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September is Suicide Prevention Month

The Military Crisis Line, online chat and text-messaging service is confidential and free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to all service members, including members of the National Guard and reserve, veterans and their families. Speak confidentially with a trained, caring Veterans Affairs responder, and get connected to services that can make a difference.

The Defense Department BeThere Peer Support Call and Outreach Center provides targeted help for any area of life to active duty, National Guard and reserve members and their families. The call and outreach center is staffed by veterans and military spouses and is available 24/7/365 by phone, text or live chat.

U.S. MILITARY

Challenges with diagnosing and investigating suspected active tuberculosis disease in military trainees

August 2017 - Between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2016, a total of 14 U.S. and international military personnel in training at Joint Base San Antonio–Lackland, TX, were hospitalized due to suspected pulmonary tuberculosis (TB); of these, five personnel were diagnosed with active TB disease. Only one TB case had pulmonary symptoms, but these symptoms were not suggestive of TB. The incidence rate in the training population was 1.89 per 100,000 population, with a higher rate when restricted to international military students attending the Defense Language Institute English Language Center. No instances of TB transmission were identified. The variety of atypical presentations and their resulting diagnostic and public health challenges prompted this retrospective review of all hospitalized cases. This case series highlights both the importance of a high index of clinical suspicion when TB is being considered in close congregate settings as well as the risk of overreliance on acid-fast bacilli staining and nucleic acid amplification testing for ruling out active pulmonary disease in young, otherwise healthy trainees.

Medical Surveillance Monthly Report

Pa. senators propose health screenings near bases with tainted water

13 September - ... Contamination from military use of firefighting foam, which contains chemicals known as PFOS and PFOA, has sparked fear and frustration among communities near bases from Pennsylvania to Washington state. ... The amendment, proposed by Sens. Pat Toomey (R, Pa.) and Bob Casey (D., Pa.) would require the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to choose eight areas affected by the contamination for “biomonitoring,” which looks at the chemicals to which people have been exposed and what remains in their bodies. Testing would begin within six months and be done within two years. ... It would provide some more immediate data as the CDC also embarks on a five-year health analysis, for which Congress has already authorized $7 million. The Inquirer

The suicide contagion: How the effort to combat veterans’ suicide may be making it worse

6 September - ... [T]he extraordinary awareness campaigns aimed at preventing veteran suicide may bear some responsibility for its increase. By endlessly repeating the message
that veterans are at risk, these campaigns have unwittingly created an unconscious narrative with its own seductive effects: In the post-9/11 era, to be a veteran is to be fragile, to be damaged, to be at risk. And for men and women who joined the military in search of a higher purpose, a community and an identity, only to find all three still lacking after they’ve returned to civilian life (or even before), the magnetic pull of this new identity can be hard to resist. As counterintuitive as it is to embrace a perception of oneself as traumatized, it may seem preferable to the sense of isolation and lack of certainty that many of us experience upon our return. And if our comrades — the men and women we served with, the people with whom we forged some of the most powerful bonds of our lives — begin to commit suicide, is it any wonder we might consider joining them? Task and Purpose

Trump taps Delawarean to lead military health care amid transgender controversy

12 September - President Donald Trump’s nominee to head military health care prefers to avoid politics, even as the ooze of political machinations coats nearly every action taken by the administration, including a recent move to ban transgender people from the military. Retired Colonel Dr. Dean Winslow would rather … focus on increasing what he calls “tooth-to-tail” ratios, military parlance for directing services to troops rather than administration. "We want to make sure we squeeze as much efficiency as we can out of the military healthcare system," said the former flight surgeon, who served part time for 35 years in the Air National Guard with deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. … [H]e prepares to face the U.S. Senate during a confirmation hearing likely to occur in October. Delaware Online

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GLOBAL

As 'flesh-eating' Leishmania come closer, a vaccine against them does, too

13 September - ... Parasites that ulcerate the skin, can disfigure the face, and may fatally mutilate its victim's internal organs are creeping closer to the southern edges of the United States. No vaccine is available against Leishmania yet, but researchers have now come closer to changing that. A new experimental vaccine, made with a proprietary biological particle developed at the Georgia Institute of Technology, has immunized laboratory mice that were genetically altered to mimic the human immune system. The vaccine exploits a weakness in Leishmania's tricky chemical camouflage, which normally hides it from the victim's disease-fighting cells, to trigger a forceful immune response against the parasite, according to a new study. Medical Xpress
Bill Gates: Strides in global health at risk if rich nations pull back

13 September - The world is making enormous strides in areas such as child mortality, HIV and extreme poverty, but if the U.S. and other countries pull back funding, that progress could slow, said Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft. When it comes to HIV, for example, “if we had a 10 percent cut in the funding, we’d have 5 million more deaths by 2030,” said Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. ... In 1970, the U.N. created a target — governments would spend 0.7 percent of their annual gross domestic income in international aid. While the U.S. is the largest international aid contributor, it hasn’t reached the 0.7 mark. Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates are among countries that have met or exceeded the 0.7 target. Gates said he is concerned that some wealthy nations appear to be reconsidering their commitment to global humanitarian funding. Gates said he is concerned that some wealthy nations appear to be reconsidering their commitment to global humanitarian funding. VOA

Former CDC chief launches $225 million global health initiative

12 September - Tom Frieden, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is starting a new initiative to tackle some of global health’s thorniest issues: cardiovascular disease and epidemics. Frieden ... said he chose those two issues based on his “unique vantage point of surveying the world and seeing where there were areas that really are at a tipping point.” Strategic investment and action in each of these areas can make substantial differences, he said. The $225 million initiative, called Resolve ... aims to reduce the global burden of heart disease and stroke, the world’s leading causes of death. It also will focus on helping low- and middle-income countries fight infectious disease epidemics by strengthening laboratory networks so emerging threats are identified promptly, and training disease detectives to track and investigate disease outbreaks, including those that circulate in animals and jump to humans. ... The initiative’s five-year funding is coming from some of the biggest names in global public health: Bloomberg Philanthropies ($100 million), the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative ($75 million) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation ($50 million). The Washington Post

Groups announce launch of large controlled malaria infection study

8 September - In the largest-ever controlled malaria infection study, PATH’s Malaria Vaccine Initiative and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) today announced the launch of a clinical trial to test modifications to the vaccine regimen of Glaxo Smith Kline’s RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine candidate. The trial includes 160 US adult volunteers who have begun receiving their vaccinations, which involve various regimens using two different formulations. According to a PATH press release, the participants will be exposed to malaria
Health at a planetary scale

13 September - ... While human health is now, by most metrics, better than it’s ever been, ongoing planetary changes threaten to reverse that progress. These threats require a new approach to health research and health policy—a new paradigm that has come to be called “planetary health.” ... Planetary health asserts that human beings cannot thrive over time while degrading the ecological life support systems that sustain us. Like traditional public health, it defines health broadly, including physical, mental and social well-being; it considers health not just as an individual attribute, but across entire populations; and it pays special attention to those who are most vulnerable. ... The planetary health framework is now shaping research in domains from river ecology to urban planning, from nutrition to land use. Politico

MERS mortality linked to age, illness severity, hospital infection

12 September - Advanced age, severe illness, and hospital-acquired infections top the list of predictors of mortality for MERS patients measured at 3 days, 30 days, and 45 days after initial diagnosis, according to a study yesterday in BMC Infectious Diseases. ... Patients over the age of 60 were more likely to die from their infections than were younger patients. ... Patients with preexisting illness were twice as likely to die and those with hospital-acquired infections almost three times as likely to die in the 30-day mortality window compared with previously healthy patients. And illness severity was associated with a 6.5-fold increased risk of death 3-days post-infection. The strongest association was between non-healthcare workers and mortality; non-healthcare workers had a 19.2 times increased risk of death at 30 days as healthcare workers. CIDRAP

Extreme rain, flooding, and health

9 September - The unprecedented volume of rain and floods during the past few weeks is difficult to comprehend. More than 1400 people in south Asia are dead and tens of millions more have been affected by extreme monsoon rains. The worst flooding in 100 years has left one third of Bangladesh submerged. In Nepal, almost half a million people are food insecure. More than 7000 schools have been damaged in India at the height of the exam season, with the result that many children will not complete their education. In Pakistan, the
floods hampered celebrations of Eid al-Adha. Typhoon Hato, the strongest storm in the region for 50 years, battered Macao, Hong Kong, and southern China. In Sierra Leone, 499 people died in mudslides, 150 of them children. In the USA, the Gulf States of Texas and Louisiana are reeling after Hurricane Harvey. ... In *The Lancet Planetary Health* this month, Giovanni Forzieri and colleagues predict that weather-related disasters could affect up to two-thirds of Europeans by the end of the century, with an accompanying 50-fold increase in climate-related deaths from 3000 to 152 000 annually. *The Lancet*

**Hurricane season public health preparedness, response, and recovery guidance for health care providers, response and recovery workers, and affected communities — CDC, 2017**

13 September - CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) have guidance and technical materials available in both English and Spanish to help communities prepare for hurricanes and floods (*Table 1*). To help protect the health and safety of the public, responders, and clean-up workers during response and recovery operations from hurricanes and floods, CDC and ATSDR have developed public health guidance and other resources; many are available in both English and Spanish (*Table 2*). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*

**Life after the storm: Children who survived Katrina offer lessons**

8 September - The children upended by Hurricane Katrina have no psychological playbook for the youngsters displaced by Harvey, or those in the path of Irma. ... Thousands of children will have to adjust on the fly, bussed for hours to new schools from makeshift housing. Texas officials are scrambling to coordinate mental health support; the state’s psychology board is issuing temporary licenses for out-of-state therapists. ... Therapists ... have found no equations, no way to predict who will be laid low, who will adjust or who will become stronger. But they do recognize some distinctive effects of hurricanes. Unlike an earthquake or a fire, flooding from a storm like Katrina or Harvey leaves many houses and buildings still physically standing but uninhabitable, simultaneously familiar and strange, like a loved one sinking into dementia. Surveys done in the first seven years after Katrina found that the rate of diagnosable mental health problems in the New Orleans area jumped by 9 percent – a sharper spike than after other natural disasters – and the effects did not discriminate much by race or income. *The New York Times*

**Tetanus in areas affected by a hurricane: Risk, prevention, and management guidelines for clinicians**

12 September - Exposure to flood waters does not increase the risk of tetanus. Therefore, tetanus immunization campaigns for evacuees from flooding disasters are not needed. However, during evacuation and flood cleanup, emergency responders, cleanup workers,
and volunteers may be at increased risk for wounds. These workers should make sure they are up to date with tetanus vaccination before starting cleanup activities. IDSA

HARVEY

Air pollution from industry plagues Houston in Harvey's wake

14 September - ... The benzene plume in Manchester was one of dozens of unplanned air emissions caused by Harvey's flooding, some during the storm, others occurring for weeks after the rain stopped. Much of the public health focus in Houston has been on the hazards posed by flood waters, but the city is also facing a crisis in air quality. Even under normal circumstances, "air quality is a big problem in Houston," says Loren Raun, the chief scientist for the Houston Health Department. "We put out more emissions than any other city." At least 7 million pounds of pollutants have been emitted in and around Houston as a result of the storm so far, according to an analysis by the Environmental Defense Fund. And there is more to come. Much of the pollution is the result of refineries shutting down and restarting, which releases petrochemicals into the air. The Environmental Defense Fund warns that about half the refineries in the region still are not operating at full capacity, and as they restart facilities, they'll release more pollution. NPR

Harvey floodwaters still pose significant health threat, testing shows

13 September - It's been nearly three weeks since Harvey hovered over south Texas, dumping historic amounts of rain that left Houston and the surrounding region flooded for weeks. Waters have receded in most places but what remains contains toxic levels of contaminants, new tests reveal. Testing of floodwaters organized by the New York Times and conducted by Baylor College of Medicine and Rice University indicates that some Houston neighborhoods have dangerous levels of harmful contaminants, including lead, arsenic and bacteria like E. coli. In one apartment complex along Houston's Buffalo Bayou, levels of E. coli, which comes from fecal matter, were tested in one kitchen at levels 135 times what is considered safe. Weather.com

In scathing lawsuit, first responders describe vomiting, gasping at Texas chemical plant fire

7 September - A group of first responders exposed to smoke from a Crosby, Tex., chemical plant fire after Hurricane Harvey are suing the owner of the plant for more than $1 million. ... The responders allege that the plant owner, Arkema, minimized the dangers of exposure to the fire and failed to warn the responders manning the perimeter of the mandatory 1.5 mile evacuation area to move farther away from the fumes after the first of nine trailers full of volatile organic peroxide burst into flames in the early nighttime hours of Aug. 29. ... Separately, the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday ordered Arkema, a French
multinational company, to provide a detailed timeline of events and to respond within 10 days to questions about the handling of organic peroxides, which are combustible if not kept refrigerated, the amount of chemical materials, and the measures taken in advance to guard against flooding and loss of electricity. The Washington Post

Texas calls in U.S. Air Force to counter post-storm surge in mosquitoes

12 September - Texas has launched aerial attacks on mosquitoes swarming coastal regions of the state and threatening to spread disease and hinder disaster recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. U.S. Air Force C-130 cargo planes began spraying insecticides over three eastern Texas counties over the weekend and will expand to other areas over the next two weeks, officials from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) said. About 1.85 million acres have been treated as of Tuesday, according to the department. Officials hope the spraying can avoid outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases. ... Most mosquitoes that appear after floods are not the disease-carrying varieties but can hurt recovery operations by swarming residents and disaster workers during cleanup efforts, said DSHS spokesman Chris Van Deusen. Reuters

The looming Superfund nightmare

12 September - ... David Gray, the acting deputy regional administrator for the EPA’s Region 6 office, which includes Texas, told me evaluations have continued. ... “EPA completed site assessments at all 43 Superfund sites affected by the storm,” Gray wrote in an email. “Of these sites, two (San Jacinto and U.S. Oil Recovery) require additional assessment efforts.” ... There are several Resource Conservation and Recovery Act–managed areas—active dumping or waste sites being managed by the EPA—around Houston, too. But Superfund sites contain some of the worst hazards—old plants and dumps that operated before the EPA’s rules were in place—the mitigation of which requires federal oversight and funding. Environmentalists told me after Harvey that the agency may not be up to the task, and that its readiness is in decline. The Atlantic

IRMA

Florida nursing home where 8 died after Hurricane Irma previously cited for generator issues

14 September - The Florida nursing home where eight people died Wednesday in a scorching facility that lost its air conditioning after Hurricane Irma roared through had been previously cited by the state for having generator and maintenance issues. ... After responding to three calls early Wednesday about patients there in distress, firefighters went through the facility and found three people dead and evacuated more than 150 patients to hospitals. By the afternoon, five more had died. The medical examiner’s office said the victims were five women and three men, ages 70 to 99. ... Hollywood Police Chief Tom Sanchez said at a news conference. ... that investigators believe the deaths were heat-
related and said the building has been sealed off and a criminal investigation underway. 

Fox News

Hurricane Irma survivors describe horror in Caribbean

13 September - Hurricane Irma survivors on the hardest-hit islands in the Caribbean fear they will be forgotten after the storm left "apocalyptic" destruction in its wake, wiping out homes and leaving many residents desperate and without power, running water and food. ... But President Emmanuel Macron of France, which governs several of the islands in the Caribbean, promised that no one would be forgotten. ... "This is unseen, and we cannot compare it to another known weather event in the last decades," Macron said in Guadeloupe, asserting that France had mobilized "one of the biggest air bridges [of relief] since the Second World War." At least 53 people across the Caribbean and the Southeastern United States were killed by Irma, which at its peak was a Category 5 hurricane, the strongest there is. The storm wreaked havoc across Barbuda, St. Maarten/St. Martin, the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Cuba before turning its eye on Florida. MSN

Irma death toll in U.S. climbs to 22 as power is restored to over 2 million Florida customers

12 September - The death toll from Hurricane Irma has climbed to 22 in the United States following its path of destruction across the Caribbean and through the Southeast U.S. over the weekend, while power has now been restored to over 2 million customers in Florida. By late Tuesday, Florida Power & Light Co. had restored power to 2.3 million customers, which was 40 percent of those affected across the state; about 4.4 million customers in Florida are still without power as of Tuesday afternoon. ABC News

Irma recovery: Fla. Department of Health warns of risks from displaced animals

12 September - The Florida Department of Health in Orange County has advised people to protect themselves from animals that may have been displaced by Irma’s rain. Snakes may be swimming in the water to get to higher ground and could be hiding under debris or other objects. If you see a snake, back away slowly and don’t touch it. ... During floods, fire ant colonies are capable of floating in clusters or "rafts." Do not disturb or stand on or near ant mounds. Colonies can also form under rocks, wood or other debris on the ground, edges of bodies of water, trash cans and areas with food or sugary drinks. ... Rodents often relocate in search of food, water and shelter. Removing food, water and items that provide shelter for rodents is the best way to prevent contact. AJC.com

Mosquitoes, carbon monoxide and chemicals are big post-Irma health concerns

11 September - ... State and federal health authorities have warned residents to be on the
lookout for mold in their homes, strange rashes on their bodies, stray jagged items in standing water that can lead to infected wounds, and depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as those affected try to stitch their lives back together. ... Here are some lesser-known health threats that Americans face: ... Carbon monoxide poisoning. After hurricanes, people often struggle without power for days or even weeks. Many people set up generators to provide much-needed electricity while they clean up their homes. ... Experts say the gas poses a poisoning risk when the devices are used improperly. ... Chemicals. The winds and storm surge that sweep onto the land during and after a hurricane can unleash dangerous chemicals, as floodwaters inundate industrial sites, overflow sewage and wastewater treatment facilities, and drench agricultural sites. ... Mosquitoes. ... “[T]he initial run of mosquitoes is not too much of a disease threat - although a huge nuisance to people. But it’s the next run we really need to be concerned about.” ... Chronic illnesses. The aftermath of a hurricane can spark a variety of health problems, from respiratory illnesses caused by mold outbreaks to infected wounds. But a potentially larger problem for some people is the lack of access to medications and treatment for chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and kidney disease. ... Mental health. It’s no surprise that natural disasters can traumatize people, so it perhaps follows that hurricanes can exacerbate mental illness. The Washington Post

Thousands of U.S. troops continue to support Hurricane Irma rescue and recovery operations

12 September - The Army has positioned more than 16,700 soldiers as well as civilians from the Army Corps of Engineers in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and continental United States to assist with recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Irma. More than 150 boats, 3,400 trucks and 680 generators are in use or have been made available to governors of states and territories where the hurricane made landfall. ... The active Army is involved as well. The 101st Airborne Division, of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is positioning its helicopters to be used in search and rescue operations and resupply of food, water, medical supplies and other necessities the state may need. The 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is overseeing the Army’s wheeled-vehicle effort, officials said. A convoy of about 100 high-water vehicles and nearly 400 soldiers are on their way from Fort Bragg to help locate and rescue people trapped by the flooding. Additionally, more than 950 airmen are supporting Hurricane Irma rescue and recovery operations, with another roughly 800 airmen assisting in Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, Air Force spokeswoman Erika Yepsen said in an email Monday. Air Force C-5s and C-17s from multiple bases are bringing supplies, including helicopters, to Homestead Air Reserve Base, which is just south of Miami, to support search-and-rescue operations. Rescue missions already underway have evacuated more than 1,000 U.S. citizens from St. Maarten, Yepsen said. ... In addition to soldiers and airmen, the USS Abraham Lincoln, a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, arrived off Florida’s east coast Sunday night with 24 helicopters, according DoD. The USS Iwo Jima, an amphibious assault ship, and the USS New York, an amphibious transport dock, are expected to arrive today, as well. The ships will participate in rescue and recovery missions in south Florida and the Florida Keys. Military Times
INFLUENZA

CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

2016-2017 Influenza Season Week 35 ending September 2, 2017 - Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: Based on National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality surveillance data available on September 7, 2017, 5.0% of the deaths occurring during the week ending August 19, 2017 (week 33) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 5.9% for week 33. CDC

China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus

13 September - On 18, 25 August and 4 September 2017, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China (NHFPC) notified WHO of four additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus in China. ... To date, a total of 1562 laboratory-confirmed human infections with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus have been reported through IHR notification since early 2013. WHO
ECDC: Flu News Europe


- Influenza activity was at out-of-season levels in all countries. All reporting countries continued to report low intensity of influenza activity.
- Influenza viruses were detected sporadically both in sentinel and non-sentinel specimens, with both influenza type A and B viruses detected.
- For week 34/2017, data from the 20 countries or regions reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated all-cause mortality to be at expected levels.

European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO

NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report

7 September - Febrile respiratory illness cases:

- Military Recruits - 21 positive of 63 tested
- CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance and Zika Surveillance - 8 positive of 24 tested
- DoD Beneficiaries – 15 positive of 43 tested. Naval Health Research Center

What to know about a study of flu vaccine and miscarriage

13 September - Researchers studying the flu vaccine in pregnancy have found a hint of a possible link between miscarriage early in pregnancy and the flu vaccine in women who received a certain version of the vaccine two years in a row. It’s the first study to identify a potential link between miscarriage and the flu vaccine and the first to assess the effect of repeat influenza vaccination and risk of miscarriage. The findings suggest an association, not a causal link, and the research is too weak and preliminary, experts said, to change the advice, which is based on a multitude of previous studies, that pregnant women should get a flu vaccine to protect them from influenza, a deadly disease that may cause serious birth defects and miscarriage. The Washington Post

VDN / FOOD SAFETY

CDC discovers fourth *Salmonella* outbreak linked to papayas

12 September - Federal and state officials are investigating another deadly *Salmonella* outbreak traced to papayas imported from Mexico, but they have not named retailers that
sold the contaminated fruit. At least 14 people across Arizona, California and Colorado have been confirmed with the outbreak strain of Salmonella Anatum, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One person has died. At least five have required hospitalization. A dozen of the victims live in California. At least four of them reported buying and eating papayas from the same retail chain before becoming ill. The Salmonella Anatum identified in lab samples collected from the victims match the strain of that type of Salmonella found by the Food and Drug Administration on papayas imported by Bravo Produce Inc. of San Isidro, CA. Food Safety News

Floodwater pathogens can’t be washed off of fresh produce

12 September - The state of Florida produces more fresh fruits and vegetables than any other state except California, and is the top tomato state in the country. As with backyard gardens, Hurricane Irma has turned many of Florida’s commercial fruit and vegetable fields into patches of pathogens that can’t be washed away. Even the thick rinds of pumpkins and melons cannot protect the edible portion of the produce if it has been exposed to floodwater. From the Food and Drug Administration to county extension agents, experts on fresh produce are warning of the dangers of eating fresh produce that has been touched by floodwaters. “Fresh fruits and vegetables that have been inundated by flood waters cannot be adequately cleaned and should be destroyed,” according to the FDA. Food Safety News

Pet-store puppies linked to Campylobacter outbreak in people

12 September - ... The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is investigating a Campylobacter outbreak in people and its link to puppies purchased from a chain of pet stores. According to the CDC, at least 39 people across seven states have confirmed or suspected cases of Campylobacter bacteria, which can cause diarrhea, abdominal pain and fever. While the investigation is ongoing, federal officials have linked it to contact with puppies sold by Petland, a chain of pet stores based in Ohio. Twelve of the confirmed cases are in Petland employees, and 27 other people who fell ill either visited a Petland, recently purchased a puppy there, or visited or live in a home with a Petland puppy. According to the CDC’s announcement, nine people have been hospitalized and there are no reported deaths. NPR
WELLNESS

Child psychiatric disorders tied to in utero antidepressant exposure

12 September - Antidepressant use during pregnancy is tied to an increased risk of psychiatric illnesses, especially mood disorders, in children, according to a new study. The overall risk is low, though. Only about 3 percent of the nearly 905,383 children in the study were diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder by age 16. But compared to the children of women who took antidepressants before pregnancy but not during, kids whose mothers continued taking the medications in pregnancy were 27 percent more likely to be diagnosed with mood, anxiety, behavioral or autism spectrum disorders. Reuters

Eating in synch with your body clock may help curb fat gain

11 September - Timing meals relative to your own body clock, rather than to the time of day, may affect how lean you are, researchers suggest. Studies have shown that eating later in the day ups your risk of weight gain. However, the impact of a person’s body (biological) clock - independent of the time of day - has not been tested until now. … [Study subjects] with a higher percentage of body fat - 8.7 percent higher in women and 10.1 percent higher in men - ate most of their calories about an hour closer to the time of melatonin onset than did lean participants. … “While it’s not possible to know the timing of your melatonin onset without having it measured very precisely in dim lighting, we tend to think that melatonin levels rise about two hours prior to habitual sleep onset,” McHill explained. Reuters

Get up, stand up!

13 September – … [In a] new study [scientists] turned to an extensive database of existing health information about tens of thousands of Caucasian and African-American men and women 45 or older who were part of a study of stroke risk. The participants had undergone a battery of health tests and about 8,000 of them also had worn accelerometers for a week to track their daily movements. … The scientists … stratified these participants into various groups, depending on how many hours per day each person had sat, as well as how long each of the bouts of sitting had continued, uninterrupted. … About 5 percent of the participants of all ages had died during the follow-up period. … The men and women who sat for the most hours every day, according to their accelerometer data, had the highest risk for early death, especially if this sitting often continued for longer than 30 minutes at a stretch. It also was barely lowered if people exercised regularly. The New York Times
U.S. suicide attempts up most among younger adults, less educated

13 September - Young adults with low levels of education and people with mental health disorders bore the greatest burden of a recent increase in suicide attempts in the U.S., a new study shows. Suicide prevention efforts may need to focus most on those two groups, the research team suggests. ... [T]he rate of suicides in the U.S. increased about 2 percent between 2006 and 2014. One way to reduce suicides is to target prevention strategies toward people at high risk, such as people who recently tried to kill themselves, Offson and colleagues note. They cite a Swedish study in which the rate of suicide in the year after a suicide attempt was 100 times higher than the rate in the general population. Reuters

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Democratic Republic of the Congo: Over 500 dead as Congo cholera epidemic spreads

10 September - More than 500 people have died so far in a cholera epidemic that is sweeping the Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. Outbreaks of the water-borne disease occur regularly in Congo, mainly due to poor sanitation and a lack of access to clean drinking water. But this year's epidemic, which has already hit at least 10 urban areas including the capital Kinshasa, is particularly worrying as it comes as about 1.4 million people have been displaced by violence in the central Kasai region. The WHO said at least 528 people had died and the epidemic had spread to 20 of Congo's 26 provinces. ... So far, health officials have recorded more than 24,000 suspected cases of the disease across the vast nation this year, averaging more than 1,500 new cases per week since the end of July. Reuters

Nigeria: Referral challenge hits bid to contain cholera in Nigeria's northeast

12 September - Efforts to contain a cholera outbreak that has struck more than 1,000 people in refugee camps in northeast Nigeria are being hampered because people are failing to report suspected cases to authorities, a United Nations official said. Health officials in Borno, the northeastern state at the epicenter of both an insurgency by Islamist militant group Boko Haram and the disease outbreak, said the number of suspected cholera cases had jumped to 1,626 as of Sept. 11. Forty people had died, it said, up from the 23 reported by the U.N. on Sept. 6. ... Aside from Muna Garage, the nearby camps of Custom House, Ruwan Zafi and Bolori II have also reported cholera cases. Reuters
Tanzania: High levels of resistant bacteria found in Tanzanian street children

13 September - A study yesterday in *PLoS One* found a high incidence of fecal carriage of extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing Enterobacteriaceae among street children in Mwanza city, Tanzania, a port city of almost 3 million people. The researchers analyzed stool samples obtained from 107 street children in 2015 and found ESBL-producing Enterobacteriaceae (EPE) in 34 of them (32%). Out of 36 isolates from the 34 children, 36 (100%), 35 (97%), 25 (69%), and 16 (44%) were resistant to tetracycline, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, ciprofloxacin, and gentamicin, respectively. ... The authors say their study "highlights the need for multidisciplinary approaches to understand the epidemiology and drivers of antimicrobial resistance in low-income countries."

CIDRAP Stewardship/Resistance Scan (second item)

USCENTCOM

Kyrgyzstan: Anthrax outbreak reported in Naryn region, Kyrgyzstan

10 September - Officials in Kyrgyzstan are reporting an anthrax outbreak in the At-Bashinsky district of the Naryn region in eastern Kyrgyzstan, according to a local media account (computer translated). Currently, three people are in the hospital, another 15 are under medical supervision. Doctors say the individuals contracted the dangerous bacterial infection cutting animal carcass. About 10 days later, the appearance of skin ulcers on the hands and forearms were noted. Outbreak News Today

Oman: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

12 September - On 30 August 2017, the national IHR focal point of Oman reported one case of Middle East respiratory syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The last report of MERS-CoV from Oman was on 29 November 2016. Detailed information concerning the case, a 54-year-old male living in Al Musanaa Batinah region. ... Globally, 2080 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV including at least 722 related deaths have been reported to WHO. WHO
USEUCOM

Italy: Ongoing outbreak with well over 4,000 measles cases in Italy from January to end August 2017 – what is making elimination so difficult?

14 September – We report an ongoing measles outbreak in Italy, with over 4,400 cases reported in 20 Regions from January to August 2017. Median age was 27 years, 88% of the cases were unvaccinated. The highest incidence was in infants below one year of age and 7% of cases occurred among healthcare workers. Three deaths occurred and two cases of encephalitis were reported. Wide immunity gaps and nosocomial transmission are major challenges to measles elimination in Italy. Eurosurveillance

Italy: Outbreak of disease carried by mosquitoes halts blood donation in Rome

14 September - Italian health officials have banned residents across half of Rome from donating blood because of an outbreak of the painful, mosquito-borne illness Chikungunya. At least 17 people in southeastern Rome have been diagnosed with the virus since the end of August, and the local health authority decided to suspend blood donations in the affected areas to prevent accidental transmission. The ban covers some 1.2 million residents. Anyone who has visited the affected area of the capital since Aug. 25 should not give blood for 28 days. Reuters

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USNORTHCOM

Mexico: Death toll from southern Mexico's big earthquake rises to 96

11 September - The death toll from Mexico's 8.1 magnitude earthquake rose to 96 on Monday as more victims were confirmed in the hard-hit southern states of Oaxaca and Chiapas and residents worked to repair shattered homes and small businesses. ... As funerals continued for the disaster's victims, teams of soldiers and federal police with shovels and sledgehammers fanned out to help demolish damaged buildings across the southern city of Juchitan, which was hit particularly hard. Volunteers, many of them teens from religious or community groups in surrounding towns that came through in better shape, turned out in force to distribute water and clothing or lend a hand. At a leafy technological school turned into a shelter, a couple hundred people have been sleeping in
classrooms or on thin mattresses laid out under trees since the quake last week. Everyone cited fear of aftershocks as their reason for staying, including those whose homes were still standing. CNN

U.S.: 2 more Americans were affected by Cuba health attacks

12 September - Two more Americans have been confirmed to be affected by unexplained health attacks against U.S. diplomats in Cuba, the United States said Tuesday, raising the total number of victims to 21. The additional two individuals appear to be cases that were only recently reported but occurred in the past. The State Department said no new, medically confirmed "incidents" have taken place since the most recent one in late August. Earlier this month, the U.S. disclosed there had been another incident in August after previously saying the attacks had stopped. ... The U.S. citizens were members of the American diplomatic community, the U.S. said. Officials have said previously that the incidents, deemed "health attacks" by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, affected diplomats posted to the Embassy in Havana along with family members who live with them. ... The union representing American diplomats has said mild traumatic brain injury is among the diagnoses given to some diplomats victimized in the attacks. The American Foreign Service Association has said permanent hearing loss was another diagnosis, and additional symptoms had included brain swelling, severe headaches, loss of balance and "cognitive disruption." ABC News

U.S.: Army soldiers help fight fires in Oregon

11 September - U.S. Army soldiers from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, in Washington State, are helping fight fires in southern Oregon. 200 soldiers have been deployed to the Umpqua North Complex of Fires, which has burned nearly 40,000 acres east of Roseburg. When federal firefighting resources are tapped, military troops can be deployed to help. Captain Tony Sagastizado says the soldiers of US Army Task Force Spearhead completed their training on Saturday and went to work on the fire lines Sunday. NWPR

U.S.: Drug For 'neglected' Chagas disease gains FDA approval amid price worries

10 September - The Food and Drug Administration recently approved the first U.S. treatment for childhood cases of Chagas disease — a parasite-driven illness that, over time and unless treated early, can cause serious heart problems in about a third of the people it infects. There are perhaps 300,000 cases in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the illness is much more common in Latin America, where it affects millions. ... On Aug. 29 the FDA gave the global drug company Chemo Group approval to market its drug benznidazole in the U.S. The approval came via a fast-track process the agency says it uses for drugs that can be used to treat "serious conditions where there is unmet medical need." NPR
**U.S.: 'Impressed' FDA panel unanimously recommends GSK shingles vaccine**

13 September - A U.S. Food and Drug Administration advisory panel on Wednesday voted 11-0 that the safety and efficacy of GlaxoSmithKline's Shingrix shingles vaccine warrants approval for its use in adults aged 50 and over. Panel members said they were "very impressed" by efficacy data from Shingrix clinical trials, and that it represents an improvement over Zostavax, the only marketed shingles prevention vaccine from Merck & Co. Reuters

**U.S.: Is all that wildfire smoke damaging my lungs?**

11 September - It's an unusually bad wild fire season in the West, and for weeks people across the region have been breathing air thick with smoke. "There's smoke from Canada, smoke from Idaho, smoke from California and Montana. There's smoke everywhere," says Greg Svelund, a spokesman for Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality. A quick look at the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Now website shows unhealthy or hazardous air conditions all over the Pacific Northwest and into Northern California, Idaho and Montana. ... For most people, the risk of any serious complications, like chest pain, irregular heart beat or even heart attack, is minimal. But for people who have underlying heart conditions or respiratory illnesses — such as asthma or chronic lung disease — exposure to wildfire smoke can be serious. Other high-risk groups include people over 65, children (whose lungs are still developing) and pregnant women, because of the risk to the fetus. NPR

**U.S.: NIOSH adds nine chemicals to skin notation profiles**

11 September - ... Because of the significant risk to chemicals in the workplace, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has published new skin notation profiles to “alert workers and employers to the health risks of skin exposures to chemicals in the workplace.” ... Originally published in the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards, the profiles provide supplemental information to the skin notation. ... The new chemicals include:

- Arsenic and inorganic arsenic containing compounds
- Disulfoton
- Heptachlor
- 1-Bromopropane
- 2-Hydroxypropyl acrylate
- Dimethyl sulfate
- Tetraethyl lead
- Tetramethyl lead
U.S.: San Diego is power-washing streets with bleach amid hepatitis outbreak

13 September - California’s San Diego County is in the middle of a major hepatitis A outbreak that has led to 16 deaths and almost 300 people being hospitalized, according to its Health and Human Services Agency. County health officials declared a local public health emergency on Sept. 1. Since November 2016, 421 cases of hepatitis A have been reported, according to the California Health Alert Network. ... Patients have ranged from 5 to 87 years old. “The majority of people who have contracted hepatitis A are homeless and/or illicit drug users, although some cases have been neither,” the Health and Human Services Agency said. To battle the outbreak, officials in the city of San Diego are planning to power-wash streets with bleach every other week. The bleach solution reportedly will be used predominantly on streets occupied by the homeless population. Additionally, officials have installed dozens of hand-washing stations in San Diego County, and the Health and Human Services Agency is distributing hygiene kits that contain hand sanitizer, cleansing wipes, bottled water, an informational flyer and a waste bag. U.S. News and World Report

U.S., Texas: Rabies alert: - Two bats found dead last week in Buda, health officials warn

11 September - The city of Buda is warning the public about two bats found dead that state health officials are treating as possible cases of rabies. One bat was found dead Sept. 3 near Whispering Hollow Park in the 100 block of Joy Hollow. Another dead bat turned up last Thursday around 6 p.m. in the 400 block of Faircrest Drive near Bradfield Village Park. Health officials said the bats were too decomposed to test for rabies, but the state is treating the bats as positive rabies cases as a precaution. Statesman

U.S.: The health care crisis facing rural moms

13 September - An alarming new study by the Rural Health Research Center at the University of Minnesota shows a huge gap in a vital area of health services -- maternity care. Giving birth is becoming more complicated and potentially more dangerous for the 28 million women of childbearing age who live in America's rural counties, according to the report, which looked at the availability of obstetric services in 1,984 rural counties over a 10-year period. A major finding: More than half -- 54 percent -- of rural counties had no hospitals with obstetric services in 2014, a jump from 45 percent in 2004. The decline in maternity services was greatest in counties with large African-American populations and in states with strict rules for Medicaid eligibility. ... This dearth of rural maternal care might be exacerbated by the recent push to make severe cuts in Medicaid. CBS News
U.S.: The U.S. thought it was rid of hookworm. Wrong

12 September - The U.S. thought it wiped out hookworm decades ago. But a new study shows that it never truly went away. ... [A] new study has uncovered a community of people infected with hookworm in Alabama. The study, published this month, found that 19 of 55 individuals tested positive for the worm. ... Lowndes County, Alabama, is one of the poorest counties in the U.S. — so poor that many residents lack proper sewage systems. Unable to afford a septic system, residents concoct their own sewer line using PVC piping, the researchers observed. The pipe runs from the toilets in their homes and stretches off some 30 feet above ground until it reaches a small ditch. “This seems safe to [the residents],” says Dr. Rojelio Mejia, a pediatrician and infectious disease specialist at the Baylor College of Medicine who led the hookworm study. “But Alabama is very hilly and any drizzle of rain causes flooding, so whatever they delivered to the site spreads to the entire area, including their neighbors’ area.” The soil in the area, Mejia adds, also drains poorly, worsening the situation. NPR

U.S.: U.S. Census Bureau records improvements in income, poverty and health coverage

12 September - The U.S. Census Bureau released a trio of reports Tuesday on income, poverty and health insurance coverage. All three measures showed improvement. Real median household income increased by 3.2 percent in 2016 over the previous year, and now stands at just over $59,000. The official poverty rate fell for the second year in a row to 12.7 percent. ... Health insurance coverage increased in 2016. 8.8 percent of Americans were without health insurance. That’s a slight improvement. Still, that means 28 million people did not have health insurance last year. NPR

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China: Northern China smog cuts life expectancy by 3 years versus south

11 September - Air pollution caused by coal-fired winter heating has slashed life expectancy in northern China by more than three years compared with the south, according to a new study, underlining the urgency of Beijing’s efforts to tackle smog. Researchers with the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) said average lifespans north of the Huai river, where China supplies mostly coal-fired winter heat, were 3.1 years lower than in the south, which is not covered by the state heating policy. EPIC’s study cites long-term smog exposure as a primary cause of the difference. In a statement, EPIC said its study examined pollution and mortality data in 154 cities from 2004 to 2012, and found higher
death rates were due entirely to increases in cardiorespiratory illnesses. Reuters

Brazil: Brazil declares end to yellow fever outbreak that killed 261

6 September - Brazil’s Health Ministry has declared an end to a yellow fever outbreak that killed more 250 people over the past nine months. The ministry said Wednesday that the last case of the mosquito-borne disease was in June. In total, 777 people were infected, of whom 261 died. STAT

Peru: Peru reports child infected with rare Elizabethkingia meningoseptica

7 September - A 3-year-old girl from from Tingo María, Leoncio Prado Province in central Peru is in a Lima hospital (Hospital Dos de Mayo with) a serious infection with a “unusual” bacteria. In fact, according to an El Comercio report (computer translated), she is the only case of Elizabethkingia meningoseptica infection reported in Peru. The child has been hospitalized for nearly two months suffering from widespread infection, organ failure and necrosis of the hands and feet. Outbreak News Today
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