International Outbreak Museum Now Online

OR Center of Excellence introduces international outbreak museum website and case series

The office of the late William E. (“Bill”) Keene, PhD, MPH, is a treasure trove of outbreak history. From his early years investigating infectious disease outbreaks as a graduate student and then with the Oregon Public Health Division, Bill realized that outbreak investigations were memorable episodes that taught physicians, epidemiologists, food scientists, and the lay public about disease transmission. In many ways they formed the foundation of our collective knowledge of what’s risky and what we’d do well to regulate.

Now the site of the International Outbreak Museum (IOM), Bill’s office includes a fascinating array of exhibits associated with outbreaks, from a 1978 box of “Rely Tampons” associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome, to restaurant menus, cans of contaminated leather spray, bottles of MRSA-contaminated tattoo ink, packaging from numerous commercial food products recalled from the market, and replicas of pathogen-tainted foods such as artisanal raw milk cheese.

The IOM is part of The Northwest Center for Foodborne Outbreak Management, Epidemiology, and Surveillance (FOMES), which fosters foodborne/diarrheal disease surveillance and outbreak investigation. FOMES is working to bring the physical IOM exhibits to digital life. Our hope is that these fascinating exhibits can continue to edify audiences far and wide. If you’ve worked an interesting outbreak, please consider submitting information about the investigation. Should you find yourself in Portland, contact Hillary Booth or Paul Cieslak at 971-673-1111 to view the museum!

New White Paper on Product Tracing

MN Center of Excellence highlights release of White Paper on product tracing in epi investigations

The Minnesota Center of Excellence would like to call attention to the recent release of the White Paper entitled “Product Tracing in Epidemiologic Investigations of Outbreaks due to Commercially Distributed Food Items – Utility, Application, and Considerations.” The collaborative effort includes authors representing state health and agriculture, CDC, FDA, and academia.

The effective use of product tracing as part of epidemiologic investigations has been demonstrated in numerous foodborne disease outbreaks. However, approaches used to conduct product tracing in this context have not been standardized, and application of this critical tool has not kept pace with the growing number and complexity of cluster investigations. This document summarizes rationale for conducting product tracing as part of epidemiologic investigations, how product tracing fits in with the rest of an investigation, how it can be conducted most efficiently and effectively, and barriers to its use.

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Local and state agencies are a primary focus of this document. However, because multi-jurisdictional outbreak investigations can benefit greatly from this product tracing, federal public health and regulatory agencies are critical collaborators. Please disseminate this document widely and consider its use in foodborne outbreak investigation trainings.


### Outbreak Case Study

**CO Center of Excellence announces online outbreak case study**

The Colorado Integrated Food Safety Center of Excellence will release paper-based and online versions of the “Polka Festival Case Study” in Winter 2015-2016. Adapted from a 2011 outbreak at a polka dance festival in El Paso County, Colorado, this case study is an interactive approach for designing and implementing a cohort study.

The case study will provide students and public health professionals an opportunity to practice investigating a localized outbreak, from receipt of initial illness complaints to dissemination of results. The case study covers a range of critical investigation steps, including: hypothesis generation, outbreak team assembly, case definition, epi curve building, risk measure analysis, environmental assessments, and more.

It is the first of its kind to utilize a full, downloadable dataset for analysis using any of several software packages (including Excel, EPI Info7, OpenEPI, etc.) The online version, which incorporates a variety of tools developed by the Centers of Excellence, provides the flexibility to complete the case study individually, while maintaining the interactive experience. The paper-based version is ideal for a classroom setting to promote discussion and collaboration between student and instructor. Both versions will be available on the CoE Tools and Resources webpage.

### CoE LinkedIn Group

**FL Center of Excellence moderates the CoEs’ professional network presence**

To aid in the development of a strong network of public health professionals who work in food safety, the CoEs have created an interactive group on LinkedIn. The social networking site has been designed specifically for the business community, allowing members to establish networks of people they know and trust professionally. The open discussion platform allows sharing of new innovations, current problems, and best practices to help improve foodborne disease surveillance and outbreak investigations. To sign up, go to www.LinkedIn.com and enter your name, email address, and a password you’ll use. To connect with the CoEs, search “Integrated Food Safety Centers of Excellence” and join the group.

### Find Us Online:

- CDC — http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/centers/
- CO — http://www.cofoodsafety.org/
- FL — http://foodsafetyflorida.org/
- MN — http://mnfoodsafetycoe.umn.edu/
- NY — http://nyfoodsafety.cals.cornell.edu/
- OR — http://www.healthoregon.org/fomes
- TN — http://foodsaftynotn.org/
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