# Former CDC director warns of potential bird flu pandemic with high mortality rate



Former CDC director Robert Redfield has warned that bird flu may trigger the next global pandemic, with a potential mortality rate between 25% and 50%, significantly higher than COVID-19. His remarks come following the World Health Organization's confirmation of the first human death from the H5N2 bird flu strain in a 59-year-old man from Mexico.

Dr. Redfield expressed concerns during an interview with NewsNation, emphasizing the likelihood of a bird flu pandemic. The United States has already experienced several outbreaks impacting dairy cattle and poultry, with four human infections reported among farmworkers displaying mild symptoms like coughing and conjunctivitis. All cases thus far have shown no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

Worldwide, between 2003 and 2024, there have been 889 human H5N1 cases resulting in 463 deaths, a mortality rate of 52%. Redfield highlighted that once the bird flu virus mutates to attach to human receptors and spreads between humans, a pandemic could ensue. The risk currently remains low according to the CDC, but the situation is being closely monitored.

Redfield’s concerns extend to the virus's presence in U.S. cattle and the potential for lab-based modifications, referencing past research that identified necessary amino acid changes to make bird flu highly infectious for humans. The CDC is tracking wastewater sites to monitor the spread.