



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 7, 2014

Disease Rampant Among Illegal Immigrants Housed in U.S. Facilities

According to a report released by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general on October 6, the presence of communicable diseases at detention facilities housing illegal immigrants — both unaccompanied children and families — remains a problem.

The findings, detailed in a memo written by DHS Inspector General John Roth to DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson, were released by Roth's office on October 6. They summarized the findings of the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) investigators during five unannounced visits to three detention facilities in Texas and New Mexico between August 21 and September 26.



Roth provided one specific example of what his inspectors found:

During one routine spot inspection, we observed that CBP personnel did not properly segregate a UAC with a communicable disease. They also did not ensure that food and water were readily available. CBP rotated personnel during a period when there had been no UAC in the facility for a month. As a result of this rotation, the personnel responsible for the UAC were not familiar with procedures.

A report in the *Washington Times* noted that Roth said the illnesses, which had the effect of putting the DHS detention facility in Artesia, New Mexico, under quarantine earlier this year, have proved to be a continuing problem. A report in the *Times* for July 30 quoted Rep. Steve Pearce (R-N.M.), whose district includes Artesia, saying that children at the facility were being treated for chicken pox. Said Pearce:

As the FLETC facility reaches maximum capacity, I am increasingly concerned for the health and safety of the women and children at FLETC and for the local community. The virus, that has caused two residents to be put in isolation, has halted all departures.

The problem of illegal immigrants who come across our borders from countries whose health standards are not as stringent as those in the United States bringing communicable diseases with them has been a matter of concern for some time. A report from ABC 15 News in Phoenix on June 9 noted that U.S. Border Patrol agents were worried that diseases spread by migrants might pose a threat to our general population.

"We are sending people everywhere. The average person doesn't know what's going on down here," ABC 15 quoted Border Patrol agent and Rio Grande Valley Union representative Chris Cabrera.

"There's been an outbreak of scabies that's been going on for the past month," continued Cabrera. "We are starting to see chicken pox, MRSA staph infections, we are starting to see different viruses."



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During the peak years of legal immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, all new arrivals were examined by doctors to make sure they were not afflicted with any contagious (or even noncontagious but potentially debilitating) diseases. Approximately two percent of immigrants inspected at Ellis Island were denied admission to the United States and sent back to their countries of origin for reasons such as having a chronic contagious disease, criminal background, or insanity. Though admissions standards were generous, the advantages of having all immigrants pass through an official admissions procedure are obvious.

Though no cases of Ebola have been recorded among legal or illegal immigrants from Latin America, the recent case of an Ebola-infected man arriving from Africa in Dallas should serve as a warning about how quickly contagious diseases can spread. The current practice of immigration authorities resettling unaccompanied children who are here illegally all across the United States, where they are enrolled in local schools, is a recipe for a future epidemic. These illegal immigrants must be quickly processed and deported back to their countries of origin.

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