

## EXHIBITION SUMMARY

In 2018, the National Museum of Natural History will deliver a major exhibition and public program initiative tentatively titled *Outbreak*. Prompted by the Ebola outbreak, heightened in importance by the Zika epidemic, and coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the Spanish influenza pandemic, the project's goal is to raise public awareness and understanding about the inter-connectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.

*Outbreak* will examine the ways infectious diseases reveal an intricate network between humans, animals, their environments, and microbes—why infectious diseases emerge where they do, how they spill over from animals to people, why they spread so quickly, and where to look for the next one. As the recent examples have shown, humans face potentially grave consequences as we begin to interact in new and complex ways with the changing global environment. Environmental changes enable local pathogens to evolve and, potentially, invade human hosts in ways and at scales we never imagined. The exhibition will address public fears and media hype head-on, empowering the Museum's seven million annual visitors to respond to epidemics with knowledge and responsibility.

## SUMMARY OF RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following a successful first Stakeholder Meeting for the *Outbreak* exhibition earlier this year, a smaller, more focused group convened again in June. The Core Team presented the schematic design plans with sample views of the exhibit's look and feel. These views illustrated the use of stunning SEM images of the pathogens, dynamic mapping stations, display of the Smithsonian's collection to highlight scientific research on zoonotic diseases, and experiential 3D tableaus that create a scenic backdrop for stories around each focus disease. The group was highly engaged in discussing strategies for helping visitors create personal connections to stories and people that may be featured in the exhibition. They offered thoughtful advice, lessons learned, and knowledge of ongoing projects which the Core Team has and will continue to take under consideration.

The Exhibition Core Team has completed the draft script and schematic design phase. For the next milestone, complete script and draft design, the team will:

- Refine the thematic sections
- Ensure the “One Health” approach and multidisciplinary research is threaded throughout the exhibit
- Fully flesh out the personalities and stories that are paired with each disease and theme
- Research all graphics, videos, and objects/specimens to be used
- Continue multimedia development

## MAIN MESSAGES

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*Outbreak* provides an opportunity to link science, natural history, and humanitarian issues in the minds and hearts of its visitors, sparking curiosity and inspiring planet-savvy citizens. To achieve this objective, the Core Team has developed and refined the exhibition's key messages over the past several months. The main and supporting messages will promote better understanding of the ecology of our rapidly changing planet and our connection to it:

### Human health, animal health, and environmental health are intimately connected.

Most emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) originate from wildlife. Human activities greatly influence the distribution and abundance of wildlife species and may also change how disease-causing agents are transmitted. This integrated three-part perspective, sometimes called “One Health,” is essential to understanding outbreaks.

- While there are similarities, no two outbreaks are the same. Microbes, viruses, and other pathogens are always evolving and mutating. Environmental and other factors impact the trajectory and duration of an outbreak.
- Effective responses to outbreaks of infectious disease are, by necessity, multidisciplinary and international. Doctors, public health workers, ecologists, biologists, veterinarians, epidemiologists, linguists, anthropologists, economists, and communications specialists are just some of the people who predict, prevent, and respond to EIDs.
- Outbreaks have broad, and sometimes unexpected, societal consequences beyond the final death toll. Societal infrastructure—family connections, cultural traditions, and local and national economies—can be stressed to the breaking point. Survivors often bear the burden of these consequences for years after. Outbreaks can also prompt improved detection and health regulations for future outbreaks.

## CONSTANT EVALUATION

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Throughout the development and design process, the team will conduct a formative evaluation of concepts, tone, graphics, and exhibition components to ensure that messages are communicated clearly and in an engaging manner.

## EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMING

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The Museum will begin related educational programming this fall, prior to the exhibition's opening. A diverse offering of public programs will extend the reach, breadth, and depth of the exhibition through experts, media, and activities. After discussion with *Outbreak* advisors, types of outreach will include:

- Film – both documentary and popular series
- Speaker series – experts representing national, international, and local interests and perspectives
- Audio podcasts - from zoonotic disease-themed “Nerd Night DC,” and gaming events at local venues
- Q?rius experiences - hands-on, self-guided activities tied to the exhibit and Museum research
- Exhibit experiences - facilitated by volunteers stationed within the exhibition

## PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING

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In only a few short months, the Museum has raised over \$1.2M for this project. With both \$1.5M and \$3M budget options for the exhibition, this initial fundraising success has enabled the Museum to proceed with the \$3M option. Our generous supporters include the Skoll Global Threats Fund, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Page Family Foundation Donor Advised Fund, and Lyda Hill. Additional proposals have been presented to Rite-Aid (declined), Open Philanthropy, Johnson & Johnson, Express Scripts, Wellcome Trust, and Rabin Martin. The Museum is actively pursuing other sources of support for the completion of the exhibition, including a presentation to potential Smithsonian donors at the CDC Museum in Atlanta in October.

Preliminary conversations are underway with the World Health Organization, USAID, and the U.S. State Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding collaborations, partnerships, and funding. At the invitation of US Ambassador, Bonnie Jenkins, a representative from the *Outbreak* team may present at the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) meeting in the Netherlands this October.

With additional funds, the Core Team envisions maximizing the exhibition's global impact. By designing a “pop-up” version of the exhibition and distributing digital design files to venues around the world, the Museum can provide a low-cost tool to extend *Outbreak* messaging beyond its two- to three-year run in Washington. This version of the exhibition could be expanded or contracted based on local resources, produced in flexible materials, translated into any language, updated to include local content and placed, through the help of partnerships, in communities facing emerging outbreaks and in key policy sites worldwide.

## LOOKING AHEAD

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The Museum needs your help to achieve its project goals. Please contact the *Outbreak* team with any suggestions you may have related to sources of additional partnership and support.

*Outbreak* is already on the path to becoming a blockbuster. The next phase of development is crucial as our exhibition team solidifies key stories, featured personalities, and completes its design approach. Your continued support and enthusiasm will be instrumental during this process.