

6 May 2016

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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U.S. MILITARY

Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015

5 May - Overall, sexual assault reporting remained consistent with the high levels seen in recent years. The department received a total of 6,083 reports of sexual assault. ... In addition ... over 16,000 service members intervened in situations they believed to be at risk for sexual assault. Encouraging greater sexual assault reporting is one of five key Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program efforts outlined in this year's report. Other areas where the department took significant action include advancing sexual assault prevention; improving response to male sexual assault victims; combatting retaliation associated with sexual assault; and tracking accountability of sexual assault cases.

[Federal Health Care News](#) (first item)

Army ditches weekly random drug tests for soldiers

1 May - The Army is doing away with weekly random drug tests in an effort to ease the burden on commanders while still deterring soldiers from using illicit drugs. Every soldier will be tested at least once a year. A new directive from Acting Army Secretary Patrick Murphy calls for commanders at every level to ensure "random urinalysis testing at the rate of 10 percent of assigned end-strength each month." Before this change, which is effective immediately, Army Regulation 600-85 required battalion-level commanders to randomly select and test 4 percent to 5 percent of the battalion's end-strength each week.

[Army Times](#)

Mental health disorders, care increase among military children in US

2 May — Mental health diagnoses and care significantly increased among military-connected children within the last 15 years. ... [Researchers] analyzed data for all children aged 2 to 18 years who received care in the Military Healthcare System from October 2001 through September 2015. ... Overall, between 1.45 and 1.7 million children received care in the Military Healthcare System each year. In 2001, 9.6% of children had one or more mental health diagnosis, compared with 15.9% in 2015. There was an average 3.6% yearly increase in pediatric mental health diagnoses during the 15-year period. ... Visits for children with mental health diagnoses increased from 6.1 to 12.1 per person-year, with an average yearly increase of 5.7% per year. [Healio](#)

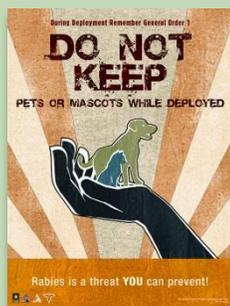
Handwashing Cling-on

A cling-on designed to stick to bathroom mirrors on proper handwashing is available from the [Health Information Products eCatalog](#).



Avoid Rabies during Deployment Posters

A new series of posters on avoiding rabies during deployment is available in print from the [Health Information Products eCatalog](#).



Navy reinstates nurse who refused to force-feed at Guantánamo

3 May - A Navy lieutenant nurse who refused to force-feed protesting prisoners at Guantánamo in the summer of 2014 has been restored to full duty and is serving at a Navy medical facility in New England, his attorney said Tuesday. The case became a cause célèbre in certain circles that both honored the nurse's defiance and defended the duty of a medical professional to let his ethics trump his chain of command if he disapproves of U.S. military medical decisions. But it took nearly two years to resolve after the Miami Herald disclosed the crisis of conscience, as overheard by a Syrian hunger striker, and the prison confirmed it happened. [Miami Herald](#)

Pentagon debuts new efforts to crack down on sex assault retaliation

29 April - The Defense Department is zeroing in on a problem officials believe continues to keep military sexual assault victims from reporting the crime: real or perceived retaliation from their command or community. A 2014 study by the RAND Corp. showed 62 percent of sexual assault victims reported some kind of retaliation after making their report. ... A cluster of new policies will make it easier for sexual assault and harassment victims to obtain speedy transfer to new commands, allow victims to appeal to a senior officer when they believe their career is threatened by reprisal in their chain of command, and develop better retaliation response policies within each of the service branches. [Military.com](#)

Pentagon perpetuates stigma of mental health counseling, study says

5 May - Even as troop suicides remain at record levels, the Pentagon has failed to persuade servicemembers to seek counseling without fears that they'll damage their careers. ... Despite six major Pentagon or independent studies from 2007 through 2014 that urged action to end the persistent stigma linked to mental health counseling, little has changed, analysts said in the April report by the Government Accountability Office. ... One key problem is that many Defense Department policies covering job assignments and security clearances still discriminate against anyone who receives mental health care, the report said. ... The most recent health survey of U.S. troops from 2011 shows that 37% of active duty servicemembers, nearly 600,000, felt that seeking mental health care through the military would probably or definitely hurt their career. [USA Today](#)

The Army may be blowing up its entire body composition regulation

2 May - The Army regulation governing body fat and height and weight standards will go under a complete review this summer, officials told Army Times. Also being reviewed is the Army's controversial tape test. "The revision process for AR 600-9, The Army Body

Fact Sheet: Using Insect Repellents on Children

Applying insect repellents helps protect children from insect bites, particularly bites from mosquitoes and ticks. Parents want to protect their children from insect bites and insect-borne diseases but often have questions about how to safely and properly use insect repellents on their children. This fact sheet addresses common questions about insect repellents and children and provides references for additional reading.



Composition Program (dated June 2013) will begin summer of 2016," said Paul Prince, an Army spokesman. [Army Times](#)

Veterans more likely to delay seeking health care

2 May - Military veterans are more likely to report delays in seeking necessary healthcare, compared to the US general population. ... Nearly 29 percent of veterans reported they had delayed seeking needed medical care, compared to the national rate of 17 percent. Reasons for care delays differed between insurance groups. The veterans reported difficulties in making appointments by phone and in getting transportation to the doctor's office (as did Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries). After controlling for personal factors and region of the country, veterans were 1.76 times more likely to delay needed medical care, compared to privately-insured individuals. "Such delays may have an effect on veterans' propensity to seek healthcare as well, which could be detrimental to their health." [ScienceDaily](#)

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GLOBAL

Are low wages an occupational health hazard?

3 May - Low wages should be recognized as an occupational health threat. ... "Workers earning low wages may be at greater risk for disease and injury than workers earning high wages," write J. Paul Leigh, PhD, and Roberto De Vogli, PhD, MPH, of University of California Davis School of Medicine. They believe that low wages should be considered among the psychosocial factors -- such as long work hours and high job strain -- identified as occupational risks to health. While the reasons for the link between low wages and adverse health outcomes aren't clear, most hypotheses suggest that "[A]t least part of the correlation between wages and health can be attributed to low wages resulting in poor health or health behaviors rather than vice versa," the researchers write. [ScienceDaily](#)

Breast cancer: Scientists hail 'milestone' genetic find

2 May - Scientists say they now have a near-perfect picture of the genetic events that cause breast cancer. The study ... has been described as a "milestone" moment that could help unlock new ways of treating and preventing the disease. The largest study of its kind unpicked practically all the errors that cause healthy breast tissue to go rogue. Cancer Research UK said the findings were an important stepping-stone to new drugs for treating cancer. ... The international team looked at all 3 billion letters of people's genetic code - their entire blueprint of life - in 560 breast cancers. They uncovered 93 sets of instructions, or genes, that if mutated, can cause tumours. Some have been discovered before, but scientists expect this to be the definitive list, barring a few rare mutations. [BBC News](#)

**Fact Sheet:
Pesticides and
Child Safety**

A pesticide is any substance used to prevent, destroy, or repel pests such as insects, rodents, other animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms like bacteria and viruses. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pesticides are used in about three out of every four homes in the United States. Pesticides commonly used and stored in and around your home and garden may put children at risk, even when handled in a seemingly safe manner.



France gets G7 to discuss global regulation of medicine prices

3 May - France will press its G7 partners this month to launch an "irreversible" process to control the prices of new medicines, part of a global drive to make life-saving drugs more affordable. ... The rising cost of ground-breaking medicines has been criticised around the world, with campaigners in developing countries demanding reform of the patent system to make vital treatments more affordable. G7 nations are home to most of the leading drug makers and while governments are keen to tackle rising health costs they may be reluctant to pitch themselves against their own pharmaceutical industries. Any regulation would have to balance the need to keep costs down with the need for pharmaceutical companies like U.S group Pfizer, France's Sanofi or Britain's GlaxoSmithKline to retain financial incentives for innovation. [Reuters](#)

Fighters need to learn more about concussion risks, study head says

5 May - Fighters need to learn more about the risks of concussion, especially during training, to protect against brain injury, a medic leading a long-term study into head trauma said. ... [Neurologist] Dr. Charles Bernick ... said combat sports could never be made completely safe. But there were clear steps fighters could take to cut down the risks. ... "Educate yourself on concussion and head injury," Bernick says, when asked for his best advice. "Most cumulative injury comes in training, and sustaining a concussion close to a fight may make a fighter more vulnerable to be knocked out easier. It is important to reduce the exposure to head trauma during sparring and training." [Reuters](#)

Healthy people an increasingly significant reservoir for ESBLs

4 May - The rate of gut colonization with extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing organisms, a risk factor for ESBL infections, is significant not only in hospitalized but in healthy people worldwide. ... [Researchers] carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies containing data for fecal colonization with ESBL class A bacteria in healthy individuals in each of the World Health Organization regions of the world. ... Asian and African regions had the highest prevalence of colonization, ranging from 15% to 46%; Central, Northern, and Southern Europe had lower but significant prevalence (3%, 4%, and 6%, respectively), as did the Americas (2%). ... The use of antibiotics within the prior 4 months was associated with a high risk of colonization ... as was use of antibiotics within the prior 12 months. ... Colonization was also associated with a history of international travel. ... ESBL infections have traditionally been linked with hospitals but are increasingly occurring as community-acquired infections and "have recently emerged as a major threat for public health," said the authors. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Standards for Quality Immunization Practice Course

The IHB Standards for Quality Immunization Practice Course (SQIPC) is a one day course designed to ensure healthcare personnel are trained in vaccine policy, vaccine safety, effectiveness, and the standards of military immunizations.

Upcoming Courses:

Joint Base Andrews:
24 May 2016

Okinawa, Japan:
13 Jul 2016

Seoul, Korea:
18 Jul 2016

Fort Hood, TX:
16 Aug 2016

Camp Pendleton, CA:
21-22 Sep 2016

Enroll



Johnson & Johnson hit with \$55m damages in talc cancer case

3 May - Pharmaceutical firm Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has been ordered to pay more than \$55m (£40m) in compensation to an American woman who says its talcum powder caused her ovarian cancer. Gloria Ristesund, 62, said she used J&J talc-based powder products on her genitals for decades. The company - which faces about 1,200 similar claims - insists its products are safe and says it will appeal. Researchers say links with ovarian cancer are unproven. ... The mineral talc in its natural form does contain asbestos and does cause cancer. However, asbestos-free talc has been used in baby powder and other cosmetics since the 1970s. But the studies on asbestos-free talc give contradictory results. [BBC News](#)

Studies document risks of assault for health care workers

28 April - A new report that reviews research on assaults against doctors, nurses and other medical personnel concludes that health care workers often experience physical and verbal attacks, and, all too often, little is done to address it. "Health care workplace violence is an underreported, ubiquitous, and persistent problem that has been tolerated and largely ignored," writes Dr. James Phillips of Harvard Medical School and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. "Our industry is, statistically, the most violent non-law-enforcement industry in the United States. And that's using government statistics that have been shown to under-report the actual violence that takes place by up to 70 percent," he told Reuters Health. The violence is often tied to patients with dementia and mental health or substance abuse problems. [Fox News](#)

Study: 30% of outpatient antibiotic prescriptions unnecessary

4 May - Approximately 30% of all oral antibiotics prescribed in US outpatient settings are unnecessary, and antibiotic prescribing rates are higher overall for young children and people living in the South. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ... said the findings suggest that 47 million needless prescriptions are written each year. This puts patients at unnecessary risk for allergic reactions or the sometimes deadly diarrhea caused by *Clostridium difficile*. ... Nationwide, infants ages 0 to 2 had significantly higher rates of antibiotic treatment compared with other age groups, with an average of 1,287 outpatient visits per 1,000 resulting in a prescription, the authors said. [CIDRAP](#)

U.N. Security Council condemns attacks on health workers in war zones

3 May - In a unanimous vote, the United Nations passed a resolution to remind combating parties that hospitals are to be treated as sanctuaries from war. ... Warplanes level a hospital in the rebel-held half of Aleppo, Syria, killing one of the city's last pediatricians. A Saudi-led military coalition bombs a hospital in Yemen. In Afghanistan, American aircraft pummel a

Immunization Program Leaders Course

The Immunization Program Leaders Course is a two-day course designed to ensure credentialed healthcare providers, clinical managers, and other senior leaders understand responsibilities for the successful management of an immunization program.

Participants should be the credentialed providers or other healthcare personnel who provide direct oversight and management of immunization activities.

Upcoming Courses:

Joint Base Andrews:
25-26 May 2016

Okinawa, Japan:
14-15 Jul 2016

Seoul, Korea:
19-20 Jul 2016

Fort Hood, TX:
17-18 Aug 2016

Camp Pendleton, CA:
21-22 Sep 2016

Enroll



hospital mistaken for a Taliban redoubt. ... On Tuesday, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution to remind warring parties everywhere of the rules, demanding protection for those who provide health care and accountability for violators.

[The New York Times](#)

U.S.-funded abstinence programs not working in Africa

3 May - The U.S. funds abstinence and faithfulness education in sub-Saharan Africa to prevent HIV transmission, but a new study suggests the investment doesn't lead to less risky sexual behaviors in that area. When researchers looked at the number of sexual partners in the past year, age at first sexual intercourse and teenage pregnancy, there were no differences between countries that did or did not receive the funding. ... Generally, the results of abstinence and faithfulness education programs are mixed, the researchers write in *Health Affairs*. Also, the effectiveness of these campaigns in sub-Saharan Africa remains unknown. ... Yet, PEPFAR invested more than \$1.4 billion in abstinence and faithfulness programs between 2004 and 2013. [Reuters](#)

ZIKA VIRUS

Bacteria shown to curb mosquitoes' ability to spread Zika

5 May - Brazilian researchers have shown for the first time that using *Wolbachia* bacteria, an experimental technique designed to shrink *Aedes aegypti* populations, can dramatically curb their ability to transmit Zika virus. ... *Wolbachia* bacteria are naturally found in the gut of 60% of all insects, and infecting *Aedes* eggs with them was thought to shorten their lifespans, but earlier pilot projects aimed at controlling dengue revealed an extra benefit: It dramatically reduced dengue virus replication in the mosquitoes. *Wolbachia* also had the same effect on chikungunya, so the new Zika finding is an encouraging sign that the control technique might be helpful for all three mosquito-borne diseases. ... [The] idea behind the control method has been for *Wolbachia*-infected mosquitoes to mate with noninfected ones and eventually replace the mosquito population with one that carries *Wolbachia*.

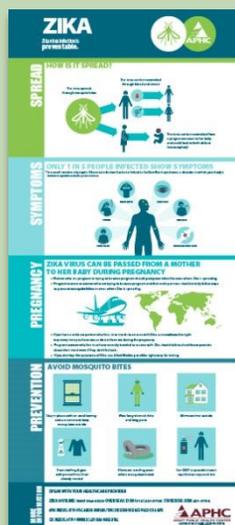
[CIDRAP](#)

First U.S. death tied to Zika is reported in Puerto Rico

29 April - A Puerto Rican man died from complications of the Zika virus earlier this year, the first reported death attributed to the disease in the United States. The victim, a man in his 70s, died in February from internal bleeding as a result of a rare immune reaction to an earlier Zika infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Puerto Rico now has 683 confirmed Zika infections in its outbreak, which began in December; 89 are in pregnant women, according to Dr. Ana Ríos, the territory's health secretary. Fourteen of those women have given birth, and all their babies are healthy, she said. Seventeen patients have been hospitalized for Zika-related causes in Puerto Rico. Of those, seven had

Zika Virus Infographic

A poster with information on Zika virus is available in print from the [Health Information Products eCatalog](#).



Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare form of paralysis that strikes about two weeks after an infection and, although frightening, is usually temporary. [The New York Times](#)

Peru finds local Zika cases; report supports complication links

3 May - ... Peru's health ministry yesterday reported its first local cases. ... [The] MOH said three other locally acquired cases have been reported. ...

[A] Brazilian report showed a clear-cut relationship between a rise in acute exanthematous (rashlike) illness (AEI) in Brazil and rises in Guillain-Barre syndrome 5 to 9 weeks later, followed by a spike in microcephaly 30 to 33 weeks later. ... Researchers found that raw and smoothed data showed a clear start, peak, and decline in cases, followed by classic epidemic time-series incidences for acute rashlike illness, GBS, and suspected microcephaly. Acute illnesses peaked in early May, with GBS cases peaking in early to mid-June and suspected microcephaly peaking from mid-November through mid-December. They said the lag time they saw with GBS fit with the results from a recent case-control study from French Polynesia's Zika virus outbreak and that the suspected microcephaly findings show a strong association with acute illness during the first pregnancy trimester. [CIDRAP](#)

Update: Ongoing Zika virus transmission — Puerto Rico, November 1, 2015–April 14, 2016

6 May - ... During November 1, 2015–April 14, 2016, a total of 6,157 specimens from suspected Zika virus–infected patients from Puerto Rico were evaluated and 683 (11%) had laboratory evidence of current or recent Zika virus infection. The public health response includes increased capacity to test for Zika virus, preventing infection in pregnant women, monitoring infected pregnant women and their fetus for adverse outcomes, controlling mosquitos, and assuring the safety of blood products. Residents of and travelers to Puerto Rico should continue to employ mosquito bite avoidance behaviors, take precautions to reduce the risk for sexual transmission, and seek medical care for any acute illness with rash or fever. Clinicians who suspect Zika virus disease in patients who reside in or have recently returned from areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission should report cases to public health officials. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Zika virus: Risk higher than first thought, say doctors

2 May - The mosquito-borne Zika virus may be even more dangerous than previously thought, scientists in Brazil say. They told the BBC that Zika could be behind more damaging neurological conditions, affecting the babies of up to a fifth of infected pregnant women. ... While it is estimated that 1% of women who have had Zika during pregnancy will have a child with microcephaly, ... as many as 20% of Zika-affected pregnancies will result in a range of other forms of brain damage to the baby in the womb. A separate study ... said that "29% of scans showed abnormalities in babies in the womb, including growth restrictions, in women infected with Zika." ... Many of the conditions that Brazilian doctors

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.

are noticing in babies born to mothers who had Zika are not as obvious to the untrained eye as microcephaly. ... "There are cerebral calcifications, an increase in the number of dilation of cerebral ventricles and the destruction or malformation of the posterior part of the brain," he says. ... [He] makes a list of the conditions that they are now witnessing with increasing regularity; ventriculomegaly, damage of the posterior fossa, craniocynostosis and cerebral calcification. [BBC News](#)

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INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 16:

- NORTHCOM: Influenza activity continued to decrease and was minimal across most of NORTHCOM.
- EUCOM: Influenza activity remained minimal across EUCOM.
- PACOM: Influenza activity remained minimal throughout PACOM.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Influenza activity remained minimal across CENTCOM and AFRICOM.

SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity in Honduras was minimal based on DMSS data.

[DHA - Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

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

During week 16 (April 17-23, 2016), influenza activity decreased in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported by public health laboratories during week 16 was influenza B. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories decreased.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below their system-specific epidemic threshold in both the NCHS Mortality Surveillance System and the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System.
- Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [CDC](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 16/2016 (18-24 April 2016)

- Influenza activity continued to decrease in the WHO European Region. Most countries (92%) reported low intensity, with lower numbers of specimens being collected and fewer testing positive for influenza virus (22%) than in the previous week (35%).
- As is often seen late in the northern hemisphere's influenza season, a shift towards

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circulation of type B influenza virus has occurred. Type B accounted for 75% of influenza virus detections from sentinel sources and 17–20% of hospitalized cases.

- Fewer cases of severe disease were reported than in previous weeks, although numbers varied between countries. Cases occurred mainly in people under the age of 65, and the great majority of those testing positive for influenza virus was infected by A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

Flu vaccination protective against premature birth in Laos

4 May - Maternal influenza vaccination improves birth outcomes to the tune of preventing about 1 in 5 preterm births during times of high flu circulation. ... The authors, from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and several institutions in Laos, enrolled 5,103 women giving birth at three hospitals in Laos from April 2014 through February 2015. ... A total of 2,172 (43%) of the women had been vaccinated. Of the 4,854 women who had live births, 10.2% had infants classified as preterm. The proportion born to vaccinated and unvaccinated mothers differed significantly (7.5% vs 12.8%, respectively. ... The protective effect of vaccine remained only among infants born during periods of high influenza activity. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (third item)

H5N6 sickens another in China, WHO notes hospital spread with H7N9

4 May - A 65-year-old woman from China's Anhui province is hospitalized in critical condition with an H5N6 avian influenza infection, the country 13th such case since 2014. ... The pace of H5N6 illnesses in China has picked up in recent months, with 10 cases reported since the end of December. ... Though a handful of Asian countries have reported H5N6 in poultry, China is the only one to report human infections. ...

[The] WHO said yesterday that on Apr 18 China notified it of 17 more lab-confirmed H7N9 cases, 5 of them fatal. ... Eleven of the patients were men, and 15 of the patients had been exposed to live poultry before their symptoms began. One healthcare-related cluster was reported among the group: An 85-year-old woman from Zhejiang province who reportedly had no poultry exposure but had shared the same hospital ward with an earlier confirmed case-patient died from H7N9 on Mar 8. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (second item)

Maternal flu shot lowers risk of infant flu infection, hospitalization

3 May - Infants born to women who received a flu vaccination during pregnancy were 81% less likely to be hospitalized with influenza during the first 6 months of life. ... Researchers ... analyzed medical records of 249,387 infants born to 245,386 women from December 2005 to March 2014. Approximately 10% of women (23,383) reported receiving the flu vaccine during pregnancy. Maternal vaccination was associated with a 70% lower risk of an infant 6 months or younger having laboratory-confirmed influenza. ... Immunization during

pregnancy was also associated with an 81% lower risk of young infants requiring flu-related hospitalization. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (first item)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2016 Week 17 (through 30 April 2016):

- Influenza: Two cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza type (B) among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

USAFSAM: DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During 17 - 30 April 2016 (Surveillance Weeks 16 & 17), a total of 180 specimens were collected and received from 38 locations. Results were finalized for 153 specimens from 36 locations. During Week 16, 14 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, three A(H3N2), and 23 influenza B viruses were identified. Five influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, two A(H3N2), and nine influenza B viruses were identified during Week 17. Approximately 38% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 16. The percent positive for Week 17 decreased to approximately 22%. The influenza percent positive for the season is currently 27%.

[US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

2 May - Influenza activity in the Northern Hemisphere continued to decrease. A predominance of influenza B virus activity continued to be reported in parts of North America, in Northern Temperate Asia, South-East Asia and in parts of Europe. In a few countries in the Southern Hemisphere, slight increases in influenza-like illness (ILI) activity were reported. [WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Dole knew about Listeria problem at salad plant, F.D.A. report says

29 April - The Dole Food Company, one of the largest processors of fresh produce, knew it had a listeria problem in one of its salad plants more than a year before it closed in January, according to a Food and Drug Administration report. The report, obtained by Food Safety News and The Food Poisoning Bulletin through the Freedom of Information Act, shows that products in the plant tested positive for listeria nine times before F.D.A. inspectors showed

up to do a test in January at a plant in Springfield, Ohio. Four people have died after becoming ill so far in the outbreak, and 33 more across the United States and Canada have become so sick they have spent time in a hospital. Dole said the Justice Department was investigating. [The New York Times](#)

Fat Labradors give clues to obesity epidemic



3 May - The Labrador retriever, known as one of the greediest breeds of dog, is hard-wired to overeat, research suggests. The dog is more likely to become obese than other breeds partly because of its genes, scientists at Cambridge University say. The gene affected is thought to be important in controlling how

the brain recognises hunger and the feeling of being full after eating. The research could help in the understanding of human obesity. ... "What we have found is that some Labradors get fat because they have a deletion in a gene within their brain," he said. "And this particular gene plays a role in sensing how much fat they have in their body - and so some Labradors don't know how much fat they have and so keep eating to try to get fatter."

[BBC News](#)

FDA report finds resistant *Salmonella* down in meat

2 May - In its annual reporting on antibiotic resistance in *Salmonella* found in US retail poultry and meat, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said resistant strains are down. ... The FDA said the data reflect improvements since 2011 on several fronts. For example, *Salmonella* prevalence in retail poultry sank to its lowest level since testing began in 2002. Detections in ground turkey dropped from a high of 19% in 2008 to 6% in 2014, and ... positive results in retail chicken fell from 15% to 9%. ... The worrisome findings were fewer but included a ceftriaxone-resistant chicken isolate from 2014 that had the extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) gene blaCTX-M6-5, the first such detection in the United States. [CIDRAP](#)

Listeria linked to frozen vegetables sickens 8 in 3 states

4 May - A three-state *Listeria* outbreak linked to a Washington company's frozen vegetables has sickened eight people, with two deaths reported, and led to a recall of all vegetables and fruits processed by the company, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said yesterday. Two of the *Listeria monocytogenes* cases were detected this year, the most recent one on March 28. Using PulseNet, the national foodborne pathogen subtyping network, investigators identified six other illnesses matching the outbreak strain from as far back as September 2013, the CDC said. Six patients are from California, while Maryland and Washington each have a case. [CIDRAP](#)

USDA offers \$6 million for antimicrobial resistance research

3 May - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) yesterday announced the availability of \$6 million for research on antimicrobial resistance in agriculture, including how resistance develops and spreads and how to combat it. [CIDRAP](#)

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WELLNESS

After 'The Biggest Loser,' their bodies fought to regain weight



2 May - ... Kevin Hall, a scientist at [the National Institutes of Health] ... had the idea to follow the "Biggest Loser" contestants for six years after that victorious night. ... The results ... showed just how hard the body fights back against weight loss. ... It has to do with resting metabolism, which determines how many calories a person burns when at rest.

When the show began, the contestants, though hugely overweight, had normal metabolisms for their size. ... When it ended, their metabolisms had slowed radically and their bodies were not burning enough calories to maintain their thinner sizes. ... As the years went by and the numbers on the scale climbed, the contestants' metabolisms did not recover. They became even slower, and the pounds kept piling on. It was as if their bodies were intensifying their effort to pull the contestants back to their original weight.

[The New York Times](#)

FDA to extend tobacco regulations to e-cigarettes, other products

5 May - E-cigarettes and other tobacco products like premium cigars and hookahs will be regulated in the same way the government regulates traditional cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. ... The rule broadens the definition of tobacco products to include e-cigarettes, hookahs, pipe tobacco, premium cigars, little cigars and other products. ... The new rule will not go into effect immediately, since companies will need time to comply. ... With the new regulations, people under the age of 18 won't be able to buy these products. Currently, not all states forbid sales to minors. Research has showed that e-cigarettes have become a problem for children. This year, the CDC found that e-cigarette use had tripled among teens in just one year. [CNN](#)

New implant set to join fight against U.S. painkiller epidemic

29 April - Two companies are on the cusp of taking a new treatment for opioid addiction to the U.S. market at a time when lawmakers are seeking ways to arrest an epidemic of heroin and painkiller abuse that kills 78 Americans every day. Titan Pharmaceuticals Inc and privately owned Braeburn Pharmaceuticals have together developed a matchstick-sized implant that analysts expect will be approved next month, despite mixed reviews. Implanted into the arm, the treatment is designed to be less vulnerable to abuse or illicit resale than the oral drugs that are currently used to treat opioid addiction. ... The implant, known as Probuphine, offers an alternative by administering buprenorphine for up to six months after users have first been stabilized on the oral form of the drug. [Reuters](#)

Psychotherapy should be first choice to treat chronic insomnia

3 May - People with chronic insomnia should try cognitive behavioral therapy before medications, suggests a prominent group of U.S. doctors. While the American College of Physicians (ACP) can't say cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) outperforms medications for chronic insomnia, the group does say psychotherapy is less risky than drugs. ... The ACP commissioned two reviews of insomnia treatments. One focused on medications, and the second focused on psychological and behavioral treatments. Overall, the first review found that some medications may improve sleep over a short period of time, but those come with the potential for changes in thinking and behavior. Additionally, there is a risk for infrequent but serious harms. ... The review of psychological and behavioral treatments found that CBT for insomnia improved overall sleep with a low risk of harms, the researchers report. [Reuters](#)

Risk of opioid overdose climbs at middle age

5 May - ... In 2013 and 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people ages 45 to 64 accounted for about half of all deaths from drug overdose. And there's been a particular increase for people over 55. ... "They're taking longer-acting opioids," he says. "They're taking doses that, at certain thresholds, are associated with increased overdose death." Also, Bratberg says, they're more likely to have chronic health conditions that put them at higher risk of respiratory depression. Medical conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or even the flu can amplify opioids' ability to depress breathing. And some percentage of these drug users, he says, will develop a substance use disorder. [NPR](#)

Study finds HPV-behavior link

2 May - A diagnosis of HPV may make women more susceptible to smoking, alcohol abuse, or use of recreational drugs -- so-called negative coping skills -- researchers reported here. In a small cross-sectional study a history of HPV was associated with a more than two-fold increased risk of negative coping skills and self-destructive escape behaviors, such as

drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes or marijuana ... compared with women with no history of HPV, reported Anna-Barbara Moscicki, MD, of the University of California at San Francisco, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

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USAFRICOM

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda: WHO notes local yellow fever spread likely in DRC, confirmed in Uganda

2 May - The World Health Organization (WHO) today posted updates on yellow fever outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—which are linked to an ongoing event in Angola—and in Uganda. The outbreak in the DRC is very concerning, given that the disease is endemic, reports of suspected cases began in January, and a large Angolan community in Kinshasa, a city of 10 million people, the WHO said. ... Since January, a total of 453 suspected yellow fever cases have been reported in the DRC, 45 of them fatal. ...

[A] suspected viral hemorrhagic fever cluster in Uganda prompted an early April rapid response team investigation, which confirmed yellow fever in three samples, the WHO said in a separate update. As of Apr 18, a total of 30 cases from seven districts had been reported, 7 of them fatal. Among the 30 cases, 6 have been confirmed from two districts, including 2 deaths. Most of the patients are male, and none had traveled outside of Uganda. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

Sierra Leone: How Ebola destroyed maternal health gains in Sierra Leone

2 May - ... [Sierra Leone] is still reeling from the effects of the Ebola outbreak, which has crippled its health care system. ... Sierra Leone and Liberia — two of the West African countries hardest hit by the virus — have long ranked among the world’s worst for maternal health, but before the outbreak they had been slowly improving after years of civil wars that reduced both nations to ruin. Those meager gains have since been erased. Many health care workers, especially those in maternity wards, were exposed to Ebola through contact with bodily fluids and died, devastating the ranks of skilled hospital staff. Most of the country’s health facilities were forced to close during the epidemic, precipitating an institutional collapse. ... “It’s like having lost 10 years in terms of health quality. Now you have to train new staff from a young age, you need to restart everything.” Making matters worse, many health care workers who survived Ebola have been reluctant to return to work, while pregnant women often avoid the poorly equipped clinics and hospitals for fear of contracting the virus or other diseases. [The New York Times](#)

Sierra Leone: Nearly half of Ebola survivors' household contacts infected

4 May - In a study conducted in Sierra Leone, nearly half of household contacts of Ebola virus disease (EVD) survivors contracted the illness, with the risk strongly associated with the level of exposure. ... [Researchers] talked with 937 household members of 94 Ebola survivors. ... Of the 937 people, 448 (48%) had had EVD. After adjusting for confounding and clustering, the researchers found that the risk of infection was highly correlated with the level of exposure, ranging from 83% for touching the corpse of an Ebola victim down to 8% for minimal contact, such as sitting in the same room with a patient. The adjusted risk also varied by age: 43% for children under 2 years, 30% for those 5 to 14 years; 41% for those 15 to 19, 51% for adults 20 to 29 years, and more than 60% for adults over 30. ... Having a spouse who contracted EVD first was not found to be a risk factor after adjustment for age, the report says. "Consequently, sexual transmission did not appear to be an important factor in the acute phase." [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

South Sudan: After war, fears of a health emergency

29 April - As South Sudan emerges from two years of war, with a fragile peace in place, aid agencies have warned that it may now face a medical crisis. Civil war erupted in 2013. ... Nearly two years of ruinous war that followed killed thousands and displaced millions, with UN agencies warning of mass hunger in the world's youngest nation. The government spends just 2 to 3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on healthcare. Previously, international donors have invested huge sums. But now they say they will cut the amount of medicine they are providing and want South Sudan to spend more. Some believe they are using healthcare funding as a political tool to force the government to increase its spending. But critics say if that is the case, then the victims will be some of the poorest people in the world. [Al Jazeera](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Despite billions in U.S. funding, Afghan forces have a problem with boots

5 May - ... As [Afghan] recruits stood in formation here last week, some wore nearly paper-thin black boots one stumble away from an exposed heel or toe. Others had on boots better suited for trekking through feet of snow than standing on sun-scorched gravel. The lucky ones had the same well-padded, sandy-colored boots worn by a visiting U.S. general and his support staff. ... The sad state of soldiers' boots highlights something that U.S. military officials have known for about two years: Despite more than \$68 billion in U.S.

funding for Afghan security forces over the past 14 years, they still can't even clothe themselves. Because of widespread corruption and incompetence, the U.S.-led coalition has taken control of procurement of uniforms and boots for the Afghan army and Afghan National Police Force. [The Washington Post](#)

Qatar: MERS case reported in Qatar

3 May - Qatar yesterday reported its second MERS-CoV case this year in a man with no travel history, according to translated information from Qatar's Ministry of Public Health posted on FluTrackers, an infectious disease message board. The MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) case involves a 40-year-old camel worker who is isolated in stable condition at Hamad General Hospital in Doha. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia reports 3 new MERS cases, 1 death

2 May - Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health (MOH) reported three new MERS-CoV cases, two recoveries, and the death of one previously reported patient over the past several days. ... Today's update brings the MERS-CoV total in Saudi Arabia since 2012 to 1,381 cases, including 588 deaths. Nine cases remain active. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

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USEUCOM

EU upholds tough rules on tobacco packaging

4 May - Rules that will drastically alter cigarette packaging are set to be adopted, after big tobacco firms failed to block new European Union laws. Europe's highest court upheld a law that will standardise packaging and ban the advertising of e-cigarettes. The Court of Justice found the laws "did not go beyond the limits of what is appropriate and necessary". Under the new rules health warnings will have to cover 65% of the front and back of cigarette packaging. The rules are due to take effect from 20 May, but the new packets will not be on sale until stocks of existing cartons have been cleared over the next year. [BBC News](#)

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Canada: Alberta wildfire - Emergency declared in Fort McMurray



5 May - A state of emergency has been declared in the province of Alberta in Canada after a wildfire forced all 88,000 residents of Fort McMurray to flee. Officials say the fast-moving blaze could destroy much of the city. The fire, which broke out on Sunday in the heart of the country's oil sands region, has gutted 1,600 buildings,

including a new school. The evacuation was the largest-ever in Alberta. Oil companies operating in the area have been forced to cut output. ... So far there have been no reports of deaths or injuries, but two women gave birth in one evacuation centre, Reuters news agency reported. [BBC News](#)

U.S.: Arsenic in New England well water tied to bladder cancer risk

4 May - Low to moderate levels of arsenic in New England well water may be responsible for an increased risk of bladder cancer in that region, suggests a new study. ... [Bladder] cancer death rates have been elevated in New England compared to the rest of the country for the last five decades. Bladder cancer diagnoses were also found to be about 20% higher in New England. Thanks to the area's geography, private wells there tend to contain low-to-moderate levels of arsenic from bedrock. ... [Researchers] compared 1,213 people who were diagnosed with bladder cancer between 2001 and 2004 in Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire to 1,418 people without cancer. In addition to looking at other risk factors for bladder cancer, the researchers estimated how much water participants had consumed on a daily basis over the course of their lives, and the water's arsenic content. Overall, the researchers found that bladder cancer risk increased with how much water people drank.

[Reuters](#)

U.S.: Medical error—the third leading cause of death in the U.S.

3 May - The annual list of the most common causes of death in the United States, compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), informs public awareness and national research priorities each year. The list is created using death certificates [and] ... it relies on assigning an International Classification of Disease (ICD) code to the cause of death. As a result, causes of death not associated with an ICD code, such as human and system factors, are not captured. ... We have estimated that medical error is the third biggest cause of death in the US and therefore requires greater attention. ... The ICD-10 coding system has limited ability to capture most types of medical error. At best, there are

only a few codes where the role of error can be inferred. When a medical error results in death, both the physiological cause of the death and the related problem with delivery of care should be captured. [The BMJ](#)

U.S.: More U.S. kids have chronic health problems, study finds

2 May - The number of American kids suffering from asthma and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is on the increase, with poor children being hit the hardest, researchers report. Children living in extreme poverty who had asthma and ADHD were nearly twice as likely to have at least one other chronic medical condition. These conditions included developmental delays, autism, depression, anxiety, behavioral or conduct issues, speech and language problems, epilepsy and other seizure disorders, and learning disabilities. ... The reasons for the increase in chronic conditions aren't clear, but access to health care and health literacy may be playing a part, he said. Increases in these conditions also were seen among children who rely on public assistance for their health care, Pulcini added. [CBS News](#)

U.S.: Number of HIV infections falling in United States, but fails to meet reduction goals

3 May - The number of new HIV infections occurring annually in the United States decreased by an estimated 11 percent from 2010 to 2015, while the HIV transmission rate decreased by an estimated 17 percent during the same time period, according to new research. ... But despite making important progress on these key indicators, the researchers say the U.S. fell short of the goals outlined in the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy [which] called for a 25-percent reduction in HIV incidence — the number of new infections in a given time period — and a 30-percent reduction in the rate of transmission by the year 2015. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

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USPACOM

Australia: Major health alert for Sydney CBD after three new cases of Legionnaires' disease confirmed

4 May – NSW Health has confirmed three new cases of Legionnaires' disease linked to the Sydney [Central Business District] CBD. One patient, an elderly man, is in a critical condition, a health spokeswoman said. Another is in hospital with the condition and a third has since been discharged. They are believed to have spent time in the city's CBD since last Friday. Air conditioning towers are being blamed for the contamination. ... Sixteen NSW Health

employees are investigating the 67 cooling towers are located within the area and expect to complete their investigations within two days. [9News](#)

Bangladesh: Children in developing world infected with parasite ... may be more prone to stunted growth

4 May - Children infected even just once with a certain type of waterborne parasite are nearly three times as likely to suffer from moderate or severe stunted growth by age 2 than those who are not – regardless of whether their infection made them feel sick. ... The researchers ... found that three of every four children studied in a slum on the outskirts of the capital of Bangladesh experienced at least one *Cryptosporidium* infection in the first 24 months of life. One in four of the 302 infected children experienced the severe diarrhea that is associated with the parasite, while the other 72 percent were infected with *Cryptosporidium* but had no symptoms at all. Despite a lack of symptoms, more than half of the children experienced stunted growth in the first two years of life, leading to irreversible damage. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

China: Amid scandal, China military hospital closes doors to new patients

4 May - A Chinese military hospital, embroiled in a scandal over the death of a college student who had sought experimental cancer treatment at the facility, has temporarily closed its doors to new patients, state media reported on Wednesday. The Second Hospital of Beijing Armed Police Corps has stopped new admissions, the state-run People's Daily said in a post on its official microblog, a day after the health ministry launched an investigation into the hospital. ... Wei had searched Baidu for the best place for treatment, finding a department under the Second Hospital of Beijing Armed Police Corps that offered an experimental treatment that ultimately failed, state media reported this week. ... Healthcare is a flashpoint for many people in China, who have long faced issues from ticket touts illegally trading appointment tickets, snarling queues to see top doctors and rampant corruption that can push up the cost of receiving care. [Reuters](#)

China: Obesity 'explosion' in rural youth, study warns

27 April - Obesity has rapidly increased in young rural Chinese, a study has warned, because of socioeconomic changes. Researchers found 17% of boys and 9% of girls under the age of 19 were obese in 2014, up from 1% for each in 1985. The 29-year study ... used a stricter cut-off of the Body Mass Index (BMI) than the World Health Organization standard. ... The study said China's rapid socioeconomic and nutritional transition had led to an increase in energy intake and a decrease in physical activity. ... On the reason for the higher prevalence of overweight and obesity in boys, the study says: "The traditional, societal preference for sons, particularly in rural areas, may mean that boys are likely to enjoy more of the family's resources." ... This study used a lower cut-off of 24-27.9 for overweight and 28 and above for obese. [BBC News](#)

Hong Kong: Polluted air may up risk of many cancers

3 May - For elderly people in Hong Kong, long term exposure to fine-particle air pollution is tied to an increased risk of dying from many cancers. ... The researchers began following more than 66,000 people age 65 and older in Hong Kong between 1998 and 2001 and tracked them through 2011. They used satellite data and site monitors to estimate fine particulate matter in the air at the subjects' homes. They focused on fine particulate matter, or PM2.5. ... After accounting for smoking status, the researchers found that as a subject's home exposure to fine particles in the air increased, so did the risk of dying from any cancer, including cancer of the upper digestive tract, liver, bile ducts, gall bladder and pancreas. [Reuters](#)

India: ITC shuts cigarette plants from May 4

5 May - India's biggest cigarette maker ITC Ltd shut its plants from May 4 to comply with a new stipulated pictorial warnings rule issued by the federal government, the company said in a statement. India's top court told tobacco companies on Wednesday they must adhere to a new federal rule requiring much larger health warnings on cigarette packs, in a major setback for the \$11 billion industry. [Reuters](#)

India: More than 300 million Indians suffer from a crippling drought

4 May - ... About 330 million Indians are struggling under grueling heat and drought conditions across 10 states this year, the government said, severely harming the economy of a nation where nearly half the people rely on farming. Reservoirs and rivers here in Maharashtra's drought districts are almost dry, and a 50-car train now delivers water to Latur city. ... Nearly 30 percent of Indians in cities and 70 percent in villages rely on water pumped from deep underground, because the tap- water supply is either insufficient or nonexistent. Only 17 percent of India's farms have access to surface irrigation projects.

[The Washington Post](#)

Indonesia: Antismoking coalition gives big tobacco a fight in Indonesia



30 April - ... [Indonesia] is the second-largest cigarette market in Asia after China, and had the highest male smoking rate in the world — 67 percent, according to a 2011 survey. ... Over the last decade, it has become a last Eden for tobacco companies facing declining smoking rates at home. ... Yet that push has been met by an increasingly potent

coalition of mayors, health officials and antismoking groups. ... [Huge] cigarette billboards that dominated the highways of Jakarta, the capital, were taken down in 2015, as part of a move to ban outdoor tobacco advertisements by mayors around the country.

[The New York Times](#)

Papua New Guinea: Cheating death - Papua New Guinea's snake man



2 May - Every year, the Papuan Taipan kills up to 1,000 people in PNG, and in some parts of this South Pacific nation, there can be as many as 60 snakes per hectare. Those who live in remote villages far from medical help are especially vulnerable. ... For snake bite victims, the only hope for survival is an anti-venom treatment produced in Australia. But it costs \$2,000. ... Now Williams and his team are working to change that. They're developing a new anti-venom treatment that will be much cheaper and more readily available. Unlike the existing treatment, their anti-venom ... will not need to be refrigerated, so it can be kept at the many remote clinics that lack electricity. "If this product passes the clinical trials and goes into general use it can be supplied to the Papua New Guinean government for about \$150 a vial," Williams explains. [Al Jazeera](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Chikungunya cases climb by more than 28,000, PAHO notes

2 May - In its most recent chikungunya fever update, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 28,317 new suspected and confirmed cases of the virus, bringing the 2016 total to 82,603 cases as of Apr 29. Many countries, however, are behind on their reporting or have not submitted any data. Brazil recorded by far the largest increase since the previous update, adding 25,341 new cases and 10 related deaths that occurred in March. The country's total of 39,017 cases now accounts for 47% of all cases in 2016 thus far. Nicaragua had the second-highest increase at 1,137 new cases for a total of 12,458. Honduras was next, according to PAHO, reporting 797 new cases, for a total of 7,978. There are now 12 related deaths caused by chikungunya so far this year, all in Brazil.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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