



## Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for April 23, 2018

### Correction on Columbine story

(Correction) I made an error in the lead-in to the Columbine story in the April 21 Update. April 20th was the **19th anniversary of Columbine**. Read more: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43835834>

### Crime quiet as fireworks boomed at Thunder Over Louisville, with only two arrests reported

(Courier-Journal) Hundreds of thousands of people jammed along the Ohio River for Saturday's annual Thunder Over Louisville air show and fireworks extravaganza, an event that remained peaceful and virtually crime-free.

The Louisville Metro Police Department reported only two arrests between the hours of about 11 a.m. and midnight in the area where event spectators gathered, the department said Sunday.

One arrest was by Kentucky State Police on a warrant. LMPD did not have immediate information on the single arrest its officers reported, the department said.

Read CJ story & see pictures: <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2018/04/22/thunder-over-louisville-2018-arrests/540299002/>

### Drug-related deaths overburden Maryland medical examiner's office

(Baltimore Sun) The opioid epidemic that has claimed so many lives in Maryland is overwhelming the state medical examiner's office.

The agency has exceeded national caseload standards — the number of autopsies a single pathologist should perform in a year — in each of the past four years. The office now risks losing its accreditation.

The challenge is not limited to Maryland. The combination of additional and more complex cases is overwhelming medical examiners' offices across the country, particularly along the East Coast, leaving many on the verge of losing accreditation.

Full story: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-hs-medical-examiner-accreditation-20170415-story.html>

### Can Triage Nurses Help Prevent 911 Overload?

(NPR) Most people are familiar with some form of triage: When you go to an emergency room, you first sit down with a triage nurse who records your symptoms, takes your vital signs and assesses the urgency of your medical need.

As of Thursday, that's happening over the phone for [911 callers in Washington, D.C.](#), where triage nurses now sit alongside 911 dispatchers to help field calls.

Why are they there? D.C. has the highest rate of 911 calls in the U.S., and 1 in 4 of those calls is not an actual emergency — instead, it's a twisted ankle, or a cough or a rash. The new triage program aims to improve those numbers by diverting needs that aren't urgent to medical care that doesn't involve an ambulance or an emergency room.

The triage nurses can even [coordinate free Lyft rides](#) for people who are on Medicaid — including a stop at a pharmacy if needed.

Other cities across the U.S., such as Louisville, Reno and the Dallas-Fort Worth area, have tried similar initiatives, Holman says. But D.C.'s program is distinct in its broad reach, and in the way it's embedded within the 911 dispatch system. {[Dr. Robert Holman](#), is the Washington, DC, Fire and EMS Department's medical director.}

The hope is that the triage line will save the city and insurers money — ambulances and ERs are the most expensive way to deliver care. Wait times for ambulances should go down, as should ER overcrowding.

Full story: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/04/19/601987914/can-triage-nurses-help-prevent-911-overload>

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***It's not just the oceans: Microplastic pollution is all around us***

(CNN) Chances are you've seen the photos of [dead seabirds](#), their stomachs filled with scraps of plastic foraged from beaches and oceans around the world. In the past few years, scientists have found microplastics in our soil, [tap water](#), [bottled water](#), [beer](#) and even in the [air we breathe](#). And there's growing concern about the potential health risks they pose to humans.

Full story: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/22/health/microplastics-land-and-air-pollution-intl/index.html>

**Enzyme That Eats Plastic Accidentally Found in Lab**

(National Geographic) It's a potential breakthrough in the fight against [plastic pollution](#)—an enzyme that can digest plastic that is commonly found polluting our environment. The discovery could one day result in a recycling solution that can process millions of tons of plastic, made from [polyethylene terephthalate](#) (also known as PET), which currently persists in the environment for hundreds of years.

Full story: <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/04/enzyme-dissolves-plastic-pollution-science-spd/>

**Biodefense Headlines – Rapid Diagnostics,  
Chemical Weapons Inspectors, Ebola Lab Exposure**

(Check out Global BioDefense) <https://globalbiodefense.com/2018/04/22/biodefense-headlines-rapid-diagnostics-chemical-weapons/>

The KHREF Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of [Emergency Preparedness Updates available here](#). If you would like to add or delete, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact [rbartlett@kyha.com](mailto:rbartlett@kyha.com) (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and KHREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.