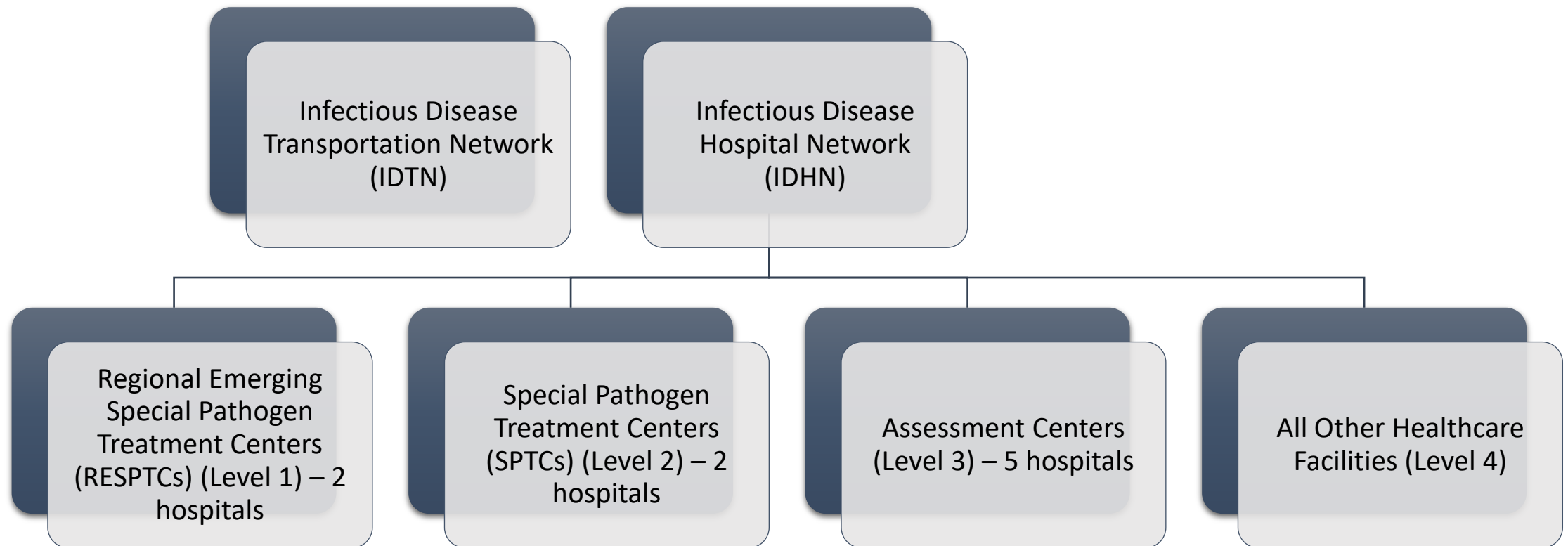
- History of Preparedness
- Infectious Disease Network
- Program Development
- Resources for Provider
- Increased Outreach and Relationship Building
- Current Gaps and Challenges

History of Ebola Preparedness in Georgia



! Supported by funds through the Hospital Preparedness Program Ebola Preparedness and Response Activities cooperative agreement

Infectious Disease Network (IDN)



Quarterly IDN Meetings



Partner Exercises

Baby Driver 2.0 – November 2024



Tranquil Passport – June 24-27, 2025



Program Development

- Rebranded from Ebola to High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID)
- Hired a state Infectious Disease Coordinator to manage the IDN and HCID planning
- Updated State High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) Plan
- Creating a HCID Concept of Operations for IDHN and IDTN
- Developing a new protocol and process for re-designation of IDN facilities

Provider Resources

HCID Screening Tool

IDENTIFY, ISOLATE, INFORM

Guidance for Early Recognition and Containment of Highly Infectious Diseases

For every patient that the healthcare facility encounters, go through the following process as appropriate.

IDENTIFY

patients who have traveled to areas with current outbreaks or endemic disease OR have had contact with sick persons who recently traveled AND have symptoms of illness, including:

- fever
- severe headache
- fatigue
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- muscle aches

1. Use Travel Clinical Assistant to help identify which diseases are present in traveled areas.
2. Collect detailed travel information from the last 30 days.
3. Inquire about other potential exposures (funerals, healthcare facilities, animals).

ISOLATE

patients that have both exposure and symptoms.

1. Place patient in a private room with a private bathroom or personal commode.
2. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when entering the room.
3. Limit the number of healthcare personnel that enter the room.
4. Only perform necessary tests and procedures and limit aerosol generating procedures.

INFORM

internal Infection Prevention and Control and State Public Health.

1. Call 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584).
2. Provide reason for calling, brief patient history and ask for a Medical Epidemiologist (Med Epi).
3. Depending on the situation, the Med Epi will need the following information:
 - Locations (countries and/or cities) and exact dates of travel.
 - Symptoms and progression of illness.
 - Exposures to sick individuals, healthcare facilities, funerals, animals, etc.

Think HCID Magnet

Healthcare Providers

Think High Consequence Infectious Diseases

1. Identify

2. Isolate

3. Inform

Make Travel History Part of Your Routine

Travel History
+ Symptoms

=

1-866-PUB-HLTH
(1-866-782-4584)

Follow prompts to ask for med epi



Scan for
Travel Clinical
Assistant



Plan B Resources

Category A Waste Management Kits

- DPH has 16 Category A Waste Management Kits that facilities can request if they are treating a patient with a confirmed HCID. These kits can be used for collection of any Category A waste. Each kit includes the following waste supplies required for roughly 24 hours of patient care.

Decedent Management Kits

- DPH has decedent management kits that can be requested by partners handling human remains with a confirmed HCID. The Infectious Disease Body Bag System protects against the postmortem spread of infectious disease at the site of death, prior to transport, during transport, at the mortuary, and during final disposition of remains.

Increased Visibility

Created GA IDN webpage and resources on the DPH and the Georgia Healthcare Coalitions websites.

The screenshot shows the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) website. The header includes the DPH logo and the text "GEORGIA DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC HEALTH". Below the header is a navigation bar with links: About DPH, Public Health, COVID-19, Vital Records, Women and Children, Immunizations, Environmental Health, and Epidemiology. The Epidemiology link is highlighted. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Epidemiology > Epidemiology Emergency Preparedness > Georgia Infectious Disease Network (IDN). The main content area shows the "Georgia Infectious Disease Network (IDN)" page. On the left is a sidebar menu with the following items: Epidemiology, Healthcare Associated Infections, Acute Disease Epidemiology, Emerging Infections Program (EIP), Viral Hepatitis, Epidemiology Emergency Preparedness, Georgia Infectious Disease Network (IDN) (highlighted), and Georgia's Health Alert Network (GAHAN). The main content area has the title "Georgia Infectious Disease Network (IDN)" and the following text: "In 2015, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa brought the first cases of Ebola Viral Disease (EVD) to the United States. Most hospitals across the country were ill equipped to handle even one potential patient. The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) realized the need to ensure that Georgia's health care system was properly equipped and trained to handle confirmed or suspected cases of EVD. This led to the creation of the Infectious Disease Network (IDN). Although initially focused on EVD, the IDN has since expanded its efforts to include any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID). The IDN has two components – the Hospital Network (IDHN) and the Transportation Network (IDTN). Participation in the IDN is free and voluntary. Any hospital or EMS agency wishing to join as a designated facility or provider can reach out at contactpublichealth@dph.ga.gov. DPH is responsible for coordination of patient movement between IDHN facilities via the IDTN. Infectious Disease Hospital Network (IDHN) The IDHN originally began as a tiered model with three designation levels: treatment centers (Tier 1), assessment centers (Tier 2), and frontline health care facilities (Tier 3). In 2025, the tiers were changed to align with the National Special Pathogen System (NSPS) system of care. The graphic below illustrates the four levels in the NSPS System of Care."

Healthcare Providers

The most important step in preventing and mitigating the spread of HCIDs is the Identify, Isolate, Inform process. Healthcare providers should be asking about travel history along with symptoms. If a patient has relevant symptoms and a travel history to areas of concern, the provider should immediately contact Georgia Department of Public Health at 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) for further consultation.

Resources

- [Georgia's Health Alert Network](#) (GAHAN)
- [Travel Clinical Assistant](#) (TCA)
- [CDC Travel Health Notices](#)
- [National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center](#) (NETEC)

Healthcare Providers

Think High Consequence Infectious Diseases

1. Identify
2. Isolate
3. Inform

Make Travel History Part of Your Routine

Travel History + Symptoms = **1-866-PUB-HLTH**
(1-866-782-4584)
Follow prompts to ask for med epi



Healthcare Providers Think High Consequence Infectious Diseases. Make Travel History Part of Your Routine. 1. Identify 2. Isolate 3. Inform. Travel History + Symptoms = 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) Follow prompts to ask for med epi.

Building Relationships to Address Gaps

Decedent Management Planning

- Learning from real world incidents – Lassa Fever in Iowa.
- Working with local SMEs build partnerships, identify funeral service partners and create a protocol for HCID decedent management.

Gaps and Challenges

- Ongoing education on the appropriate use of Identify, Isolate and Inform
- 'Whose lane is this' issues – decontamination of patient's private belongings or living spaces
- Sustained source of funding for both hospitals and EMS
- Maintaining engagement across disciplines and levels of healthcare facilities
- Access to Level 2 or Level 3 facilities across the state

Goals for the Future

- Conduct statewide education for stakeholders and partners on state plans and processes.
- Complete re-designation of current IDN facilities
 - Build an online platform for designation application and approval
 - H5N1 funding to re-designate and support Level 3 Assessment Centers
 - NETEC STAND Award Application for Level 2 Treatment Centers
- Recruit new facilities to join the IDN as Level 2 or Level 3 centers
 - Focus on Regional Coordinating Hospitals in areas with no coverage
- Complete tabletop and full-scale exercises to test new plans and partnerships.

Questions

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