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# Panama: Precautions To Prevent Cholera Epidemic

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## **Panama: Precautions To Prevent Cholera Epidemic**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On April 16, Health Minister Carlos Castro Charpentier announced a nationwide "health alert" to prevent the spread of cholera. The minister said an emergency fund is available to health authorities to help diagnose the disease, and to implement preventive programs. Castro Charpentier said the government was in the processing of acquiring an incinerator to destroy solid wastes taken from airliners arriving in Costa Rica and Panama from South American countries. The first cases of cholera were reported in Peru on Jan. 23. Since then, the disease has spread to Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador. Thus far, the official death toll from cholera in Peru is 1,100, and about 140,000 persons have been infected. According to unofficial sources, the real death toll is closer to several thousand. In Ecuador, about 7,000 cases of cholera have been diagnosed, and at least 30 persons have died. Unconfirmed cholera cases have also been reported in Panama, Honduras and Nicaragua. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 04/16/91)

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