



**To:** CAHAN San Diego Participants

**Date:** May 12, 2026

**From:** Public Health Services

**Health Alert:** Hantavirus Among Cruise Ship Passengers

#### Key Messages

- On May 8, 2026, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) issued a [Health Alert](#) and on May 11, the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) issued a [corresponding Health Alert](#) to inform clinicians and health departments about a new cluster of hantavirus disease caused by infection with [Andes virus](#) aboard the cruise ship MV Hondius.
- As of May 9, CDPH has been notified of three California residents who were passengers on the cruise ship. One has returned to California, and two are currently at a facility in Nebraska for evaluation. A fourth traveler had contact with a known case while overseas and has returned to California.
  - County of San Diego Public Health Services is not aware that any of these individuals will be returning to San Diego County.
- [Andes virus](#) is a hantavirus species that is endemic to South America. It is *different* than the Sin Nombre virus species, which is native to California and does not spread person-to-person.
- Sin Nombre virus infections are [rare in San Diego County](#) with only four cases among residents since 2004.
- Hantavirus disease can cause severe illness and can be fatal. The risk of broad spread of Andes virus to the United States is considered extremely unlikely at this time.

#### Situation

There are multiple species of Hantavirus. The current outbreak of the South American hantavirus species, [Andes virus](#), has been reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) among passengers on the trans-Atlantic cruise ship MV Hondius. There were [eight hantavirus cases](#) (six confirmed and two suspected), including three deaths. As of May 9, CDPH has been notified that four exposed individuals were California residents. None of these individuals are San Diego County residents.

#### Background

Hantavirus can cause [serious and often fatal illness](#). The confirmed virus among cruise ship passengers is [Andes virus](#). It is *not* Sin Nombre virus, which is the hantavirus native to [California](#). Unlike Andes virus, Sin Nombre virus is not spread person-to-person. The County of San Diego Vector Control Program conducts [routine rodent surveillance](#) for hantavirus exposure and provides prevention outreach to affected communities.

#### Actions Requested

1. **Be aware** that returned MV Hondius passengers and their contacts will receive daily symptom monitoring by public health. Affected Counties are coordinating with healthcare facilities and emergency medical services.
2. **Report** suspected hantavirus cases immediately to the County Epidemiology Program during office hours by calling (619) 692-8499 Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM and (858) 565-5255 after hours and on weekends.

Thank you for your participation.

#### CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

Phone: (619) 692-8499; Fax: (858) 715-6458

E-mail: [cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Public Website: <http://sandiegocounty.gov/cahan>

Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch

Urgent Phone for pm/weekends/holidays: (858) 565-5255

Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>



**CDPH**

State of California—Health  
and Human Services

Agency

**California**

**Department of Public Health**

**Erica Pan, MD, MPH**

*State Public Health Officer & Director*



**Gavin Newsom**

*Governor*

## **Health Advisory**

**To: Healthcare Providers**

**Hantavirus Disease Outbreak Among Passengers of the MV Hondius Ship**

**5/11/2026**

## **Key Messages**

- An outbreak of Andes virus, a known species of hantavirus, has been reported on a cruise ship in the South Atlantic. This outbreak has a extremely low risk of spread or impact to the general public.
- As of 8 May, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a total of eight cases, including three deaths.
- As of May 9, CDC has notified CDPH of three California residents who were passengers on the MV Hondius. One passenger has returned to California, and two are being repatriated to a facility in Nebraska for evaluation before returning to California.
- In addition, a fourth traveler, not on the ship, but while overseas, became a close contact with a known case. This person has returned to California.
- CDPH is supporting the local health departments in the two returned travelers' counties of residence in conducting ongoing public health monitoring.
- Plans for repatriation of the other passengers are still being finalized. CDC is planning to conduct health assessments prior to passengers returning to their homes. CDPH will notify local health departments with resident passengers still aboard.
- Andes virus is the only species of hantavirus with known person to person transmission, and is endemic to South America. The most common hantavirus in North America, Sin Nombre Virus, does not spread person to person.
- CDPH is in close contact with CDC and the WHO. This is an evolving situation, and information is current as of May 11. New or changing information will be updated as it becomes available.

## **Summary**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in coordination with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), is monitoring an outbreak of illness caused by Andes virus, a known species of hantavirus, among passengers and crew of the MV Hondius cruise ship. CDPH was notified by CDC that three California residents were among the vessel's passengers. One of the passengers had already disembarked and returned to California. CDPH is working with the local health department (LHD) where this passenger resides for monitoring. Two California residents remained aboard the vessel until they were able to disembark in Tenerife, Canary Islands and be repatriated to a medical facility in Nebraska. In addition, a fourth traveler, who was not onboard the MV Hondius, was determined to be in close contact with a case from the ship while overseas. As with the returned passenger from the MV Hondius, they are being monitored by their LHD. CDPH will notify California LHDs of any additional returned or repatriated passengers in their jurisdictions when this information becomes available. Currently, CDC and CDPH assess the risk to the general public as extremely low.

## Outbreak Overview

An outbreak of severe respiratory illnesses aboard the MV Hondius, a Dutch flagged cruise ship, was first reported to the WHO on May 2, 2026. As of May 8, WHO has reported a total of eight cases (six confirmed and two probable cases), including three deaths (among two confirmed and one probable case). All six cases have been confirmed as infected with the Andes virus, a species of hantavirus with documented person-to-person transmission following prolonged close contact.

The MV Hondius departed Argentina on April 1, 2026 and the first case became ill on April 6. The ship traveled to multiple destinations throughout the South Atlantic. According to the WHO, on May 2, 2026 there were 147 passengers and crew on board. Another 34 persons had previously left the ship. As of May 10, 2026, the vessel has docked at Tenerife, Spain and safe repatriation of US citizens is being coordinated by the US government, including the State Department, Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and CDC.

## Background on Andes Virus

Andes virus is a hantavirus species endemic to South America and is mainly transmitted through exposure to infected rodent feces and urine. Andes virus is the only species of hantavirus where person-to-person transmission has been documented, typically following prolonged and close personal contact. Based on data from prior outbreaks, individuals infected with Andes virus are considered infectious only after the onset of symptoms.

Hantavirus has an incubation period of 4-42 days. Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) or Hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS) is a severe respiratory illness caused by hantavirus. After a 4-to-6-day prodromal period with flu-like and gastrointestinal symptoms, the patient can progress rapidly to cardiac and respiratory compromise, with a case fatality rate of 30–40%.

Andes virus is the most frequent cause of HPS in South America and is not endemic to North America. The primary cause of HPS in North America is the Sin Nombre virus, which has not been associated with person-to-person transmission.

## Recommendations for Clinicians

Returned passengers will receive daily symptom monitoring by public health, and affected LHDs will coordinate with healthcare facilities and EMS in jurisdictions where a returned passenger has been identified if they expect a returned passenger will require medical evaluation.

Clinicians who are providing medical care for patients who traveled on the MV Hondius and are presenting with [signs/symptoms](#) consistent with Andes virus infection should take appropriate infection control precautions (see Recommendations for Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control, below) and notify their hospital's infection prevention team.

Testing for Andes virus in a returning cruise ship passenger and/or their close contacts should only be performed in coordination with local health department with CDPH involvement. Testing is not recommended for asymptomatic returned travelers or contacts and should be reserved for those exhibiting symptoms. Providers are reminded that suspect hantavirus cases should be immediately reported to the local health jurisdiction where the patient resides, who can help coordinate appropriate testing and provide additional guidance.

Individuals with Andes Virus infection showing signs of HPS should be evaluated as soon as possible at a facility with critical care capacity that can provide extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

## Recommendations for Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control

[CDC-recommended precautions](#) for healthcare providers treating patients with suspected or confirmed Andes virus infection include:

- Patient placement in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR), and
- Personal protective equipment: gown, gloves, eye protection, N95<sup>®</sup> respirator or higher

Healthcare providers and EMS should coordinate with local health departments and CDPH for transport and infection prevention recommendations if any exposed individuals are requiring hospitalization.

## Recommendations for Clinical Laboratories

Clinical Laboratories handling specimens from patients with suspected hantavirus infection should maintain heightened awareness and ensure strict adherence to biosafety practices, including BSL-2 enhanced practices, containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for laboratory handling of specimens from persons potentially infected with hantaviruses.

A diagnostic molecular RT-PCR assay for hantavirus is available at the CDPH Center for Laboratory Sciences (CLS) Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL), and serology testing to detect IgM and IgG antibodies against hantavirus is available at CDC. CLS VRDL will facilitate submission of samples to CDC for serology testing.

### To request testing

Contact VRDL ([VRDL.submittal@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:VRDL.submittal@cdph.ca.gov)) and the CDPH hantavirus SME, Mary Beth Danforth ([Mary.Danforth@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Mary.Danforth@cdph.ca.gov)).

Serum and, if possible, whole blood should be collected for hantavirus serology and PCR. Respiratory swabs should also be collected to rule out other respiratory viruses. Details about specimen collection and shipping can be found at the CLS [VRDL Sin Nombre Virus \(Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome\)](#) (PDF) and [PCR](#) test page.

# Recommendations for Local Health Departments

LHDs will be notified by CDPH if any returned passengers or contacts are residing in, or repatriating to, their jurisdiction.

LHDs with known returned passengers should follow CDC guidance and consult with CDPH regarding activity modification and symptom monitoring, including 42-day daily symptom monitoring from day of departure from ship.

LHDs with returned passengers or contacts that become symptomatic should immediately notify CDPH by contacting the CDPH Infectious Diseases Branch (510-620-3434) during business hours, or the CDPH Duty Officer (916-328-3605) after hours or on weekends/holidays. If they are requiring hospitalization, CDPH will assist with coordination of transport and treatment at a previously designated healthcare facility with 24-hour ECMO coverage. Contingency planning if residents require medical transport, care and testing should be made in advance in consultation with CDPH.

## Recommendations for the Public

CDPH and CDC regard the risk to the general public posed by this outbreak to be extremely low and no additional action or precautions need to be taken by the general public.

## Resources

- [CDC 2026 Multi-country Hantavirus Cluster Linked to Cruise Ship Health Alert Network | CDC](#)
- [About Andes Virus | Hantavirus | CDC](#)
- [CDC Andes Virus Public Health Guidance \(PDF\)](#)
- [Type and Duration of Precautions Recommended for Selected Infections and Conditions | CDC](#)
- [Clinician Brief: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome \(HPS\) | Hantavirus | CDC](#)

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