RC/PIO News & Notes

September 18, 2026

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

News & Notes

This week, we will provide updates regarding measles, West Nile Virus, and CERC training. We will also review the key outcomes from Tuesday's monthly state DPH EPR meeting.

West Nile Virus

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed eight human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2026, but that number is expected to increase. DPH has also confirmed one WNV death. Mosquito traps have tested positive in multiple counties, including Chatham, Fulton, and DeKalb. Mosquito season typically lasts through October, so Georgians are urged to protect themselves from mosquito bites. A state DPH **News Release** with more details went out on Wednesday.

Measles

The state DPH Epidemiology Division sent out a measles Health Update last Friday:
The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has identified two additional cases of measles. There have now been 10 total cases identified in Cobb County since August 18, 2026, with some associated with a daycare and others indicating potential community spread. All cases were either unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. DPH continues to work diligently to identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed. These cases bring the total number of reported measles cases in Georgia in 2026 to 16.

State EPR Monthly Meeting

The September meeting of the State DPH EPR Team opened with leadership updates, followed by a presentation from Sussie Fussell of the Georgia Health Care Association. She highlighted the association's work in supporting long-term care facilities and vulnerable populations. Next, Byron Lobsinger discussed the role of Environmental Health in disaster response, emphasizing how strike teams accelerate recovery by helping communities restore daily routines. The meeting concluded with an interactive exercise on multidisciplinary collaboration and problem-solving. Finally, the team extended its sincere thanks and best wishes to Saneika Thomas as she transitions from her role in Emergency Preparedness.

"*EP was my start and foundation in public health. I am grateful for the opportunities, collaboration, and partnerships that have developed over the past 8 years. I look forward to seeing how the program will continue to evolve. The Training Coordinators will always be near and dear to my heart. Thank you for trusting my leadership in the training and exercise program.*"

CERC Training

The next DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training will take place on September 22 at the LaGrange Health District Office. Prospective attendees are asked to reach out directly if they would like to take part in the class (**Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov**) so we can ensure adequate accommodations for all participants. Registered attendees should have received a reminder email this week containing the updated agenda, pre-test, and informational one-pager.

Next Week Preview

Next week brings several key events, starting on Tuesday with the CERC training in LaGrange and the official arrival of autumn at 8:04 PM. This is followed by the monthly National Public Health Information Coalition call on Wednesday afternoon, and the state DPH Integrated Preparedness Planning workshop on Thursday.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication for risk communicators and public information officers across Georgia's 18 public health districts. This communication aims to enhance preparedness by exchanging information on significant events, training, and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO (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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