

24 October 2014

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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## **GEN Dempsey hits YouTube to address troops' Ebola concerns**

The nation's top military officer has taken to YouTube to soothe troops' concerns about deploying to the region of Africa being ravaged by Ebola.

### **In a video posted**

**Tuesday**, Army Gen.

Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said the operation in West Africa is a national security priority and the Defense Department will do all it can to protect the health of its personnel before, during and after their deployments.

**Military Times**



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## 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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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Hagel orders expeditionary Ebola support team

19 October - In response to a request by the Department of Health and Human Services, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel today ordered U.S. Northern Command to prepare and train a 30-member expeditionary medical support team that could, if required, provide short-notice assistance to civilian medical professionals in the United States. In a statement, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said formation of the team is an added prudent measure to ensure the nation is ready to respond quickly, effectively and safely in the event of additional Ebola cases in the United States. Army Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., the Northcom commander, is with the military services to source and to form the joint team, Kirby said. It will consist of 20 critical care nurses, five doctors trained in infectious disease and five trainers in infectious disease protocols, he added. [U.S.](#)

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## GLOBAL

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### 3D printing and the future of disaster relief

23 October - Architects in Amsterdam are building a 3D-printed house - an effort some say could soon transform disaster reconstruction and help the homeless around the world as the technology becomes increasingly more affordable. The idea behind the project, according to the architects, was to develop ways to build homes in a faster and more efficient way, while making use of newly developed substances derived from bio-based raw materials. "We are currently printing with bio plastics, which are 80 percent made from vegetable oil," Tosja Backer, expo-manager at the 3D Canal House, told Al Jazeera. "We are also researching the possibilities of printing with recycled materials, plastics of course, but we are looking into using wood pallets and natural stone waste as well." ... Some observers say the technology is likely to revolutionise the construction industry, as there are almost no transport costs since designs can simply be transferred digitally and printed locally. [Al Jazeera](#)

## Brain scans show cause of seasonal affective disorder

20 October - Scientists say they have identified the underlying reason why some people are prone to the winter blues, or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). People with Sad have an unhelpful way of controlling the "happy" brain signalling compound serotonin during winter months, brain scans reveal. As the nights draw in, production of a transporter protein ramps up in Sad, lowering available serotonin... Using positron emission tomography (PET) brain scans, they were able to show significant summer-to-winter differences in the levels of the serotonin transporter (SERT) protein in Sad patients. [BBC News](#)

## Drug-resistant tuberculosis at crisis levels, warns WHO

22 October - Multi drug-resistant tuberculosis remains at crisis levels, with about 480,000 new cases this year, and various forms of the lung disease killed about 1.5 million people in 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday. In recent years, the emergence of multi drug-resistant TB -- a manmade problem caused by regular TB patients being given the wrong medicines, the wrong doses, or failing to complete their treatment -- has posed an increasing global health threat. About 9 million people contracted tuberculosis during the year and about 3.5 percent of those had a strain that was to some extent drug-resistant -- cases that are much harder to treat and have significantly poorer cure rates, it said. [Reuters](#)

## Procedure on paralyzed man stirs hope and caution

21 October - A Polish man who was paralyzed from the chest down after a knife attack several years ago is now able to get around using a walker and has recovered some sensation in his legs after receiving a novel nerve-regeneration treatment, according to a new report that has generated both hope and controversy... The techniques have shown some promise in animal studies. But the medical team, led by Polish and English doctors, also emphasized that the results would "have to be confirmed in a larger group of patients sustaining similar types of spinal injury" before the treatment could be considered truly effective. [New York Times](#)

## Scientists consider repurposing robots for Ebola

22 October - Robotics scientists nationwide are pondering an intriguing possibility: Might robotic technologies deployed in rescue and disaster situations be quickly repurposed to help contain the Ebola epidemic? A robot that could perform even some of the tasks of a human, such as waste removal or the burial of bodies, would have significant lifesaving potential... The problem, scientists say, is that the technology is still limited when it comes to medicine. While mobile robots now can disarm roadside bombs and drive cars, they are taking only the first tentative steps toward the human levels of dexterity required in health care. [New York Times](#)

## Vegetative patients show glimmers of consciousness

16 October - Scientists have uncovered hidden signatures in the brains of people in vegetative states that suggest they may have a glimmer of consciousness. Doctors normally consider these patients - who have severe brain injuries - to be unaware of the world around them although they appear awake. Researchers hope their work will help identify those who are actually conscious, but unable to communicate. [BBC News](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### Assessing the impact of travel restrictions on international spread of the 2014 West African Ebola epidemic

23 October - The quick spread of an Ebola outbreak in West Africa has led a number of countries and airline companies to issue travel bans to the affected areas. Considering data up to 31 Aug 2014, we assess the impact of the resulting traffic reductions with detailed numerical simulations of the international spread of the epidemic. Traffic reductions are shown to delay by only a few weeks the risk that the outbreak extends to new countries. [Eurosurveillance](#)

### Canada to ship experimental Ebola vaccine to World Health Organization

18 October - Canada said it would start shipping 800 vials of an experimental Ebola vaccine to the World Health Organization on Monday to combat the deadly viral outbreak in Africa. The WHO is the international coordinating body for the Ebola outbreak, which has claimed almost 4,500 lives, mostly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. "Canada views this experimental Ebola vaccine as a global resource and in the interest of global public health, we are sharing it with our international partners to help address the Ebola outbreak in West Africa," Canadian Health Minister Rona Ambrose said on Saturday... The experimental vaccine is the product of more than a decade of scientific research by scientists at the Public Health Agency of Canada's main laboratory in Winnipeg. The vaccine had shown "very promising results in animal research" and earlier this week, Ottawa announced the start of clinical trials on humans at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in the U.S. Canada has supplied 20 vials of the vaccine for the trial. Results of the trial are expected in December. [Wall Street Journal](#)

### CDC issues new guidelines for workers dealing with Ebola patients

20 October - The Centers for Disease Control on Monday issued new guidelines for health care workers caring for patients stricken with Ebola, one week after two workers at a Dallas

hospital came down with the deadly virus. No skin may be exposed when wearing protective gear, and workers are to be repeatedly trained in putting on and taking off the equipment, CDC Director Tom Frieden said at an evening telephone press conference. Hospital workers are to check each other as they come in and go out, and hospital workers will be expected to exhaustively practice getting in and out of the equipment. [Fox News](#)

## DHS boosts screening for travelers from Ebola outbreak nations

21 October - In a step to further tighten checks on travelers from Ebola-stricken countries, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced today that all travelers whose flights originate in Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone must enter the United States through one of five airports that are currently doing enhanced screening for the disease. The new measures go into effect tomorrow at five airports that account for 94% of all travelers from the three outbreak countries: New York's JFK, Newark, Dulles, Atlanta, and Chicago O'Hare. Though there are no direct, nonstop flights to the United States from the three outbreak countries, federal officials estimate that about 150 people from those locations fly into the United States each day. [CIDRAP](#)

## Ebola blood-therapy team set up

23 October - An international team of scientists has been set up to determine the effectiveness of using the blood of Ebola survivors as a treatment. It is hoped the antibodies used by the immune system to fight Ebola can be transferred from a survivor to a patient. The study will start in Guinea and is led by the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium... People produce antibodies in the blood in an attempt to fight off an Ebola infection. In theory, those antibodies can be transferred from a survivor into a sick patient to give their immune system a boost. However, large-scale data on the effectiveness of the therapy is lacking. [BBC News](#)

## 'Ebola czar' brings decades of Washington experience

17 October - The man tapped to be the country's "Ebola czar" is a veteran Washington advisor and Democratic strategist who will oversee a multi-agency response to the outbreak in West Africa and the U.S. cases, the White House announced Friday. In a change from a career spent mainly behind the scenes, Ron Klain becomes the Obama administration's point person leading a complicated and highly-visible government Ebola strategy. Klain, a longtime confidant to Democratic presidents and presidential candidates, brings to the job an in-depth knowledge of federal agencies and processes, former colleagues said. Republicans, however, challenged the appointment, calling him a political appointee with little relevant medical background. "What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Friday. " [Los Angeles Times](#)

## Ebola death toll rises to almost 4,900

23 October - The number of people with Ebola is almost to hit 10,000 in West Africa, the World Health Organisation said, as the scramble to find a cure gathered pace. The UN's public health body said 9,936 people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone - the three countries at the epicentre of the world's worst Ebola epidemic - have contracted the disease, WHO said on Wednesday. In total, 4,877 people have so far died. The news comes as the Red Cross said it would be at least four months before the epidemic is contained, but only if all necessary steps are taken. [Al Jazeera](#)

## EU names coordinator to step up response to Ebola

23 October - The European Union appointed a coordinator on Thursday to lead its drive to fight Ebola in West Africa following criticism that European efforts so far to contain the world's worst recorded outbreak of the disease have been inadequate. Christos Stylianides, who takes over on Nov. 1 as the EU's commissioner for humanitarian affairs and crisis management, will also be the 28-nation bloc's point man on Ebola. [Reuters](#)

## Mali becomes sixth West African nation hit by Ebola

23 October - Mali confirmed its first case of Ebola on Thursday, becoming the sixth West African country to be touched by the worst outbreak on record of the hemorrhagic fever, which has killed nearly 4,900 people. Mali's Health Minister Ousmane Kone told state television that the patient in the western town of Kayes was a two-year-old girl who had recently arrived from neighboring Guinea, where the outbreak began. "The condition of the girl, according to our services, is improving thanks to her rapid treatment," the minister told state television. A health ministry official, who asked not to be identified, said the girl's mother died in Guinea a few weeks ago and the baby was brought by relatives to the Malian capital Bamako. [Reuters](#)

## Natick plays key role in helping to fight spread of Ebola

21 October - Researchers at the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center here, invented a next-generation disinfectant system that kills the Ebola virus on surfaces. The scientists developed and patented a novel chemical system, which is being used to sterilize medical equipment and electronic items used in the treatment of patients on the front lines of the war on Ebola in West Africa... Natick's invention is a portable "no power required" method of generating chlorine dioxide, known as ClO<sub>2</sub>, gas, one of the best biocides available for combating contaminants, which range from benign microbes and food pathogens to Category A Bioterror agents. The starting ingredients used to generate ClO<sub>2</sub> are now produced and marketed by Lebanon, New Jersey-based ClorDiSys Solutions, and they can be quickly mobilized and applied as a gas to decontaminate or sterilize equipment and surfaces. [Army.mil](#)

## Nigeria declared Ebola free by U.N. health agency

20 October - The World Health Organization has declared that Nigeria is now free of Ebola. In an update issued Monday, the U.N. health agency said the country's containment of the lethal disease was a "spectacular success story." The announcement comes after 42 days have passed — twice the disease's maximum incubation period — since the last case in Nigeria tested negative. WHO said Nigeria had traced nearly every contact of Ebola patients in the country, all of whom were linked to the country's first patient, a Liberian man who arrived with symptoms in Lagos and later died. Nigeria reported 20 cases of Ebola, including eight deaths. [Times-Picayune](#)

## Nigeria pledges 600 volunteers as Africa steps up Ebola fight

23 October - Nigeria pledged on Thursday to send a contingent of 600 volunteers to help fight the worst ever outbreak of Ebola on record which has killed nearly 5,000 people in West Africa. With financial pledges flowing in from around the world but trained doctors and nurses scarce in the three worst effected countries -- Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the African Union appealed last week to member states to urgently fill the gap. African nations' response to the crisis has drawn criticism, with officials in Liberia bemoaning a lack of African solidarity. The World Health Organization (WHO) has rebuked some African countries for closing borders to Ebola-hit states, saying this worsened their suffering by cutting off supplies... Democratic Republic of Congo, which has suffered six outbreaks of Ebola since the disease was first detected there in 1976, had also pledged to train 1,000 volunteers, she said. [Reuters](#)

## Pentagon plans Ebola domestic-response team of medical experts to aid doctors

19 October - The Pentagon announced Sunday that it will create a 30-person team of medical experts that could quickly leap into a region if new Ebola cases emerge in the United States, providing support for civilian doctors who lack proficiency in fighting the deadly virus. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered the Pentagon's Northern Command, which has a prime focus on protecting homeland security, to send this new team to Fort Sam Houston in Texas for high-level preparations to respond to any additional Ebola cases beyond the three confirmed in the country. [Washington Post](#)

## Red Cross head says Ebola travel bans 'irrational'

22 October - Closing borders will not effectively curb Ebola infections, the head of the Red Cross said on Wednesday, amid debate over whether bans on travel from hardest-hit African countries would help combat the spread of the deadly virus... Travellers from the region have infected two people in the U.S. state of Texas and one in Madrid, prompting some leaders, including some U.S. lawmakers, to urge a ban on travel from West Africa...

Health experts warn that excessive constraints on air travel could have severe economic consequences that could destabilize the region and possibly disrupt essential health and humanitarian services. [Reuters](#)

## Rwanda to screen U.S. and Spanish visitors to keep out Ebola

21 October - Rwanda's Ministry of Health is requiring visitors who have been in the United States or Spain during the previous 22 days to report their medical condition to health authorities upon arrival in Rwanda, the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda said Tuesday. A Ministry of Health document says all passengers from the U.S. and Spain - two countries that have seen cases of Ebola - will have temperatures taken upon arrival. Passengers with fevers will be denied entry, and those without fevers will still be required to report daily health conditions. [Huffington Post](#)

## Study shows exit screening vital to halting global Ebola spread

21 October - Three Ebola-infected travelers a month would be expected to get on international flights from the West African countries suffering epidemics of the deadly virus if there were no effective exit screening, scientists said on Tuesday. The three countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, do all check departing air passengers for fever, although the test cannot spot sufferers in the period before they show symptoms, which can be up to 21 days. The researchers, whose work was published in The Lancet medical journal on Tuesday, said exit screening was nevertheless one of the most effective ways of limiting Ebola's spread... Dr Kamran Khan of St Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, who led the research, said the study showed it was far more effective and less disruptive to screen travelers from the affected countries in West Africa as they leave, rather than when they land, as the United States, Britain, [France](#) and some other countries have begun to do. [Reuters](#)

## U.S. government grants five open Ebola waste permits

23 October - The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued five "non-site-specific" special permits to companies for handling waste related to the Ebola virus that has killed one patient in the United States, triggering fear about the spread of the disease... Under the permits, the five companies are not limited as to where they can pick up Ebola-related waste or dispose of it. [Reuters](#)

## U.S. plans 21-day watch of travelers from Ebola-hit nations

22 October - Federal health officials Wednesday placed new restrictions on travelers from West African countries with Ebola outbreaks, requiring that they report their temperatures daily for three weeks, along with any other potential symptoms of the disease. The

regulations, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are meant to monitor everyone at risk of developing Ebola symptoms from an infection acquired overseas, while not shutting the borders and not overwhelming state and local health departments with having to hunt down hundreds of newly arrived visitors. [New York Times](#)

## WHO: Large Ebola vaccine trials could start in January

21 October - Large clinical trials that would put Ebola vaccines in the arms of thousands of West Africans may begin as early as January, depending on the outcome of small preliminary trials under way now or soon to start, a World Health Organization (WHO) official said at a press conference today. A January start for major West African trials would be about 2 months later than the same official, Marie-Paule Kieny, PhD, a WHO assistant director-general, projected in early September. It also differs from a prediction made last week by a US official, Peter Jahrling, PhD, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, that a large trial of two vaccines could begin in Liberia in December... "I'm not suggesting that there will be mass vaccination at population levels starting in January 2015," Kieny said today. "When I talk about vaccine deployment in these countries, I'm talking about tens of thousands of doses." [CIDRAP](#)

## WHO promises to review Ebola response

18 October - The World Health Organisation (WHO) has promised to undertake and publish a full review of its handling of the Ebola crisis after a leaked document appeared to show the UN agency had failed to do enough to contain the epidemic. The WHO said in a statement on Saturday that it would not comment on an internal draft document obtained and released by the Associated Press news agency, in which the organisation blamed incompetent staff, bureaucracy and a lack of reliable information for its allegedly slow and weak response to the outbreak that has reportedly killed more than 4,500 people since May. [Al Jazeera](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 41 (October 5-11, 2014), influenza activity was low in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 7,655 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 41, 282 (3.7%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to

pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold. [FluView](#)

## DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During Surveillance Weeks 40 & 41, 28 September - 11 October, a total of 119 specimens were collected and received from 39 locations. Results were finalized for 71 specimens from 31 locations. During Week 40, three influenza A(H3N2), one influenza B, and one influenza B & rhinovirus/enterovirus co-infection were identified. During Week 41, one influenza A/not subtyped and one influenza B virus were identified. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

## Flu News Europe

Week 41/2014:

- In the second week of the season, influenza activity across the WHO European Region remains low, with indications of sporadic influenza activity in 15 western, central and northern countries.
- Out of 383 sentinel specimens tested in 24 countries, four detections (1%) were reported by three countries. Three were subtyped as influenza A(H3N2) and one influenza A virus was not subtyped.
- Influenza A was detected in three patients admitted to intensive care in the United Kingdom.
- This week, primary care data were reported by 34 countries; virological data were provided by 28 countries, and hospital data by one country.
- All-cause mortality has been within the normal range for the reporting countries during the past weeks (see European monitoring of excess mortality for public health action (EuroMOMO) – <http://www.euromomo.eu>).

Season: Influenza activity in the European Region is typically low at this time of the year. [Flu News Europe](#)

## Influenza outbreak in a vaccinated population – USS Ardent, February 2014

24 October - On February 10, 2014, the USS Ardent, a U.S. Navy minesweeper, was moored in San Diego, California, while conducting training. Over the course of 3 days, 25 of 102 crew members sought medical care because of influenza-like illness (ILI). Nasal swab specimens were collected from each patient, and initial rapid influenza testing indicated 16 cases of influenza A. Ultimately, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing conducted by the Naval Health Research Center determined that 20 specimens were influenza A, of which 18 were subtype H3N2. Two specimens could not be subtyped. The HA gene sequence of an outbreak isolate was 99% identical to strains circulating during the 2013–14 influenza season and antigenically similar to the H3N2 component of the 2013–14 influenza vaccine.

At the time of the outbreak, 99% of the crew had received influenza vaccine... This outbreak highlights the risk for an H3N2 influenza outbreak among vaccinated and otherwise healthy young persons. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For Week 42 (through 18 October 2014)

- 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 at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

## New viral mutation made middle-aged adults more susceptible to last year's flu

21 October - A team of scientists, led by researchers at The Wistar Institute, has identified a possible explanation for why middle-aged adults were hit especially hard by the H1N1 influenza virus during the 2013-2014 influenza season. The findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, offer evidence that a new mutation in H1N1 viruses potentially led to more disease in these individuals. Their study suggests that the surveillance community may need to change how they choose viral strains that go into seasonal influenza vaccines, the researchers say. "We identified a mutation in recent H1N1 strains that allows viruses to avoid immune responses that are present in a large number of middle-aged adults," said Scott Hensley, Ph.D., a member of Wistar's Vaccine Center and an assistant professor in the Translational Tumor Immunology program of Wistar's Cancer Center. [EurekaAlert!](#)

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### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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## GAO recommends stronger food safety performance measures

21 October - The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) yesterday issued a series of recommendations to enhance the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS's) ability to prevent *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* contamination of poultry products... The report commended FSIS for its efforts to reduce bacterial contamination of poultry over the past 8 years but described how the USDA's lack

of performance measures and limited data on compliance represent severe hurdles to protecting the public from foodborne illness. The GAO presented a series of recommendations to reduce *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* contamination of chicken and turkey products. Recommendations include developing performance measures for food processing plants' compliance with food safety goals, developing consistent FSIS standards for ground chicken and turkey, and tracking effectiveness of farms' adoption of and compliance with safety measures. [CIDRAP Food Safety Scan](#) (first item)

## Report says US meat inspection procedures out of date

21 October - To better protect public health in the United States, a broader, data-driven effort is needed to update the US meat and poultry inspection system overseen by the USDA, say the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) in a recent report... The new report says current inspection techniques are out of date, focusing as they historically have on making sure animals at slaughter are healthy... Instead, say Pew and the CSPI, attention should be on the myriad sources of contamination, particularly microbial hazards such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* that are so prevalent today. [CIDRAP Food Safety Scan](#) (second item)

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### WELLNESS

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## Case report: A cook-out caution

20 October - A growing hazard in the summer backyard can be found in the wire bristle brushes commonly used to clean barbecue grills, a researcher reported here... "These bristles are very small and thin, and can stick to the grill. Patients may not even feel it, and there have been cases of neck and tonsil perforation, abscesses, and intestinal perforations requiring rapid surgical intervention," he said. "There has been a lot of blame in terms of cheaper products, and how they're manufactured," he added. The Consumer Product Safety Commission is currently collecting data to see if there are specific brands and designs of brushes that are particularly hazardous, if the type of grill matters, such as those made of uncoated or porcelain-coated cast iron, and if there's an association with particular types of food. [MedPage Today](#)

## Colorado health officials recommend banning most pot confections

20 October - Pot-infused brownies, candies and other confections that are "naturally attractive to children" should be banned, according to recommendations on Monday by Colorado health officials to a task force charged with drafting rules on marijuana edibles.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment said edible marijuana products should instead be limited to “a simple lozenge/hard candy or tinctures.” ... Retail pot sales began in Colorado in January and hospitals in the state have since reported an uptick in the number of children treated for ingesting marijuana edibles. [Reuters](#)

## Living with a smoker like living in polluted city

21 October -- Nonsmokers who live with smokers are exposed to triple the World Health Organization's recommended safe levels of harmful air particles, a new study warns. That means that air-particle levels in a home with a smoker are similar to that of the air in large, polluted cities, the study found. Living in smoke-free homes could offer major health benefits to nonsmokers, according to the authors of the study published online Oct. 20 in the journal *Tobacco Control*... The study's authors compared levels of fine particulate matter such as fine dust or soot in the air of almost 100 homes with smokers and nearly 20 nonsmoking homes in Scotland. Average concentrations of fine particulate matter were about 10 times higher in the homes with smokers than in the nonsmoking homes, the researchers found. [WebMD](#)

## Milk substitutes might not give kids enough vitamin D

21 October - Young children who drank nondairy replacement milks instead of cow's milk were more like to have low levels of vitamin D in their blood, a new study found. Parents often choose non-dairy beverages, such as almond, soy, or rice milk, for kids who have milk allergies or lactose intolerance. Some parents believe these beverages have health benefits even for kids who can drink regular milk... In the U.S. and Canada, cow's milk must be fortified with vitamin D, but there is no such requirement for non-dairy alternatives, Maguire said. “Our findings suggest that children are about half as likely to maintain adequate vitamin D levels when drinking non-cow's milk and it behooves us as parents to be aware that both in Canada and United States, non-cow's milk is not legislated to contain vitamin D,” Maguire said. [Reuters](#)

## More research, regulation needed on energy drinks: study

22 October - A new review of the existing evidence suggests that energy drinks may represent a looming public health threat in Europe, especially for kids and young adults. The main health risks from energy drinks come from very high caffeine levels and a higher likelihood of consuming alcohol and tobacco with the drinks, as well as engaging in other risky behaviors, the study team says in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*. There are also ingredients other than caffeine in some of the drinks – such as guarana and taurine - whose effects are so poorly studied it's hard to say whether they're safe in large quantities and in children and teens, the authors add. [Reuters](#)

## Psychiatric appointments scarce in major U.S. cities

17 October - Patients calling to make appointments with psychiatrists in major U.S. cities may only be successful about a quarter of the time, says a new study... For the new study, the researchers called 360 psychiatrists in Boston, Houston and Chicago listed in Blue Cross Blue Shield's provider database... On the first call attempt, the researchers successfully reached only a third of the psychiatrists. As the authors note in the journal *Psychiatric Services*, 16 percent of the numbers listed were wrong... Another 15 percent of psychiatrists were not accepting new patients. Of the more than 200 psychiatrists who missed the first call, only 35 called back. After a second round of calling, researchers had secured appointments with 93 psychiatrists, about a quarter of the total number. [Reuters](#)

## Study finds drugs in recalled supplements

22 October - Dietary supplements containing potentially dangerous prescription drug ingredients may still be for sale even years after safety recalls, a study found. In supplements bought online, researchers detected hidden steroids, similar ingredients to Viagra and Prozac and a weight loss drug linked with heart attacks. They tested 27 products promising big muscles, sexual prowess, weight loss and more. Of those, 18 contained ingredients not approved for over-the-counter use; 17 still had the same drug that prompted the recalls... Unlike prescription drugs, dietary supplements don't need FDA approval before they are marketed. Still, their labels must list all ingredients and manufacturers are not allowed to sell products that are "adulterated or misbranded," the agency's website says. [Fox News](#)

## Who's Jane Fonda, Mom?

22 October - ...Fitness companies like Zumba and CrossFit have recently made big business of catering to children. Now boutique gym owners are capitalizing on the confluence of shrinking physical education time at school and the typically dead gym hours of late afternoon to groom a new generation of customers willing to pay \$30 and up for a class and for the lifestyle that goes with it. [New York Times](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Uganda: Limited support for key populations undermines Ugandan HIV control

16 October - Uganda's HIV/AIDS control efforts have been undermined by a lack of consensus and clarity over which people constitute Key Populations (KPs) to be targeted in

various prevention, care and treatment efforts, say experts... "The fight against HIV-AIDS will continue to be jeopardized if marginalized groups are not well defined and included in the fight against HIV/AIDS, yet we all agree that [these] are the highest drivers of HIV," said Moses Kimbugwe, the advocacy and programme director with Spectrum Uganda, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) advocacy organization. According to studies, the most at-risk populations (MARPs) in Uganda, who account for HIV prevalence rates often more than double the national average, include fisher folk, transactional sex workers and their partners, men who have sex with men (MSM) and men in uniformed services. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS uses the term "key populations" to describe these groups. [IRIN](#)

## Zimbabwe: From wife-beaters to peace-preachers: tackling domestic abuse in Zimbabwe's hinterland

21 October - Jairos Maruwe used to beat up his wife so badly he once knocked her unconscious and broke her arm. It landed him in jail at least once, but it was the way he was raised... Now, Maruwe is the secretary of the local branch of a group set up to reduce domestic abuse in Zimbabwe, where one in three women, according to a 2013 study, experience physical violence by their spouse or partner during their lifetime... Maruwe is among hundreds of men in 26 rural districts (Zimbabwe has 59 districts in all, over 40 of which are in rural areas) to have taken part in an innovative project set up this year by local NGO Padare/Enkundleni, with funding and logistical support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The scheme encourages men to get involved in the fight against [gender-based violence]. [IRIN](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Saudi Arabia: MERS cases in Saudi Arabia reach 772, with 329 deaths

22 October - A 46-year-old Saudi Arabian man has become the 772nd case of MERS-CoV in that country since June 2012. An update from the Saudi Ministry of health (MOH) today lists his case as well as the death of a previously reported MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) case-patient. The new case occurred in Medina. The man, who is hospitalized, is not a healthcare worker. He had no preexisting disease and no contact with animals, the MOH said. The death occurred in a 56-year-old man in Taif. He was not a healthcare worker but did have preexisting disease. His death brings to 329 the total number of fatal cases in the current outbreak, according to the MOH. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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## USEUCOM

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### France: Chikungunya

23 October - On 21 October 2014, WHO was notified by the National IHR Focal Point for France of 4 cases of chikungunya locally-acquired infection in Montpellier, France. The cases were confirmed by tests conducted by the French National Reference Laboratory for arboviruses on 20 October 2014. This is the first time that locally-acquired transmission of chikungunya has been detected in France since 2010. The 4 cases of chikungunya infection occurred within the same family, with symptoms onset between 20 September and 12 October. The cases live in Montpellier in the vicinity of a chikungunya case imported from Cameroon. The cases have no history of travel out of their district of residence in the 15 days prior to the onset of symptoms. [WHO](#)

### The Netherlands: Continued seasonal circulation of enterovirus D68 in the Netherlands, 2011–2014

23 October - Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) continued to circulate in a seasonal pattern in the Netherlands, after the outbreak in 2010. Outpatient EV-D68 cases, mainly in the under 20 and 50–59 years age groups, presented with relatively mild respiratory disease. Hospital-based enterovirus surveillance identified more severe cases, mainly in children under 10 years of age. Dutch partial VP1 genomic region sequences from 2012 through 2014 were distributed over three sublineages similar to EV-D68 from the outbreak in the US in 2014. [Eurosurveillance](#)

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## USNORTHCOM

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### U.S.: CDC to clinicians - Be alert for children with polioliike illness

22-29 October - Clinicians should be on alert for pediatric patients who present with an acute neurologic illness that features focal limb weakness and abnormalities of the spinal cord gray matter on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), according to a health advisory issued September 26 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)... The illness is characterized by acute focal limb weakness and findings from MRI of the spinal cord that show nonenhancing lesions largely restricted to the gray matter, the CDC advisory said. None of the patients experienced altered mental status or seizures. [Journal of the American Medical Association](#)

## U.S.: EV-D68 cases reach 938

21 October - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today it has confirmed 938 cases of enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) in 46 states and the District of Columbia, up from 922 cases yesterday. Almost all of the cases involve children, many of whom have asthma. As noted yesterday, 12 states reported elevated or increasing EV-D68 activity in the week that ended Oct 10, the CDC said. The states without cases are Iowa, Montana, Nevada, and Oklahoma. "CDC has received substantially more specimens for enterovirus lab testing than usual this year, due to the large outbreak of EV-D68 and related hospitalizations," the agency said in the update. "CDC has prioritized testing of specimens from children with severe respiratory illness. There are likely many children affected with milder forms of illness." ... The CDC said it expects cases to decline by late fall. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## U.S. to temporarily halt funding for controversial virus research

17 October - The federal government will temporarily stop funding any new studies that could make three high-risk infectious diseases even more dangerous. The government is asking all scientists involved in this research now to voluntarily halt their current studies. The unusual move comes after a long controversy over experiments with mutant forms of a bird flu virus. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy said that the government will launch a review of the potential risks and benefits of certain experiments with three viruses: SARS, MERS and influenza. The concern is that so-called gain-of-function studies would probe how these viruses work by altering them in ways that could make them more pathogenic or contagious. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: West Nile virus - Preliminary maps & data for 2014

21 October - As of October 21, a total of 47 states and the District of Columbia have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes. Overall, 1,585 cases of West Nile virus disease in people have been reported to CDC. Of these, 917 (58%) were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis) and 668 (42%) were classified as non-neuroinvasive disease. [CDC](#)

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### USPACOM

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## China: Masks donned at smog-hit Beijing marathon

20 October - Thousands of runners battled thick smog at the Beijing Marathon on Sunday, with some athletes donning masks as air pollution soared to 16 times the maximum

recommended level. Organisers rejected calls to postpone the race despite the soupy white haze over the Chinese capital, but said they had laid on extra medical staff to treat injuries among the more than 25,000 registered runners. The level of small pollutant particles known as PM2.5, which can embed themselves deep in the lungs, reached more than 400 micrograms per cubic metre in parts of Beijing as the racers lined up. The World Health Organization's recommended daily maximum average exposure is 25. The US embassy in Beijing described the air on Sunday as "hazardous," the AFP news agency reported. [Al Jazeera](#)

## French Polynesia: Painful chikungunya outbreak reaches French Polynesia

17 October - Officials in French Polynesia on Tuesday declared an epidemic of chikungunya, a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. That day alone, 59 cases were reported on the island of Tahiti, and a further 200 suspected. Three patients are currently undergoing treatment in a hospital in Papeete, the island's capital. [VICE News](#)

## India: Physicians witness sudden change in dengue symptoms in Mumbai

Physicians across the city have witnessed a sudden and significant shift in [dengue](#) symptoms. Some strongly feel the virus has mutated owing to which the disease has been mimicking classic signs of gastritis. Over the past one week, many have treated dengue patients with distinct signs of gastritis (inflammation of stomach lining) and unrelenting fever. On the brighter side, pathologists point out that the rapid platelet dip is not that rampant in these cases. Consultant physician Dr Hemant Thacker said, "Patients are coming in with complaints of severe abdominal pain, hyperacidity and loss of appetite. The platelet and white blood cell dip is gradual and slow," he said, adding that he has observed the phenomena in at least 15 patients. Patients are also suffering from high-grade prolonged fever that is getting increasingly tough to combat. [Times of India](#)

## Nepal: Avalanche deaths prompt new rules in Nepal

21 October - Nepal on Tuesday said it will introduce new rules, improve weather forecasts and better monitor the movement of trekkers after the Himalayan country's worst hiking disaster left dozens dead last week. Tourism Department official Tulasi Gautam said trekkers venturing to mountain trails will be required to take trained local guides, and will have to rent a GPS tracking unit to help authorities trace them in case of an emergency... At least 41 people were killed last week when a blizzard and avalanches swept the mountains of the Annapurna region in northern Nepal. Of those, 21 were foreign trekkers and mountaineers from countries including India, Israel, Canada, Poland, Japan, China and Slovakia. Twenty were Nepalese guides, porters and villagers. [CBS News](#)

## Nepal: Disaster preparedness needs to go local

17 October - Mid-summer monsoon rains in Nepal triggered over three dozen floods and landslides, killing over 200 people and displacing tens of thousands. Experts say this highlights preparedness and response challenges and the urgent need for these to be prioritized in development plans and at local government level. "There was nothing unpredictable about this summer's events in Nepal," Moira Reddick, coordinator at Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRRC), a coalition of humanitarian, development, financial and government bodies, told IRIN... Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs put the number of people dead between June and September due to floods and landslides at 265, with 256 missing and 157 injured. A landslide on 2 August was the deadliest in the country's history. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), monsoon disasters in 2014 affected over 200,000 people across Nepal and displaced more than 34,000. [IRIN](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Caribbean sees more than 12,000 new cases of chikungunya

20 October - New numbers from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) released Oct 17 show 12,121 additional suspected and confirmed cases in the Caribbean and the Americas as well as 67 new imported cases, most of those in the United States. The total outbreak numbers in the area stand at 772,069, with 759,742 of those suspected and 12,327 confirmed. In addition, there have been 1,708 imported cases, with the United States accounting for 1,385 of those. The areas with the most new cases are Colombia, with a 7,366-case jump, and Grenada, reporting for the first time with 1,627. The single country with the most cases in the outbreak remains the Dominican Republic, with more than 485,000, but it reported no new cases since PAHO's last update on Oct 10. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

## Colombia: Colombian National Army provides health care to more than 800 people in La Gloria

22 October - The Colombian National Army is charged with protecting the country's civilian population, and it recently extended that role into health care provision by providing medical treatment in the municipality of La Gloria, in the Department of Cesar. Military physicians – including general practitioners, pediatricians, optometrists, odontologist, and gynecologists - provided their services to more than 800 civilians, including children and the elderly on September 30. They were joined by soldiers from the Third Special Energy and

Roadways Battalion, Tenth Armored Brigade, National Army First Division, who provided haircuts and delousing by physicians in the battalion's reserve units. [Dialogo](#)

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