JOHN: Hi Lanni, welcome to the CDC. I’m John Reams, the team leader for this investigation. I’m glad to say I’m going to be working with you on your first assignment. We really need you to hit the ground running. I’m putting together a team – well, I’ve put together a team, to be more accurate, and you’re on it.

You’ve walked right into what we think is... an event. Maybe you’ve noticed some of the media accounts – Listeriosis. Too many cases in too many places. We’ve been getting multi-state reports, starting in mid-July. I’ve asked Leif Turner, he is one of our microbiologists, and Mashonda Wise, a CDC investigator, to fill you in on why we think it’s a national outbreak. Then I will outline your first assignments.

LEIF: Hey, Lanni. Glad to be working with you. About the listeriosis – We’ve ruled out an artificial increase in cases. I consulted with the state offices reporting, and there’s no significant increase in the culturing of stools or new testing being initiated.

There doesn’t appear to be laboratory errors in identifying infections or any issues regarding contamination of cultures. No change in reporting procedures, and no apparent errors in data entry.

MASHONDA: Nice to know you, Lanni. Regarding the listeriosis reports, they pretty clearly signal a real increase in cases. However, the reports also clearly show that the events are not due to population increases or any change in population characteristics, such as an influx of higher risk individuals. There are too many cases for this to be just random.

The outbreak pretty much crosses the continent. We’ve had reports from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico... Well, the list goes on and on. So... We are dealing with a national outbreak.

JOHN: Well, Lanni, any questions? If not, let me outline some next steps you need to complete relatively quickly. There is lab work on PFGE results that needs to be reviewed. You also need to interview Tasha Samorov – Mashonda will introduce you – about our policies on public information and communication during an outbreak. Then you will need to get started on the case definition.