

FROM THE COVER



New York Times file photo

**Equipment is deep-cleaned at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. Germs have grown resistant to some drugs.**

FUNGUS

From page A1

rip out some of the ceiling and floor tiles to eradicate it.

C. auris is so tenacious, in part, because it is impervious to major antifungal medications, making it a new example of one of the world's most intractable health threats: the rise of drug-resistant infections.

For decades, public health experts have warned that the overuse of antibiotics was reducing the effectiveness of drugs that have lengthened life spans by curing bacterial infections once commonly fatal. But lately, there has been an explosion of resistant fungi as well.

"It's an enormous problem," said Matthew Fisher, a professor of fungal epidemiology at Imperial College London. "We depend on being able to treat those patients with antifungals."

Simply put, fungi, just like bacteria, are evolving defenses to survive modern medicines. A study the British government funded projects that if policies are not put in place to slow the rise of drug resistance, 10 million people could die worldwide of all such infections in 2050, eclipsing the 8 million expected to die that year from cancer.

Antibiotics and antifungals are essential to combat infections in people, but antibiotics are also used widely to prevent disease in farm animals, and antifungals are also applied to prevent agricultural plants from rotting. Some scientists cite evidence that rampant use of fungicides on crops is contributing to the surge in drug-resistant fungi infecting humans.

Yet as the problem grows, it is little understood by the public – in part because the very existence of resistant infections is often cloaked in secrecy. With bacteria and fungi alike, hospitals and local governments are reluctant to disclose outbreaks for fear of being seen as infection hubs.

C. auris, which infected the man at Mount Sinai, is one of dozens of dangerous bacteria and fungi that have developed resistance. Yet, like most of them, it is a threat that is virtually unknown to the public.

Other prominent strains of the fungus Candida – one of the most common causes of bloodstream infections in hospitals – have not developed significant resistance to drugs, but more than 90 percent of C. auris infections are resistant to at least one drug, and 30 percent are resistant to two or more drugs, the CDC said.

Nearly half of patients who contract C. auris die within 90 days, according to the CDC. Yet the world's experts have not nailed down where it came from in the first place.

"It is a creature from the black lagoon," said Dr. Tom Chiller, who heads the fungal branch at the CDC. "It bubbled up and now it is everywhere."

In late 2015, Dr. Johanna Rhodes, an infectious disease expert at Imperial College London, got a panicked call from the Royal Brompton Hospital outside London. C. auris had taken root there months earlier, and the hospital couldn't clear it.

"We have no idea where it's coming from. We've never heard of it. It's just spread like wildfire," Rhodes said she was told. She agreed to help the hospital identify the fungus' genetic profile and clean it from rooms.

It was spreading, but word of it was not. The hospital, a specialty lung and

heart center that draws wealthy patients from the Middle East and around Europe, alerted the British government and told infected patients, but made no public announcement.

This hushed panic is playing out in hospitals around the world. Individual institutions and national, state and local governments have been reluctant to publicize outbreaks of resistant infections, arguing there is no point in scaring patients – or prospective ones.

The secrecy infuriates patient advocates, who say people have a right to know if there is an outbreak. "Why the heck are we reading about an outbreak almost a year and a half later – and not have it front-page news the day after it happens?" said Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, chairman of Health Watch USA, a nonprofit patient advocacy group.

Health officials say disclosing outbreaks frightens patients about a situation they can do nothing about. "It's hard enough with these organisms for health care providers to wrap their heads around it," said Dr. Anna Yaffee, a former CDC outbreak investigator. "It's really impossible to message to the public."

Officials in London did alert the CDC to the Royal Brompton outbreak while it was occurring. And the CDC realized it needed to get the word to U.S. hospitals. On June 24, 2016, the CDC blasted a nationwide warning and set up an email address, candidaauris@cdc.gov, to field queries. Dr. Snigdha Vallabhaneni, a key member of the fungal team, expected to get a trickle – "maybe a message every month."

Instead, within weeks, her inbox exploded. In the U.S., 587 cases of people having contracted C. auris have been reported, according to the CDC. The symptoms – fever, aches and fatigue – are seemingly ordinary, but when a person gets infected, particularly someone already unhealthy, such commonplace symptoms can be fatal.

As the CDC works to limit the spread of drug-resistant C. auris, its investigators have been trying to answer the vexing question: Where in the world did it come from?

The first time doctors encountered C. auris was in the ear of a woman in Japan in 2009. It seemed innocuous at the time, a cousin of common, easily treated fungal infections. Three years later, it appeared in an unusual test result in the lab of Dr. Jacques Meis, a microbiologist in Nijmegen, Netherlands, who was analyzing a bloodstream infection in 18 patients from four hospitals in India. Soon, new clusters of C. auris seemed to emerge with each passing month in different parts of the world.

When the CDC investigators compared the entire genome of auris samples from India and Pakistan, Venezuela, South Africa and Japan, they found that its origin was not a single place, and there was not a single auris strain. The genome sequencing showed there were four distinctive versions of the fungus, with differences so profound they suggested that these strains had diverged thousands of years ago and emerged as resistant pathogens from harmless environmental strains in four different places at the same time.

The mystery of C. auris' emergence remains unsolved, but for the moment, it seems to be less important than stopping its spread.



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San Jacinto Community College District (SJCCD)

Generation Park Campus Academic Building

Tellepsen Builders, L.P., serving as CMAR for the San Jacinto College District, requests Guaranteed Maximum Price proposals for the SJC Generation Park Academic Building – Package 3. Included in this package is Concrete, Steel Fabrication and Steel Erection.

Proposals are due to Tellepsen Builders, L.P. at 2:00 P.M. local time on Thursday 18, April 2019. Complete bid forms and proposals are to be uploaded to the Smart Bid Net System. To receive your invitation to Smart Bid, please contact Paul Bain by email at [pbain@tellepsen.com](mailto:pbain@tellepsen.com) or phone at 281-272-4922. If you are unable to upload your proposal, please contact Paul Bain to discuss alternative delivery methods.

All proposals shall remain valid for 90 days. The owner, CM at Risk and Architect reserve the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informalities and irregularities in the proposal process and to make awards in the best interest of the San Jacinto Community College District.

Project Documents and Specifications are available at the following locations for respondents to review for preparation of their Proposals:

- Tellepsen's Houston Office - 777 Benmar, Suite 400, Houston, TX 77060
- SmartBidNet- By Invitation
- AGC - Houston - 3825 Dacoma St., Houston, TX 77092 (713-843-3700)
- Contact Paul Bain at (281-272-4922) or [pbain@tellepsen.com](mailto:pbain@tellepsen.com) for information.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) is planning to issue the procurement documents listed in this advertisement. **IFB No. 4019000102: Bike and Sidewalk Enhancements along the Red Line (Cavalcade between Fulton and Airline).** Solicitation will be available on or about 04/7/2019.

Prospective bidders/proposers can view and download these solicitations by visiting METRO's website at <https://www.ridemetroapp.org/procurement/>. If you are unable to download the documents or are having difficulty, please contact METRO Plan and Bid Room at (713) 739-4881.

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Request for Proposals RFP 19-02

Phase I Environmental Assessment Services

The Harris County Housing Authority ("HCHA") is requesting proposal submissions from experience environmental consultants to conduct Phase I Environmental Assessment(s) for sites/properties identified by the Harris County Housing Authority. This project will be federally funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department through the Texas General Land Office (GLO), and administered by the Harris County Community Services Department (HCCSD). Bidders shall comply with regulations governing the CDBG Disaster Recovery Program. Applicable requirements include, but are not limited to compliance with the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts, Fair Labor Standards, Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968, and contracting with small, minority, and disadvantage firms, as detailed in the RFP Packet. **Proposals Due:** April 29, 2019 at 2:00 PM. **Proposal Submission - Sealed submissions shall be submitted to:** Harris County Housing Authority, 8933 Interchange Drive, Houston, TX 77054. Attn: Affordable Housing Department. RFP #19-02 will be posted on and can be downloaded from HCHA's website [www.hchatexas.org](http://www.hchatexas.org).

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) is planning to issue the procurement documents listed in this advertisement.

**IFB No. 4019000090:** For Landscaping Maintenance Services for Various Undeveloped Properties. Solicitation will be available on or about 04/8/2019.

**IFB No. 4019000088:** For Purchase and Delivery of Brake Overhaul Kits for METRO's Rail Vehicles. Solicitation will be available on or about 04/8/2019

**IFB No. 4019000091:** For Purchase and Delivery of Cummins ISL Engines for METRO Transit Vehicles. Solicitation will be available on or about 04/8/2019

**IFB No. 4019000092:** For Purchase and Delivery of Allison Transmissions for METRO's Transit Vehicles. Solicitation will be available on or about 04/8/2019

Prospective bidders/proposers can view and download these solicitations by visiting METRO's website at <https://www.ridemetroapp.org/procurement/>

If you are unable to download the documents or are having difficulty, please contact METRO Plan and Bid Room at (713) 739-4881.

**Sealed Proposal Solicitation #RN11-19 Houston-Galveston Area Council Cooperative Purchasing Program Rentals-Equipment & Portable Facilities**  
Pre-Proposal Conference: 4/30/19 @ 9am  
Response Deadline: 6/26/19 @ 1pm  
Public Opening: 6/26/19 @ 2pm  
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX.  
Per ADA, reasonable accommodation provided with 24 hour prior notice.  
713-993-4554 or [www.hgacbuy.org](http://www.hgacbuy.org) for info

Sealed request for proposals addressed to Spring Branch Independent School District, ATTN: Director of Purchasing will be received in the SBISD Purchasing Office at 1031 Witte RD, BLDG T-1A, Houston, TX 77055-6016 until:

**MAY 1, 2019 @ 2:00 PM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR STUDENT TRAVEL RELATED SERVICES (13367)**

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE APRIL 17, 2019 @ 10:00 AM at the SBISD Purchasing Department, 1031 Witte Rd., Bldg. T-1A, Houston, TX 77055.**

Proposals will be publicly opened and read at 1031 Witte Road, Building T-1A, Houston, TX 77055, immediately following the deadline for the receiving of the proposals.

For information contact the SBISD Purchasing Department at (713) 251-1103

Proposers may register on Ion Wave website at: <https://springbranchisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

**Competitive Sealed Proposals addressed to Spring Branch Independent School District, ATTN: Director of Purchasing will be received in the SBISD Purchasing Office at 1031 Witte RD, BLDG T-1A, Houston, TX 77055-6016 until:**

**APRIL 24, 2019 @ 11:00 AM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR STUDENT ACCIDENT, CATASTROPHIC & UIL INSURANCE COVERAGE (13331)**

Proposals will be publicly opened and read at 1031 Witte Road, Building T-1A, Houston, TX 77055, immediately following the deadline for the receiving of the proposals.

For information contact the SBISD Purchasing Department at (713) 251-1107

Proposers may register on Ion Wave website at: <https://springbranchisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

Sealed request for proposals addressed to Spring Branch Independent School District, ATTN: Director of Purchasing will be received in the SBISD Purchasing Office at 1031 Witte RD, BLDG T-1A, Houston, TX 77055-6016 until:

**MAY 1, 2019 @ 11:00 AM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR EMPLOYEE TRAVEL RELATED SERVICES (13365)**

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE APRIL 17, 2019 @ 10:00 AM at the SBISD Purchasing Department, 1031 Witte Rd., Bldg. T-1A, Houston, TX 77055.**

Proposals will be publicly opened and read at 1031 Witte Road, Building T-1A, Houston, TX 77055, immediately following the deadline for the receiving of the proposals.

For information contact the SBISD Purchasing Department at (713) 251-1103

Proposers may register on Ion Wave website at: <https://springbranchisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

Sealed request for proposals addressed to Spring Branch Independent School District, ATTN: Director of Purchasing will be received in the SBISD Purchasing Office at 1031 Witte RD, BLDG T-1A, Houston, TX 77055-6016 until:

**APRIL 25, 2019 @ 1:00 PM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR OUTSOURCED ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE SERVICES (13339)**

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE APRIL 9, 2019 @ 11:00 AM at the SBISD Purchasing Department, 1031 Witte Rd., Bldg. T-1A, Houston, TX 77055.**

Proposals will be publicly opened and read at 1031 Witte Road, Building T-1A, Houston, TX 77055, immediately following the deadline for the receiving of the proposals.

For information contact the SBISD Purchasing Department at (713) 251-1137

Proposers may register on Ion Wave website at: <https://springbranchisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

Sealed request for proposals addressed to Spring Branch Independent School District, ATTN: Director of Purchasing will be received in the SBISD Purchasing Office at 1031 Witte RD, BLDG T-1A, Houston, TX 77055-6016 until:

**APRIL 25, 2019 @ 1:00 PM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SERVICES (13338)**

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE APRIL 9, 2019 @ 1:00 PM at the SBISD Purchasing Department, 1031 Witte Rd., Bldg. T-1A, Houston, TX 77055.**

Proposals will be publicly opened and read at 1031 Witte Road, Building T-1A, Houston, TX 77055, immediately following the deadline for the receiving of the proposals.

For information contact the SBISD Purchasing Department at (713) 251-1137

Proposers may register on Ion Wave website at: <https://springbranchisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

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**APRIL 25, 2019 @ 1:00 PM FOR: ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SERVICES (13338)**

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Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION FOR TPDES PERMIT FOR MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER RENEWAL PERMIT NO. WQ0011563001

APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION.

Reid Road Municipal Utility District No. 1, c/o Smith, Murdaugh, Little & Bonham, L.L.P., 2727 Allen Parkway, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77019, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a renewal of Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0011563001, which authorizes the discharge of treated domestic wastewater at an annual average flow not to exceed 1,750,000 gallons per day. TCEQ received this application on September 4, 2018.

The facility is located at 10015 Gusty Winds Drive, in Harris County, Texas 77064. The treated effluent is discharged to Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) ditch E128-00-00, thence to Whiteoak Bayou in Segment No. 1017 of the San Jacinto River Basin. The unclassified receiving water use is minimal aquatic life use for HCF CD ditch E128-00-00. The designated uses for Segment No. 1017 are limited aquatic life use and primary contact recreation. This link to an electronic map of the site facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and is not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application, <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/np610/index.html?lat=29.924722&lng=-95.568888&zoom=13&type=r>.

The TCEQ Executive Director has completed the technical review of the application and prepared a draft permit. The draft permit, if approved, would establish the conditions under which the facility must operate. The Executive Director has made a preliminary decision that this permit, if issued, meets all statutory and regulatory requirements. The permit application, Executive Director's preliminary decision, and draft permit are available for viewing and copying at the Fairbanks Branch Library, 1212 North Gessner, Houston, Texas.

**PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC MEETING.** You may submit public comments or request a public meeting about this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ holds a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING.** After the deadline for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. Unless the applicant directly referred for a contested case hearing, the responses to comments will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application. If comments are received, the mailing will also provide instructions for requesting a contested case hearing or reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision. A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in a state district court.

**TO REQUEST A CONTESTED CASE HEARING, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR REQUEST:** your name, address, phone number; applicant's name and proposed permit number; the location and distance of your property/activities relative to the proposed facility; a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the facility in a way not common to the general public; a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period; and the statement "If I/we request a contested case hearing." If the request for contested case hearing is filed on behalf of a group or association, the request must designate the group's representative for the hearing. In future correspondence, identify by name and physical address an individual member of the group who would be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity; provide the information discussed above regarding the affected member's location and distance from the facility or activity; explain how and why the member would be affected; and explain how the interests the group seeks to protect are relevant to the group's purpose.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for reconsideration or for a contested case hearing to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material water quality concerns submitted during the comment period. TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit for discharge of wastewater without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION.** The Executive Director may issue final approval of the application unless a timely contested case hearing request or request for reconsideration is filed. If a timely hearing request or request for reconsideration is filed, the Executive Director will not issue final approval of the permit and will forward the application and request to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

**MAILING LIST.** If you submit public comments, a request for a contested case hearing or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for this specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk. In addition, you may request to be placed on: (1) the permanent mailing list for a specific applicant name and permit number; and/or (2) the mailing list for a specific county. If you wish to be placed on the permanent and/or the county mailing list, clearly specify which list(s) and send your request to TCEQ Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

All written public comments and public meeting requests must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087 or electronically at [www.tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html) within 30 days from the date of newspaper publication of this notice.

**INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE.** For details about the status of the application, visit the Commissioners' Integrated Database at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid). Search the database using the permit number for this application, which is provided at the top of this notice.

**AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION.** Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at [www.tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html), or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Any personal information you submit to the TCEQ will become part of the agency's record; this includes email addresses. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep). Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Reid Road Municipal Utility District No. 1 at the address stated above or by calling 713-867-Bissit, P.E., Landev Engineers, Inc., at 713-569-2402.

Issuance Date: March 14, 2019

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