



RC/PIO News & Notes |

May 15, 2026

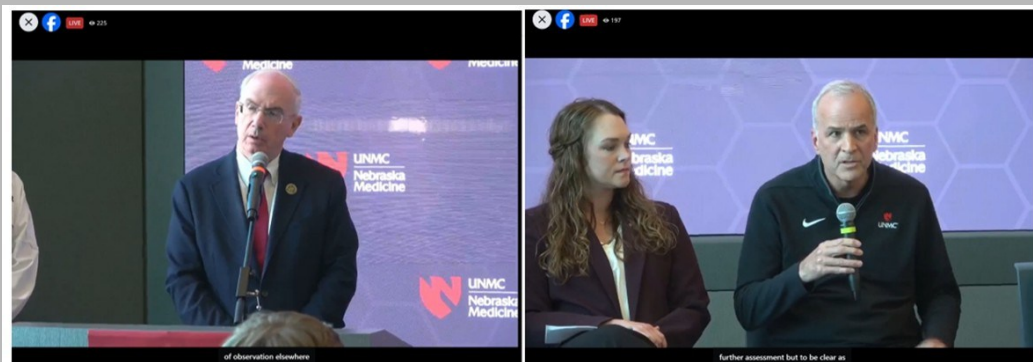
A Weekly Update from **Eric Jens, Risk Communicator** – Georgia Department of Public Health
Contents may be FYUO – For Your Use Only

News & Notes

Updates on hantavirus, last week's BioWatch exercise, and more are in store for highlights this week. Planning continues for FIFA World Cup soccer activities in and around Atlanta that kick off one month from today.

Hantavirus

Georgia is among the states impacted by a cruise ship hantavirus outbreak. U.S. citizens have returned from that voyage and have been receiving treatment or undergoing monitoring since their return. State DPH posted a [news release](#) related to this activity on Monday. CDC and other institutions have likewise released statements during the past week.



BioWatch FSE

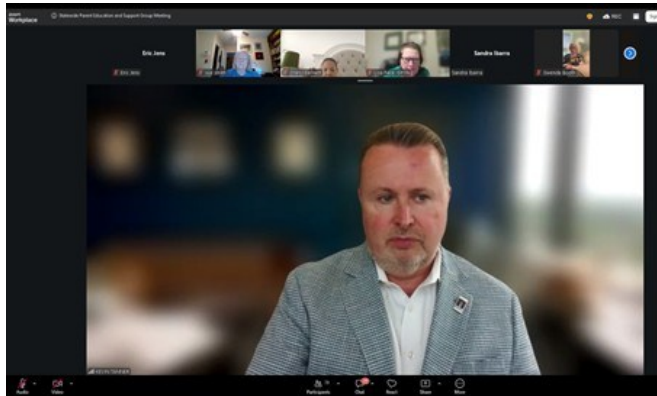
The three-day full-scale exercise for the BioWatch program that concluded last Friday tested numerous plans and brought together multiple jurisdictions, collectively responding to a BioWatch Actionable Result. Thanks to Byron Lobsinger, Nicole Fowler, Russell Goutierez, and Ephanel Armstrong for the pictures from multiple locations, and for the write up from the operations in Cobb-Douglas: *Cobb & Douglas Public Health took part in the BioWatch Full-Scale Exercise on May 8, successfully establishing a Point of Distribution (POD) to test mass prophylaxis capabilities. The event marked the first hands-on activation for the district's new Rapid Support Team (RST)—agency volunteers who specialize in quick-response site setup and staffing. Working alongside MRC volunteers, the team exceeded throughput targets and met our exercise objectives well ahead of schedule.*



Georgia Parent Support Network

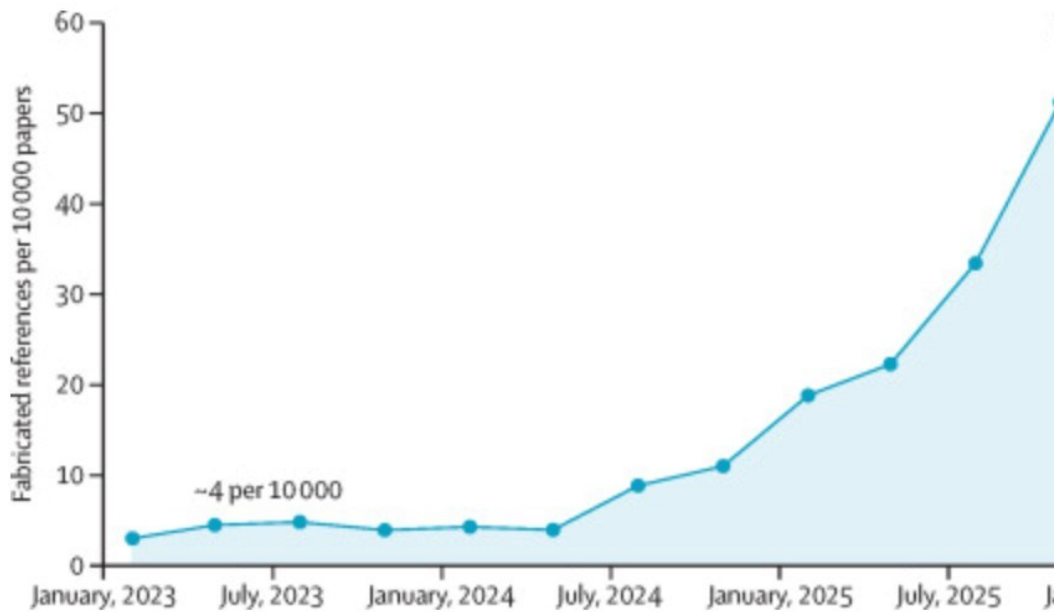
Tuesday's Georgia Parent Support Network meeting featured Kevin Tanner, Georgia Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner, providing an address and words of support for the group. He said the goal, being successfully met by multiple initiatives, is to help those in need to have someone to call, someone to respond to them and somewhere safe to go if that is what they need.

Commissioner Tanner said he is pleased to be seeing support for the people and the programs that are aiding these accomplishments.



Reference Authenticity

This week's Common Health Coalition 2-4-2 Digest cited an audit of 2.5 million biomedical papers and found that fabricated references were embedded in a growing number of those papers. While the number of incidents is still relatively low, the study suggests the rate of adverse AI influence is growing significantly.



HCID Exercise Planning

The planning is underway for a statewide High Consequence Infectious Disease scenario. Eight objectives were discussed at a Wednesday meeting at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, involving DPH districts and state, Healthcare Coalitions, medical facility partners and others. The scenario is likely to involve a measles outbreak and could expand in different directions from there. It should be a good opportunity to see how well the various Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication plans meld with other related emergency response plans in place. Thanks to Lauren Robinson for the picture below.



Next Week Preview

Next Tuesday is the monthly state DPH EPR meeting. There are FIFA related meetings next week for: ESF-8 planning, national webinars, and Web EOC training at the Atlanta Public Safety Headquarters.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov.

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Georgia Department of Public Health | 200 Piedmont Ave, SE | Atlanta, GA 30334 US