



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for May 7, 2018

Drug epidemic ensnares 25-year-old pill for nerve pain

(AP) — The story line sounds familiar: a popular pain drug becomes a new way to get high as prescribing by doctors soars.

But the latest drug raising red flags is not part of the opioid family at the center of the nation's drug epidemic. It's a 25-year-old generic pill long seen as a low risk way to treat seizures, nerve pain and other ailments.

The drug, called gabapentin, is one of the most prescribed medications in the U.S., ranking ninth over the last year, according to prescription tracker *GoodRx*. Researchers attribute the recent surge to tighter restrictions on opioid painkillers, which have left doctors searching for alternatives for their patients.

Last year, *Kentucky became the first state to classify the drug as a "scheduled substance,"* placing it among other high-risk medicines subject to extra restrictions and tracking. Gabapentin was detected in a third of fatal overdose cases analyzed by Kentucky medical examiners in 2016. Now, only health professionals registered with the federal government can prescribe the drug and patients are limited to five refills.

Get more details in full AP story: <https://apnews.com/70e49b15a082431db4938c5a324df677>

Hepatitis A case confirmed at Lexington school

Read more: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38094123/hepatitis-a-case-confirmed-at-kentucky-school>

Employee of Hard Rock Cafe at 4th Street Live! Diagnosed with hepatitis A

Read more: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38117184/employee-of-hard-rock-cafe-at-4th-street-live-diagnosed-with-hepatitis-a>

Related Stories:

- [Restaurants with a hepatitis A-infected employees are 'safest places in the city to eat,' health officials say](#)
- [Employee at Mark's Feed Store and Panera locations in Louisville diagnosed with hepatitis A](#)
- [Louisville doctor answers 6 burning questions about the hepatitis A outbreak](#)

5 arrested on human trafficking charges Derby weekend as part of undercover operation

(WDRB) -- Derby week is one of the worst times of the year for human trafficking. This weekend, Louisville Metro Police Department made several arrests as part of an undercover operation.

Read more & see related stories: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38124656/5-arrested-on-human-trafficking-charges-by-lmpd-as-part-of-undercover-operation>

KY Auditor finds questionable expenditures in firefighter fund

(AP) - Kentucky's auditor says a review of the state's fire commission has turned up questionable expenditures from a fund meant to support fire departments. The report released Thursday by Auditor Mike Harmon questions spending \$150,000 for firefighter competitions between 2014 and 2017.

Read more: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38105368/auditor-finds-questionable-expenditures-in-firefighter-fund>

FBI: More active shooter situations in 2017 than any other year

(CBS) A [new report released by the FBI](#) says there were 30 active shooter situations in 2017, which is more than any year previously recorded. The bureau defines an active shooter situation as one or more individuals "actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area" with the use of one or more firearms.

The report said there were 50 active shooter incidents in 2016 and 2017. They left 221 people killed and 722 people wounded. All of the shooters were male and each incident was a "single-shooter event." Three events made those numbers skyrocket: the [2017 Las Vegas strip shooting](#) (58 killed, 489

wounded), the [2016 Orlando nightclub shooting](#) (49 killed, 53 wounded), and the [2017 church shooting in Sutherland, Texas](#) (26 killed, 20 wounded).

Full story: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-report-active-shootings-2017-more-than-any-other-year-on-record-2018-05-05/>
Link - FBI Report: <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-us-2016-2017.pdf/view>

St. Elizabeth helps launch youth mental health facility

(BizJournal) St. Elizabeth Healthcare has donated \$250,000 to help the [Children's Home of Northern Kentucky](#) create a new psychiatric residential treatment facility. The Covington-based Children's Home opened the residential facility in March to provide comprehensive treatment to youths battling mental illness, substance abuse or severe emotional disturbances.

Read full story: <https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2018/04/27/st-elizabeth-helps-launch-youth-mental.html>

Telemedicine Gets Boost

New Law Will Allow More Kentuckians to Visit Doctors Remotely

(WFPL) Telemedicine is similar to a face-to-face health care visit but instead, patients interact with health providers remotely, usually via computer screen. Currently, the practice is limited to doctors and higher-level practitioners, and the patient has to be in a clinic setting for the visit.

But that will change starting in July 2019 because of a new law signed by Gov. Matt Bevin last week ([SB 112](#)), which broadens telemedicine. *Under the new law, Medicaid and commercial insurance companies will have to pay for telehealth visits in a patient's home.* And insurers will have to pay mid-level providers, such as psychologists, family therapists and physician assistants for telehealth visits.

Rob Sprang, director of Kentucky TeleCare at the University of Kentucky, said being able to reach patients inside their homes will impact many areas of health care. Sprang said while psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners have been able to practice telehealth, psychologists and licensed social workers were left out prior to the new law.

That's important because in Kentucky, there are not enough mental health providers to start with. In 2013, Kentucky faced a shortage of 1,638 mental health providers to keep up with demand, according to a state [report](#). The report also said that rural counties were most in need of mental health providers, and that there were more clinical social workers and psychologists than any other mental health professionals in the state.

Sprang with Kentucky TeleCare said the next year advocates will push for additional telemedicine technology. They want insurance companies to pay for remote patient monitoring. People with congestive heart failure, for instance, usually have warning signs that precede an emergency room visit. Read more: <http://wfpl.org/home-health-new-law-will-allow-more-kentuckians-to-visit-doctors-remotely/>

Questions Raised About Study Of Device To Ease Opioid Withdrawal

(NPR) As the nation grapples with a crisis of opioid addiction, a medical device called the Bridge is being touted as a way to help people through the symptoms of withdrawal. Does it work?

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/02/602908208/questions-raised-about-study-of-device-to-ease-opioid-withdrawal>

World's Biggest Underwater 'Dead Zone' Is a Very Bad Sign

(Newser) – Robots have found the world's biggest underwater "dead zone" in the Gulf of Oman—yet another sign that such oxygen-depleted regions are only increasing worldwide, [ZME Science](#) reports. "The ocean is suffocating. Of course all fish, marine plants and other animals need oxygen, so they can't survive there." Such dead zones can happen naturally, [the CBC](#) notes, but they're becoming bigger and more common, mostly due to wastewater and chemical fertilizers.

The [latest find](#) only adds to alarming data that the number of coastline dead zones has gone from 50 to 500 since 1950. Large dead zones are also hard to fix, and Queste doesn't sound too optimistic. "It's a real environmental problem, with dire consequences for humans too who rely on the oceans for food and employment," he says. (Meanwhile, the dying Gulf Stream [could trigger a global nightmare.](#))

US flu continues late-season decline

([CIDRAP News Scan](#)) As flu markers continued their late season decline last week, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today reported three more pediatric flu deaths, lifting the total this season to 163. One of the pediatric deaths occurred in the week of Apr 21, while the other two fatalities were from January and March. Clinic visits for flulike illness—at 1.5%—declined further last week and are well below the national baseline of 2.2%. Only three states are still reporting geographically widespread flu, down from four the previous week. All are in the northeast: Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York.

John Hopkins: Health Security Headlines

Extracts from [May 2, 2018](#), [May 3, 2018](#) and [May 4, 2018](#)

[Haiti: Investigation of American Red Cross Finances Finds 'Fundamental Concerns'](#) (H5N1) The American Red Cross spent a quarter of the money people donated after the 2010 Haiti earthquake - or almost \$125 million - on its own internal expenses, far more than the charity previously had disclosed, according to a report released Thursday by Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley. The report also says the charity's top officials stonewalled congressional investigators and released incomplete information about its Haiti program to the public. [Go to article](#)

[How FEMA's Focus Is Shifting](#) (Homeland Security) FEMA Administrator Brock Long gives listeners insight into FEMA's mission, vision and the role of emergency management. Administrator Long also talks about his first 8 months on the job, FEMA's large-scale response to the historic 2017 hurricane season and FEMA's strategic goals to more effectively serve the American public before, during and after a disaster. [Go to article](#)

[US House advances Disaster Reform Recovery Act](#) (Homeland Preparedness News) The US House of Representatives recently advanced the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, which proposes broad reforms at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. DRRRA, introduced by US Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA), was included in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, H.R. 4. [Go to article](#)

[DHS S&T Takes Part in Weeks-long Assessment of National Security Cutters' Capabilities](#) (Homeland Preparedness News) The US Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate recently collaborated with the US Navy and the US Coast Guard to assess critical mission capabilities of two National Security Cutters through weeks of at-sea testing. [Go to article](#)

[Scientists Alarmed by Report White House May Tighten Limits on Chinese Researchers in US](#) (STAT) One of the nation's leading scientific organizations on Tuesday expressed alarm about a report that the White House is considering imposing further limits on research by Chinese citizens in the US, saying that "scientific progress depends on openness, transparency, and the free flow of ideas." [Go to article](#)

[Mapping of the US Domestic Influenza Virologic Surveillance Landscape](#) (Emerging Infectious Diseases) Influenza virologic surveillance is critical each season for tracking influenza circulation, following trends in antiviral drug resistance, detecting novel influenza infections in humans, and selecting viruses for use in annual seasonal vaccine production. To monitor these constantly changing viruses, the CDC, in collaboration with public health partners, collects and analyzes data from multiple surveillance systems. [Go to article](#)

[Evaluation of the EpiCore Outbreak Verification System](#) (WHO) Rapid detection of infectious disease events of potential public health concern allows for control measures to be implemented in a timely manner, thus limiting the size and geographical spread of outbreaks. Traditional disease surveillance is the continuous systematic collection, analysis and evaluation of health information from formal sources. [Go to article](#)

[The Gathering Storm: Is Untreatable Typhoid Fever on the Way?](#) (*mBio*) Klemm et al. present comprehensive antibiotic sensitivity patterns and genomic sequence data on *Salmonella enterica serovar* Typhi blood culture isolates from typhoid fever cases during an epidemic in Pakistan. Microbiologic and genomic data pinpoint the identities and locations of the antimicrobial resistance genes and the outbreak strain's lineage. They propose that *Salmonella enterica serovar* Typhi be added to the list of bacterial pathogens of public health importance that have become extensively drug resistant. [Go to article](#)

[The First Smallpox Treatment Is One Step Closer to FDA Approval](#) (*Science News*) As bioterrorism fears grow, the first treatment for smallpox is nearing approval. Called tecovirimat, the drug stops the variola virus, which causes smallpox, from sending out copies of itself and infecting other cells. "If the virus gets ahead of your immune system, you get sick," says Dennis Hruby, the chief scientific officer of pharmaceutical company SIGA Technologies, which took part in developing the drug. "If you can slow the virus down, your immune system will get ahead." [Go to article](#)

[The New Killer Pathogens](#) (*Foreign Affairs*) Military and political leaders have worried about large-scale biological warfare for more than a century. "Blight to destroy crops, Anthrax to slay horses and cattle, Plague to poison not armies only but whole districts--such are the lines along which military science is remorselessly advancing," Winston Churchill lamented in 1925. But despite the deadly potential of biological weapons, their actual use remains rare and (mostly) small scale. Over the last several decades, most states have given up their programs. Today, no country is openly pursuing biological weapons. [Go to article](#)

Boy regains consciousness after parents sign papers to donate his organs

(CBS) A 13-year-old boy who suffered severe brain trauma in an accident regained consciousness after his parents signed paperwork to donate his organs. Trenton McKinley of Mobile, Alabama, suffered the injury two months ago when a small utility trailer he was riding flipped over. His mother, Jennifer Reindl, said she signed the papers to donate Trenton's organs because five kids needing transplants were a match. But just a day before doctors were set to end Trenton's life support, he showed signs of cognition, and now he's slowly going through recovery.

Read more: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trenton-mckinley-regains-consciousness-after-parents-sign-papers-to-donate-his-organs-2018-05-06/>

**Different approach to *Distracted Driver* prevention -
It will soon be illegal to hold your phone while driving in Georgia**

Read more: <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/gov-deal-to-sign-distracted-driving-bill-into-law/742426768>

Facebook accused of connecting extremists with "suggested friends" feature

(CBS) Facebook is being accused of inadvertently helping Islamist extremists connect and recruit new members. A new report in [The Telegraph](#) cites research suggesting that the social media giant connected and introduced thousands of extremists through its "suggested friends" feature. Facebook is already facing criticism for failing to [remove terrorist material from its platform](#).

Read more: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/facebook-accused-connecting-extremists-suggested-friends-feature-2018-05-06/>

It's a mess: Microsoft patched Windows or Office on 11 different days in April

Read more: <https://www.computerworld.com/article/3269847/microsoft-windows/its-a-mess-microsoft-patched-windows-or-office-on-11-different-days-in-april.html>

**FEMA EMI Course Update - Advanced PIO, August 20-24
[1402 - Training Opportunity - L0388 Advanced Public Information Officer Aug 2018](#)**

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 [CLICK HERE](#) (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.