

2 September 2016

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Command.

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## Notice:

There will be no Army  
Public Health Weekly  
Update next week.

Publication will resume  
on 16 September 2016.

## Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please [contact us](#). We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Former senator pledges to support vets in Fukushima lawsuit

31 August - Former Sen. John Edwards has pledged to support hundreds of U.S. sailors, Marines and airmen who say they were sickened by radioactive fallout from the 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. U.S. forces participated in relief efforts after a 9.0-magnitude earthquake triggered a tsunami that battered swaths of northeastern Japan, including the plant. Edwards ... has offered his "legal and personal assistance" to the plaintiffs after hearing about their lawsuit against the Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the plant. ... The plaintiffs maintain that TEPCO lied about the risk of radiation exposure, luring American forces closer to the affected areas and lulling others at bases across Japan into disregarding safety measures. [Stars and Stripes](#)

### Full metal racket

30 August - ... [T]he Department of Veterans Affairs ranks hearing loss as the number one disability among vets. At least 60 percent of those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan—some 600,000 vets—suffer permanent hearing loss or tinnitus, a chronic ringing in the ears. It's also the fastest-growing of all postwar disabilities, more than doubling over the past decade, and among the most costly in terms of lost productivity. ... War is loud and getting louder. The F-35 fighter jet, which was declared operational in 2015, is among the most deafening flying machines ever created—four times louder than the F-16. ... More firepower also means more noise. The crack of the military's standard-issue pistol, the M9, is nearly as loud as the F-35. And the Mach 7 boom of the Navy's new rail guns and other "kinetic weapons systems" are eight times louder than traditional artillery systems. [New Republic](#)

### In the wake of scandal, Wounded Warrior Project outlines significant overhaul

31 August - Wounded Warrior Project officials are firing half of their executives, closing nine offices and redirecting millions in spending to mental health care programs and partnerships as part of an organization overhaul in the wake of spending scandals earlier this year. Mike Linnington, a retired Army lieutenant general who took over as CEO of the embattled organization earlier this year, said the moves aren't an indictment of past practices at the charity but a recognition of changes needed to keep the group relevant and providing the best resources possible to veterans. ... The moves come months after the 13-year-old organization came under attack for accusations of exorbitant staff salaries, lavish corporate retreats and other reckless corporate spending. [Military Times](#)

### New Army Medicine mission, vision

25 August - Army Medicine has a new mission and vision. Mission: Army Medicine provides

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## CDC: Key Zika Considerations for Healthcare Settings

Zika is a mosquito-borne disease that is currently spreading throughout many countries and territories, including a small area in the continental United States. CDC recommends that healthcare systems (including urgent care, hospitals, physician offices, etc.) prepare for patients seeking a diagnosis and /or symptom management.



sustained health services and research in support of the Total Force to enable readiness and conserve the fighting strength while caring for our Soldiers for Life and Families. Vision: Army Medicine is the Nation's premier expeditionary and globally integrated medical force ready to meet the ever-changing challenges of today and tomorrow. End State: Army Medicine of 2025 and beyond, as an integrated system for health, is the Nation's first choice for prompt and sustained expeditionary health services. [Army Times](#)

## US set to destroy big chemical weapon stockpile



31 August - The U.S. Army plans to start operating a \$4.5 billion plant next week that will destroy the nation's largest remaining stockpile of mustard agent, complying with an international treaty that bans chemical weapons, officials said Wednesday. The largely automated plant at the military's Pueblo Chemical Depot in southern Colorado will

begin destroying about 780,000 chemical-filled artillery shells soon after this weekend, said Greg Mohrman, site manager for the plant. He declined to be specific, citing security concerns and possible last-minute delays. ... Robots will dismantle the shells, and the plant will use water and bacteria to neutralize the mustard agent, which can maim or kill by damaging skin, the eyes and airways. At full capacity, the facility can destroy an average of 500 shells a day operating around the clock. It's expected to finish in mid-2020. [AP](#)

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## GLOBAL

## An informatics approach to evaluating combined chemical exposures from consumer products

August 2016 - ... Simultaneous or sequential exposure to multiple environmental stressors can affect chemical toxicity. Cumulative risk assessments consider multiple stressors but it is impractical to test every chemical combination to which people are exposed. ... We introduce an informatics approach that uses publicly available data to identify chemicals that co-occur in consumer products, which account for a significant proportion of overall chemical load. ... Fifty-five asthma-associated and endocrine disrupting chemicals (target chemicals) were selected. ... Nearly one-third of the products (11,688 products, 30%) contained  $\geq 1$  target chemical and 5,229 products (13%) contained  $> 1$ . ... The most frequent three-way chemical combination (2-phenoxyethanol, methyl paraben, and ethyl paraben) appears in 1,059 products. ... The informatics approach increased the number of products considered in a traditional analysis by two orders of magnitude, but missing/incomplete product labels can limit the effectiveness of this approach.

[Environmental Health Perspectives](#)

**Sexual Health  
Training  
28-29 Sep 2016**

The [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center - Sexual Health and Responsibility Program](#) will conduct sexual health training at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

**Promoting Sexual Health in Military Populations.**

Wednesday 28 Sep  
0800-1600

**STI 101 for Non-Clinicians:**

Thursday 29 Sep  
0800-1100:

**Management of the STI Patient:**

Thursday 29 Sep  
1200-1600

Seats are limited and controlled by the local host. There is no registration fee. Open to all DoD-affiliated people. Travel funding and arrangements are the responsibility of the student's organization.

**Registration:**

(808)433-8681/867  
DSN:(315)433-8681



## Antibiotic resistance prompts new WHO STD guidance

30 August - Because of rapidly increasing resistance to antibiotics, the World Health Organization (WHO) today announced revised treatment recommendations for three sexually transmitted diseases (STDs): gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia. Though antibiotic resistance has been growing for all three conditions, health officials worry most about gonorrhea, because multidrug-resistant strains have already been detected that don't respond to any available antibiotics, making those infections untreatable. The WHO said the need for the update on gonorrhea—the first since 2003—was urgent. The WHO said although antibiotic resistance in chlamydia and syphilis is less common, prevention and prompt treatment are critical. [CIDRAP](#)

## Convalescent serum fails to protect monkeys from Ebola virus

30 August - Blood serum from rhesus monkeys that had survived Ebola virus (EBOV) infection offered little protection to other rhesus monkeys that were treated with the serum several days after exposure to the virus. ... In the study, nine monkeys were infected with Zaire Ebola virus (ZEBOV). Three days later, 4 of the monkeys were treated with serum from rhesus monkeys that had previously survived ZEBOV infection, 3 received serum from monkeys that had survived Sudan EBOV (SEBOV) disease, and 2 received no treatment. The monkeys that survived long enough received more treatments on days 6 and 9. All 4 monkeys treated with the ZEBOV convalescent serum died on days 8 and 9, and 2 of the 3 monkeys that received SEBOV serum died on days 7 and 9. The 2 control animals succumbed on day 9. ... "We conclude that convalescent sera treatment initiated in [monkeys] at the onset of viremia is not an effective therapeutic, particularly when compared to the recent successes of the small interfering RNA and ZMapp therapeutics at advanced stages of disease," the authors concluded. [CIDRAP Ebola Scan](#) (first item)

## Ebola virus lasts in semen for up to 565 days: study

31 August - The largest analysis yet has found Ebola virus particles present in semen as long as 565 days after recovery from an infection, highlighting the potential role of sex in sparking another outbreak, researchers reported on Tuesday. The study ... involved 429 men seen between July 2015 and May 2016 who were part of the Liberian government's Men's Health Screening Program (MHSP), the first national semen testing program for Ebola virus. Of the participants, 38 men tested positive during the study period. Within this group, 24 men, or nearly two thirds, had semen samples that tested positive for Ebola fragments a year after recovering from disease. Ebola tended to linger longer in men over age 40, the researchers said. In one case, Ebola was detected at least 565 days after a man recovered from his illness. [Reuters](#)

## How wily Lyme disease prowls the body

25 August - ... *B. burgdorferi* uses a special adhesive protein on its surface to grab like a

## Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

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hook onto the endothelial cells that line blood vessels, attaching and detaching rapidly as it migrates to its destination, the Toronto microbiologists explain in a new study. .... "This mechanism is how the bacteria can overcome the fast flow of blood and avoid getting swept away," says lead author Rhodaba Ebady. It is also likely that this tactic helps the pathogens get to sites where they are able to evade the immune system and treatment, Ebady says. [Scientific American](#)

## More than 300 million at risk of life-threatening diseases from dirty water: U.N.

30 August - More than 300 million people in Asia, Africa and Latin America are at risk of life-threatening diseases like cholera and typhoid due to the increasing pollution of water in rivers and lakes, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said. Between 1990 and 2010, pollution caused by viruses, bacteria and other micro-organisms, and long-lasting toxic pollutants like fertilizer or petrol, increased in more than half of rivers across the three continents, while salinity levels rose in nearly a third, UNEP said in a report on Tuesday.

[Reuters](#)

## New virus breaks the rules of infection

25 August - ... A team at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases has found a mosquito virus that's broken up into pieces. And the mosquito needs to catch several of the pieces to get an infection. ... Most viruses have simple architecture. They have a few genes — say about a half-dozen or so — that are packaged up into a little ball. ... But that's not the case for the *Guaico Culex* virus. It has five genes. And each one gets stuffed into a separate ball. Imagine five tennis balls, each with a different color: a red tennis ball, a blue one, a green one, a yellow one and an orange one. Then to get infected with the virus, a mosquito needs to catch at least four different colored balls, researchers write. ... The study is part of a larger project aimed at figuring out what viruses, in addition to Zika and yellow fever, could be lurking inside mosquitoes and possibly waiting to spill over into people. [NPR](#)

## NIH review finds nondrug approaches effective for treatment of common pain conditions

1 September - Data from a review of U.S.-based clinical trials published today in Mayo Clinic Proceedings suggest that some of the most popular complementary health approaches ... appear to be effective tools for helping to manage common pain conditions. ... The review focused on U.S.-based trial results on seven approaches used for one or more of five painful conditions — back pain, osteoarthritis, neck pain, fibromyalgia, and severe headaches and migraine — and found promise in the following for safety and effectiveness in treating pain:

- Acupuncture and yoga for back pain
- Acupuncture and tai chi for osteoarthritis of the knee
- Massage therapy for neck pain with adequate doses and for short-term benefit
- Relaxation techniques for severe headaches and migraine. [NIH](#)

## Vipers, mambas and taipans: the escalating health crisis over snakebites

30 August - ... Snakebites are a growing public-health crisis. According to the World Health Organization, around 5 million people worldwide are bitten by snakes each year; more than 100,000 of them die and as many as 400,000 endure amputations and permanent disfigurement. ... Many of those bites are treatable with existing antivenoms, but there are not enough to go around. This long-standing problem became international news in September 2015, when Médecins Sans Frontières ... announced that the last remaining vials of the antivenom Fav-Afrique, used to treat bites from several of Africa's deadliest snakes, were about to expire. The French pharma giant Sanofi Pasteur in Lyons had decided to cease production in 2014. ... Many [experts] want to use synthetic biology and other high-tech tools to develop a new generation of broad-spectrum antivenoms. Others argue that existing antivenoms are safe, effective and low cost, and that the focus should be on improving their production, price and use. [Scientific American](#)

## ZIKA VIRUS

### All U.S. blood donations should be screened for Zika, FDA says

26 August - The Food and Drug Administration is recommending that blood banks screen all blood donations in the U.S. for the Zika virus. It's a major expansion from a Feb. 16 advisory that limited such screening to areas with active Zika virus transmission. In a statement released Friday, the FDA says all those areas are currently in compliance with blood screening, but that expanded testing is now needed. "As new scientific and epidemiological information regarding Zika virus has become available, it's clear that additional precautionary measures are necessary," the FDA's acting chief scientist, Luciana Borio, said in the statement. [FDA](#)

### Army, Coast Guard hardest hit by Zika

25 August - The Army and Coast Guard are bearing the brunt of Zika infections among military personnel and their families, accounting for more than half the 75 cases since May, according to data released by the Pentagon. Of the troops, family members and retirees confirmed to have contracted the virus as of Aug. 17, 37 are soldiers or their dependents, and 17 are Coast Guardsmen or their family members. According to the Defense Department report, 55 troops, including active duty, National Guard and reservists, have been diagnosed with Zika, as have 12 family members and eight military retirees. The Air Force has seen 11 cases, the Navy, six, and the Marine Corps, four cases. [Military Times](#)

## Guess how many Zika cases showed up at the Olympics?

26 August - Not 1,000. Not 50. Not even 10. Zero. "There have so far been no laboratory confirmed cases of Zika virus in spectators, athletes or anyone associated with the Olympics," the World Health Organization said Thursday on its website. Now, no cases doesn't mean no one caught Zika at the Summer Games. About 80 percent of people who get infected don't know it. They don't have any symptoms. And those who do get sick often have only mild symptoms. So the vast majority of cases go unreported. But so far, it's looking like predictions from computer models were pretty much spot on: Zika wasn't a big threat in Rio de Janeiro during the Olympics. Back in the spring, several computer scientists built models for how Zika is spreading in Latin America. They predicted there would be — at most — 16 cases at the games. And the chance a fan or athlete would bring Zika home with them after the games was very low. [NPR](#)

## Guillain-Barré Syndrome during ongoing Zika virus transmission — Puerto Rico, January 1–July 31, 2016

26 August - ... Countries affected by Zika virus have reported increased numbers of cases of [Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)]. ... Among 56 patients with suspected GBS who had onset of neurologic symptoms during January 1–July 31, 2016, evidence of Zika or other flavivirus infection was present in 34 (61%), including 10 (18%) with confirmed Zika virus infection. The median age of the 34 patients was 55 years, and 59% were female. Thirty (88%) patients reported an acute illness before developing neurologic symptoms, with median time to onset of neurologic symptoms of 5 days. One patient died from septic shock after treatment for GBS. Additionally, evidence of Zika virus or flavivirus infection was detected in seven patients with neurologic disorders other than GBS.

[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## NIH collaboration helps advance potential Zika treatments

29 August - Researchers at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) recently identified compounds that potentially can be used to inhibit Zika virus replication and reduce its ability to kill brain cells. These compounds now can be studied by the broader research community to help combat the Zika public health crisis. ... Using NCATS' drug repurposing screening robots, researchers identified two classes of compounds effective against Zika: one is antiviral, and the other prevents Zika-related brain cell death. The compounds include emricasan, an investigational drug currently being evaluated in a clinical trial to reduce liver injury and fibrosis, and niclosamide, a U. S. Food and Drug Administration-approved drug for use in humans to treat worm infections. [NIH](#)

## Singapore confirms 41 cases of locally transmitted Zika virus

28 August - Singapore has confirmed 41 cases of locally transmitted Zika virus, mostly among foreign construction workers, and said it expected more cases to be identified. All but seven of those infected have fully recovered, the Health Ministry and the National Environment Agency said in a joint statement on Sunday. Those seven remained hospitalized. ... The authorities said they had tested 124 people, primarily foreign construction workers employed on a site in the same part of Singapore. Work at the site was ordered halted, and workers' dormitories were being inspected. Seventy-eight people tested negative, and five cases were pending. Thirty-four patients have fully recovered.

[The New York Times](#)

## Study suggests size of Zika epidemic may be underestimated

31 August - A study ... coordinated by researchers at the São José do Rio Preto Medical School (FAMERP) in São Paulo State, Brazil, suggests official statistics may underestimate the size of the epidemic caused by Zika virus. ... The team ... performed molecular tests on blood samples from 800 people treated as suspected dengue patients ... between January and August 2016. ... The initial diagnosis, based on clinical symptoms and serological tests, was confirmed in only 400 samples. More than 100 of the cases analyzed were positive for Zika virus, and the virus that causes chikungunya fever was identified in one of the samples. None of the three arboviruses transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* was found in the remaining samples (almost 300). ... "These results suggest the classic division usually made between symptoms - associating conjunctivitis with Zika and joint pain with chikungunya, for example - is only for classroom use. In practice, the symptoms can't be separated like that," Nogueira said. "It's also practically impossible to distinguish between the three arboviruses with the serological tests currently used on a routine basis by laboratories and emergency services." [Medical Xpress](#)

## U.S. funding for fighting Zika virus is nearly spent, C.D.C. says

30 August - The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned on Tuesday that federal funds to fight the Zika virus were nearly exhausted, and that if Congress did not replenish them soon, there would be no money to fight a new outbreak. As of Friday, the C.D.C. had spent \$194 million of the \$222 million it was allocated to fight the virus, said Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the director of the agency. Congress left for its summer recess without approving additional funding. ... The agency has sent about \$35 million to Florida, much of which has already been spent, largely on killing mosquitoes. But if Florida has another cluster of Zika cases, or if one surfaced in another state, the agency would not be able to send emergency funds, Dr. Frieden said. [The New York Times](#)

## Zika can be transmitted by female mosquito to her eggs, study says

29 August - The Zika virus can be transmitted by a female mosquito to her eggs, eventually infecting her adult daughters, researchers reported on Monday. But mother-daughter transmission happens so rarely among mosquitoes that it is probably not an important factor in the global Zika epidemic. ... The study was done in mosquitoes bred in the U.T.M.B. insectary, "so we need to confirm whether this occurs in nature, too," Dr. Tesh said. Answering that question will mean collecting eggs and larvae in the wild from the mosquitoes, *Aedes aegypti*, that carry the infection. ... The team also tested *Aedes albopictus*, a related species that is more widespread through the United States. The researchers found that no progeny inherited the virus from an infected mother. [The New York Times](#)

## Zika causes deafness in about 6 percent of cases: study

30 August - A study in Brazil of 70 babies whose mothers had confirmed Zika infections found that nearly 6 percent had hearing loss, adding a new complication to the list of ills the virus can cause when women are infected during pregnancy. The Brazilian study, published on Tuesday in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's weekly report on death and disease, confirmed less rigorous reports of deafness among infants born to mothers with Zika infections. The finding is part of an effort to fully characterize the harm caused by the Zika virus during pregnancy. ... [O]ther studies have shown that Zika can cause other brain abnormalities, vision problems and joint deformities. [Reuters](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### Airborne flu detection at bird markets hints at human exposure risk



1 September - Viable avian flu virus is easily detectable in the air of live-poultry markets, which may explain why those who visit markets but don't have direct contact with the birds become infected, according to air sampling from sites in China and Hong Kong. A research team based at Hong Kong University isolated three subtypes during their sampling activities: H5N6, H7N9, and H9N2. ... Their results come just weeks after a report from Chinese researchers who isolated H5N6 during bioaerosol surveillance at live-poultry markets in the Guangdong province city of Zhongshan. [CIDRAP](#)

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

For 2015-2016 Influenza Season Week 33 ending August 20, 2016:

**Novel Influenza A Viruses:** Seven human infections with novel influenza A viruses were reported by two states (Michigan [4] and Ohio [3]) during week 33. All seven persons were infected with influenza A (H3N2) variant (H3N2v) viruses and reported exposure to swine in fair settings during the week preceding illness onset. ... All variant virus infections have been associated with swine exposure in fair settings.

### **Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance**

- NCHS Mortality Surveillance Data: Based on NCHS mortality surveillance data available on August 25, 2016, 5.4% of the deaths occurring during the week ending August 6, 2016 (week 31) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 31.
- 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System: During week 33, 5.6% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 5.7% for week 33. [CDC](#)

## NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2016 Week 34 (through 27 August 2016):

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were elevated at Fort Benning. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

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### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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## Antibiotic resistance in pets an increasing problem

29 August - ... [T]here is growing concern in the veterinary community about the rise of antibiotic resistance in companion animals, particularly drug-resistant skin infections, urinary tract infections, and surgical site infections. As in human medicine, this is limiting the treatments that can be used by vets, as more and more antibiotics become ineffective. ... Some of these bugs—like MRSA—are coming from humans. Others, however, are the result of antibiotic overuse in veterinary practices creating selection pressure. And while antibiotic overprescribing in the human healthcare system has been well documented, Bender says "we have no idea" what the rate of antibiotic overuse is in companion animals. But {Bender}

said it "seems likely" that the amount of inappropriate use in companion animal settings is close to the most recent estimates in human medicine—50%. [CIDRAP](#)

## Hawaii hepatitis A outbreak sickens 241

1 September - The Hawaii Department of Health released a new update on August 31, 2016, stating that the number of confirmed cases of hepatitis A in the outbreak linked to imported scallops has reached 241. That means 13 new cases have been identified in the last week. All of the cases have been in adults. Sixty-four people have required hospitalization because their illnesses are so serious. [Food Poisoning Bulletin](#)

## Lightning strike kills more than 300 reindeer in Norway

29 August - Hardangervidda, a mountain plateau in southern Norway that is popular among tourists and hikers, is known for its natural beauty. As the seasons change, thousands of reindeer migrate across the plateau, moving between drier lands in the east, where they graze on lichens, and wetter lands in the west, where they breed. But on Friday, a storm transformed the plateau into a grisly scene. Lightning appeared to have killed an entire herd: 323 reindeer at last count, including 70 calves and five reindeer that had to be put down because they were severely injured in the storm. ... Officials surmised that an extremely high discharge of electricity from the storm on Friday afternoon — and the interaction of the lightning with the earth and water — had electrocuted the animals.

[The New York Times](#)

## Strawberries linked to Hepatitis A outbreak

1 September - A hepatitis A outbreak has struck 55 people across six states and is linked to frozen strawberries from Egypt, the Centers for Disease Control said Wednesday. The outbreak has mostly hit Virginia, where 44 people have been infected, but other cases has been confirmed by the CDC in West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Wisconsin and across the country in Oregon. "Due to the relatively long incubation period for hepatitis A -- 15 to 50 days -- before people start experiencing symptoms, we expect to see more ill people reported in this outbreak," CDC spokeswoman Nora Spencer-Loveall said. ... The outbreak has been tied to frozen Egyptian strawberries used in Tropical Smoothie Café smoothies. There are about 500 Tropical Smoothie Café locations in 40 states. [UPI](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## CDC Grand Rounds: Preventing suicide through a comprehensive public health approach

2 September - ... Suicide prevention has been based on a mental health treatment approach

because clinical conditions ... are apparent among many who kill themselves. However, this approach only reaches small segments of the population who have identified risk factors and who can surmount treatment barriers, such as stigma and limited availability of or access to services. ... A public health approach adds a complementary, wider, and prevention-oriented focus that increases attention to the many factors across the lifespan that contribute to circumstances that promote suicidal thinking and suicide attempts. ... With its emphasis on a science-driven approach, the public health sector has the skills and expertise to collect and analyze relevant data, select and implement comprehensive prevention strategies, organize and integrate efforts involving diverse partners, and conduct rigorous and ongoing evaluation of interventions to successfully prevent complex adverse health events, such as suicide. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Update](#)

## Depression treatment often doesn't go to those most in need

29 August - Most Americans who screen positive for depression don't receive treatment, a study finds, while most who did receive treatment don't appear to have the disorder. ... [The] [Medical Expenditure Panel Surveys](#) in 2012 and 2013 ... asked people if they had been screened for depression. Of the 46,417 adults surveyed, 8.4 percent answered in ways that suggested they had depression, but only 28.7 percent of the people who appeared depressed received any treatment for it. ... Those in the lowest-income group were five times more likely to appear to have depression compared with those in the highest income group, with 18.2 percent of lowest-income adults screening positive compared to 3.7 percent of the highest-income group. But higher-income people were more likely to get treatment. [NPR](#)

## Elephant tranquilizer could be linked to wave of heroin overdoses in Midwest

26 August - Officials across the country are grappling with waves of heroin-related overdoses and deaths this year, an epidemic blamed on heroin mixed with fentanyl, an opiate estimated to be 100 times as strong as morphine. But officials in the Cincinnati area and in southern Indiana say that a synthetic drug, carfentanil — 10,000 times as potent as morphine — could be tied to at least 189 overdoses across both states in the past week, resulting in at least four deaths in the states. In the Cincinnati area alone, there were more than 78 overdoses reported between Tuesday and Wednesday, according to a report from The Cincinnati Enquirer. In the same time span, at least 15 overdoses, one of them fatal, were rippling through two neighboring counties in Indiana, some 90 miles away. [The New York Times](#)

## Extreme temperatures could increase preterm birth risk

31 August - Extreme hot or cold temperatures during pregnancy may increase the risk of preterm birth, according to study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health. The study authors found that extremes of hot and cold during the first seven weeks of

pregnancy were associated with early delivery. Women exposed to extreme heat for the majority of their pregnancies also were more likely to deliver early. The researchers found more consistent associations with early delivery after exposure to extreme heat than to extreme cold weather. They theorized that, during cold spells, people are more likely to seek shelter and so could more easily escape the cold's effects. But during extreme heatwaves, people are more likely to endure the temperature, particularly when the cost of or access to air conditioning is an impediment. [NIH](#)

## Rising U.S. mortality rate for mothers is highest in Texas

27 August - The maternal mortality rate in Texas doubled from 2010 to 2014. Dr. Lisa Hollier of Texas' Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force tells NPR's Scott Simon it's a complex problem. Texas has some of the best medical care facilities in the world, but a study in the *Obstetrics and Gynecology Medical Journal* singles out Texas for concern because its maternal mortality rate has doubled. From 2010 to 2014, the mortality rate for mothers dying from complications of childbirth has risen in the U.S. generally over a decade, but that increase has been sharpest in Texas where more than 600 women died between 2010 and 2014 while they were pregnant or within six weeks of giving birth. ... We find that African-American women are bearing the greatest risk for maternal death. In fact, their rate of maternal death is about three times higher than it is for women of other races and ethnicities. In the years 2011 to 2012, African-American women accounted for 11 percent of the births but accounted for 28 percent of the maternal deaths. [NPR](#)

## Your gut's gone viral, and that might be good for your health

29 August - ... A study published Monday suggests some viruses in your gut could be beneficial. And these viruses don't just hang out in your intestines naked and homeless. They live inside the bacteria that make their home in your gut. These particular viruses are called bacteriophages. ... [Mark] Young and his team identified 23 bacteriophages that seemed to be associated with a healthy gut. These viruses were common in more than half the healthy people and were much less common in people with Crohn's or colitis, the team reports. ... "We speculate — and clearly at this point, it is speculation — that these viruses help maintain your health," Young says. [NPR](#)

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### **USAFRICOM**

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## Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo: Yellow fever outbreak still serious as outbreak continues

31 August - The World Health Organization said Wednesday that the ongoing yellow fever

outbreak in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo still does not constitute a public health emergency at this time, but caution is still necessary. ... All told, the WHO estimates that there have been 6,000 suspected cases and 1,000 laboratory-confirmed cases of yellow fever, a viral hemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. More than 400 people have died since the epidemic began in December. But there is reason to be optimistic. Though suspected cases continue to be reported, the last confirmed cases were reported June 23 in Angola and July 12 in Congo. [Crossroads Today](#)

## Nigeria: As refugee children die, Nigeria probes theft of food aid

30 August - Children who escaped Boko Haram's Islamic insurgency now are dying of starvation in refugee camps in northeastern Nigeria's largest city as the government investigates the theft of food aid by officials. Refugees have staged near-daily protests over the past week. In one, women blocked the main highway linking Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, to Kano city for five hours, shouting that their children are starving and they have no drinking water as temperatures soar above 40 degrees (104 Fahrenheit). Between 10 and 25 percent of children in a 110-bed feeding center are dying, said Doctors without Borders spokeswoman Shaista Aziz. She called that a high percentage even in an emergency. Most of the dying are from refugee camps, she said. ... Nigeria's Senate last week announced it was launching an investigation into allegations that food aid is being diverted, and the Economics and Financial Crimes Commission weeks ago said it was doing the same.

[Yahoo! News](#)

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### **USCENTCOM**

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## Afghanistan: 1m Afghan children malnourished - UN

29 August - One million children under the age of five in Afghanistan are malnourished, according to a UN report, making them vulnerable to illnesses easily treated in other countries. Malnutrition is the "silent killer" of Afghan children, the report by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said. "For every one thousand babies born, fifty-five will die before the age of five," it said, adding that 82 per cent of them died before their first birthday. The number of malnourished children among the displaced population is particularly high, and increasing as a result of the ongoing conflict. Most of the children are killed by easily preventable or treatable diseases such as diarrhoea or pneumonia, it said. ... Health facilities only cover 60 per cent of the Afghan population but do little to meet the needs of children with malnutrition. [News.com.au](#)

## Afghanistan: Inside one of Afghanistan's largest hospitals

31 August - ... Serving approximately one million people with 300 beds, the MSF hospital in Helmand is the biggest hospital in southern Afghanistan and the only hospital in the province. Nearly 700 Afghan staff and 25 expats live and work in the hospital's units, from pediatrics to intensive care, orthopedics, burns, first aid and surgery. The hospital is free, for those lucky enough to get in. "Most of the countryside is under the control of the Taliban, so many patients who come from those areas are crossing front lines to reach the hospital," Lohuizen says. "You can only imagine how many people die or how many unborn babies don't make it—even doctors or nurses get killed or are kidnapped. So those who make it to the hospital are the people who make it." ... [H]ospitals like the one in Helmand are not only overloaded, but also serious targets. "To see them still operating is admirable," he says. "If you work for MSF, you don't do this for the money. You only do this if you think you have to do this, if you sincerely believe that this is necessary and that somebody needs to do it—and it's true." [Time](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## Denmark/Libya: Danish team removes 500 tons of chemical weapons from Libya

31 August - A Danish-led international operation to rid Libya of its chemical weapons has removed 500 tons of chemicals from the North African country, Denmark said Wednesday. The government said the chemicals were picked up Saturday at the Libyan port of Misrata and are now on their way out of the Mediterranean Sea toward Germany. "We have now removed the chemical remnants from Libya and have ensured that they will not fall into the wrong hands," Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen said. Britain and Finland assisted with the maritime operation. Denmark said Libya's U.N.-brokered National Unity government in July handed over a formal request for international assistance to have the chemical weapons removed. [AP](#)

## Europe: West Nile virus spike reported in the EU in recent weeks

29 August - In the European Union (EU), an increase in the number of human West Nile virus (WNV) cases has been reported in recent weeks, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). In the past two weeks, 43 total WNV cases were reported, 32 last week and 11 the week prior. Before this spike, the EU saw 54 total cases during the whole 2016 transmission season. European health officials state, although there's a noted peak in the reported West Nile fever transmission in EU recently, the overall number

of cases is still within the expected ranges for the disease transmission season. Romania, Italy and Hungary have seen the most cases during the increase. [Outbreak News Today](#)

## United Kingdom: Cuts to public health risks widening health inequalities

1 September - After taking on responsibility for public health, local authorities were dealt an in-year cut of £200 million last year and now face further real terms cuts to public health budgets. Cuts to public health and the front line services they deliver are a false economy as they not only add to the future costs of health and social care but risk widening health inequalities, says the Health Committee in its report on Public health post-2013. ... The government must recognise that tackling health inequalities and improving public health will not primarily happen in hospitals, even though hospitals receive the lion's share of health funding. Rather, it requires a whole life course approach, tackling the wider determinants of health in local communities, effective action on prevention and early intervention, and through joined-up policy making at a national level. [Parliament](#)

## Spain: Man dies in Spain from tick-borne disease, nurse ill

1 September - Spanish health authorities said on Thursday they were investigating a possible outbreak of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) which has killed one man and infected a nurse, in the first non-imported case reported in Western Europe. The 62-year-old man died on Aug. 25 after contracting the CCHF disease during a walk in the Castilla-Leon region, probably from a tick bite he reported - which is one of the main ways it is transmitted - authorities said in a statement. He also infected the nurse who treated him at a hospital in Madrid and she is now in a stable condition in quarantine at an isolation unit, they said. Authorities are monitoring about 200 other people who had come into contact with the man and nurse. [Reuters](#)

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### **USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: AAP - No non-medical vaccine exemptions

30 August - For the first time in its history, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy paper recommending against all non-medical vaccine exemptions for school-age children. While medical exemptions are still valid, the AAP is asking states to eliminate non-medical exemptions—including for religious or personal beliefs. The AAP ... said that allowing non-medical vaccinations threatens "herd" immunity, or the 90% to 95% vaccine coverage needed to protect a population against outbreaks of infectious disease. Although

most public school districts require proof of immunization before enrollment, there are also laws that allow for non-medical immunization exemptions. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

## **U.S.: F.D.A. orders stronger warning on common painkiller-sedative mix**

31 August - The Food and Drug Administration announced on Wednesday that it would require its toughest warning labels to caution patients against taking opioid painkillers together with benzodiazepines, like Xanax and Valium. The combination makes an overdose more likely and the warning is aimed at making sure people understand that. ... Increasingly, doctors have been prescribing them together. The number of patients who were prescribed both drugs rose by 41 percent — about 2.5 million people — from 2002 to 2014, the agency said. But the combination can result in extreme sleepiness, coma and death.

[The New York Times](#)

## **U.S.: Influx of fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills and toxic fentanyl-related compounds**

25 August - ... The purpose of this HAN update is to alert public health departments, health care professionals, first responders, and medical examiners and coroners to new developments that have placed more people at risk for fentanyl-involved overdoses from [illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMF)] and may increase the risk of non-fatal and fatal overdose. These developments include the following: (1) a sharp increase in the availability of counterfeit pills containing varying amounts of fentanyl and fentanyl-related compounds (e.g., labeled as Oxycodone, Xanax, and Norco), (2) the potential for counterfeit pills containing fentanyl and fentanyl-related compounds to be broadly distributed across the United States which could impact states not previously impacted by IMF and persons using diverted prescription pills, ... (3) the widening array of toxic fentanyl-related compounds being mixed with heroin or sold as heroin, including extremely toxic analogs such as carfentanil, and (4) continued increases in the supply and distribution of IMF. [CDC](#)

## **U.S.: More than 50 treated after taking suspected K2 in Austin**

25 August - More than 50 people have been treated after apparently taking the synthetic marijuana drug K2 in the Austin, Texas area, authorities said. Earlier Thursday, Austin police had said around 20 patients downtown were treated for suspected reactions to the synthetic drug — which can cause elevated heart rate, seizures, hallucinations and has been linked to deaths — in medical calls downtown that began at around noon. The Austin-Travis County EMS said later on Twitter that over the last 24 hours it responded to 45 K2 cases involving 52 patients. ... Three people suspected of being involved in distributing the synthetic marijuana downtown were taken into custody and were being questioned, Thomas said. [NBC News](#)

## U.S.: Public health problems in Oakland linked to housing crisis

30 August - The high cost of housing has created a public health crisis in Oakland, Dr. Muntu Davis, head of the Alameda County Public Health Department, said. ... [O]fficials conducted interviews with 188 Health Department workers and 167 Behavioral Services staff and contractors. Ninety-four percent of respondents said the stress of inadequate or unstable housing was affecting their clients' health, in many cases nullifying the services that county health programs provide for needy communities. ... Data published in the study showed that between 2012 and 2014, Alameda County residents who spent 35 percent of their income on rent were twice as likely to be hospitalized for hypertension or mental illness as residents who spent less than 25 percent of their income on rent. Children living in homes packed with 10 to 12 extra people were six times more likely to go to the emergency room for asthma than children living in homes that were not overcrowded. [SF Gate](#)

## U.S.: Researchers find first U.S. bacteria with worrisome superbug genes

29 August - New Jersey researchers said on Monday they had identified perhaps the first strain of E. coli bacteria in the United States with mobile genes that make it resistant to two types of antibiotics now considered last-line defenses against superbugs. Researchers said the strain of bacteria was found in a 76-year-old man who was treated in 2014 for a complicated urinary tract infection. Further analysis in 2016 showed the bacterium carried mcr-1, a gene that creates resistance to the last-ditch antibiotic colistin. It was also shown to carry blaNDM-5, a gene that blocks effectiveness of carbapenems, which are considered medicine's most reliable current antibiotics now that bacteria have found ways of outwitting other families of antibiotics. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Self-injury is a 'major killer' in U.S

26 August - When deaths from substance abuse are counted as self-inflicted, then deaths from self-injury in the U.S. are tied with deaths attributed to diabetes and outnumber those from flu and pneumonia or kidney disease, new research suggests. "Self injury is a major killer and it encompasses more than suicide," said study leader Ian Rockett, of West Virginia University School of Public Health in Morgantown. He and his colleagues write in JAMA Psychiatry that self-injury deaths in the U.S. are generally underestimated because suicides by poisoning and drug overdose are often misclassified as "accidents" on death certificates. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Their soil toxic, 1,100 Indiana residents scramble to find new homes

30 August - ... [R]esidents of the West Calumet Housing Complex [in East Chicago, Ind] learned recently that much of the soil outside their homes contained staggering levels of

lead, one of the worst threats to children's health. ... [T]he complex ... is just north of a huge former U.S.S. Lead smelting plant and on top of a smaller former smelting operation, in an area that was designated a Superfund site in 2009. [T]hey are asking why neither the state nor the Environmental Protection Agency told them just how toxic their soil was much sooner. ... The mayor's sudden decision to raze the complex, which is run by the East Chicago Housing Authority, and close an adjacent elementary school turns on its head a plan the E.P.A. has had since 2012 to remove the contaminated soil without displacing residents. ... [T]he most pressing question for residents is why they were not informed until last month that even the top six inches of soil in their yards had up to 30 times more lead than the level considered safe for children to play in, and that it also had hazardous levels of arsenic. [The New York Times](#)

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#### **USPACOM**

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### **Hong Kong's growing drug problem: *Ice* responsible for one in four psych patients at Tai Po hospital**

29 August - Methamphetamine or "Ice" was found to be the main reason why a quarter of psychiatric patients in a New Territories hospital suffered from serious conditions such as hallucination and delusions. This problem in the Northern District reflected a growing citywide trend of "Ice" use due to a rise in supply, a doctor said. ... Despite international efforts to crack down on the drug, other countries have also reported an alarming rise in the usage of "Ice". Australia declared the situation a public health crisis this year with a tripling in the number of regular users since 2010. ... The latest hospital study showed the proportion of mental health patients who abused drugs rose from 15 per cent in 2008 to 25 per cent this year, with participants comprising 232 patients, aged between 18 to 64.

[South China Morning Post](#)

### **India: An epidemic of 'dead eyes' in Kashmir as India uses pellet guns on protesters**

28 August - ... Since mid-July, when the current wave of protests against the Indian military presence started, more than 570 patients have reported to Srinagar's main government hospital with eyes ruptured by lead pellets, sometimes known as birdshot, fired by security forces armed with pump-action shotguns to disperse crowds. The patients have mutilated retinas, severed optic nerves, irises seeping out like puddles of ink. "Dead eyes," the ophthalmology department's chief calls them. ... The eye injuries have become such a focus of public anger that last week, in a conciliatory gesture, India's home minister, Rajnath Singh, promised that the pellet guns, as they are known here, would be replaced by another type of nonlethal weapon in the coming days. [The New York Times](#)

## Japan: Lionrock leaves 11 dead, three missing in flooded North Japan

31 August - Eleven people were dead and three were missing Wednesday after Typhoon Lionrock blitzed northern Japan, causing blackouts, property damage and fatal widespread flooding that caught some municipalities by surprise. The typhoon, the 10th of the season and the first to hit Tohoku's Pacific coastline, made landfall Tuesday in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture. ... Flooding appeared to be the main cause of the fatalities. According to the police, nine bodies were found near a one-story nursing home facility in the town of Iwaizumi, Iwate Prefecture, with the body of a man recovered near the rain-swollen Omoto River, which overflowed its banks. Despite the torrential rain, it has been learned that the Iwaizumi Municipal Government failed to issue a flood warning for the Omoto River, which rose from 3.2 meters at 6 p.m. to overflow its 4.9-meter banks by 7 p.m., and eventually reached 6.6 meters. [The Japan Times](#)

## Japan: Japan warns on measles as infected fan joins Bieber concert

27 August - Japanese authorities have warned of a possible measles outbreak after a fan who went to a Justin Bieber concert near Tokyo was diagnosed with the contagious disease, officials said Friday. A 19-year-old man had a fever of more than 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit) and a rash over his body after returning from Indonesia earlier this month, the Disease Control and Prevention Center (DCC) and local media have said. Despite the condition, the man, whose name was withheld, went to Bieber's concert on August 14 at Makuhari Messe in Chiba, east of Tokyo, where some 25,000 fans gathered for the event, they said. The man, from the western Japanese city of Nishinomiya, then stopped in Tokyo and neighbouring Kanagawa prefecture before returning home on August 19, when he was finally diagnosed with measles. [The Nation](#)

## Philippines: A growing problem, child malnutrition costs Philippines \$7billion in a year

30 August - Child malnutrition cost the Philippines \$7 billion or nearly 3 percent of its GDP in one year in terms of education spending and lost productivity, while hunger-related stunting is on the rise among children, a global aid agency said on Tuesday. A report by Save the Children found that the combined losses, calculated with data from 2013, are more than triple the cost of damage inflicted by 15 natural disasters that hit the Southeast Asian country last year. ... Caused by a poor diet in a child's first 1,000 days of life, stunting has severe, irreversible consequences on physical health and cognitive functioning. The report, citing government data, said that after 25 years of steady improvement, the prevalence of stunting among Filipino children under five increased to 33 percent in 2015 from 30 percent in 2013. [Reuters](#)

## Thailand: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus

26 August - On 30 July 2016, the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, announced a laboratory confirmed case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) in an 18-year-old Kuwaiti man who arrived in Thailand on 25 July with his family. The patient developed symptoms on 25 July during a flight from Kuwait to Bangkok. On 26 July he sought medical treatment at a hospital in Bangkok. Although there was no history of direct contact with camels or with a suspected human case of MERS-CoV infection, he had a history of travel in the Middle East in the previous 14 days. On 28 July, he tested positive for MERS-CoV in three separate laboratories. He was then referred and admitted to an isolation ward in the national referral hospital for infectious diseases. [WHO](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Haiti: Strike ends for medical residents

30 August - Monday, the hospital's resident physicians of the State University of Haiti (HUEH) announced the official end of the strike, which paralyzed the largest public hospital in Haiti since March 28 and thereafter all public hospitals across national territory. "We have decided to lift the strike, following the commitments made by health authorities to satisfy our demands," said Dr. Roosevelt Aubourg, of the inter-hospital committee. [T]he adoption of the 2016-2017 budget ... [will] figure an additional 800 million gourdes to the health sector. ... "We learned that sanitation and rehabilitation work is underway in hospitals, that inputs are being delivered as we demanded," added Dr. Aubourg which highlights the agreement for gradual adjustment of fees for residents and interns, stating that the Government had promised a 200% increase in fees for residents and resident doctors.

[Haiti Libre](#)

## PAHO reports 1,428 more chikungunya cases in Central, South America

31 August - In its most recent weekly update late last week, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 1,428 new suspected or confirmed chikungunya cases, lifting the total in the Americas this year to 252,154. ... Most of the newly reported cases were from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, and Venezuela. One more death was reported, putting that total for the year at 55. ... In other chikungunya developments, researchers from the Philippines, where the disease is endemic, yesterday reported that in an outbreak, rising antibodies approaching 50% seem to signal the end of the event. Their observation came from active febrile illness surveillance in the city of Cebu during 2012 to 2014. ... Overall chikungunya incidence during the second year was significantly lower than the first year:

2.84 cases per 100 person years, compared with 12.32 cases per 100 person years. The authors said the change was driven by a drop in subclinical infections across all age-groups. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Public Health Information Directorate, Army Public Health Center.

