



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for May 14, 2018

Ebola is back — and the top White House official in charge of pandemics is gone

(Vox) There's a worrying new Ebola outbreak [in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) — the second the country has faced since the largest-ever [Ebola epidemic swept West Africa](#) in 2014-'15.

The World Health Organization learned about the new outbreak on May 8, when DRC health officials reported two confirmed cases of Ebola in Bikoro, a health zone in the country's northwest Équateur province.

No one knows when or how the outbreak started, but the [WHO suspects](#) that since April 4, a total of [34 people have been infected with Ebola](#) (though only two of them are confirmed so far), including 18 deaths. Three of the deaths involved health care workers.

Updated numbers: Ebola outbreak: 19 dead, 39 infected so far - WHO

Source: <http://www.africanews.com/2018/05/14/dr-congo-ebola-outbreak-19-dead-39-infected-so-far-who/>



Health officials suspect that the high case fatality rate means there may be more Ebola cases already out there, and that this outbreak could have been simmering undetected for some time.

To stop the virus from spreading, the WHO is working with the country's ministry of health, as well as *Doctors Without Borders*, to figure out who may have been exposed to Ebola and set up treatment centers where victims of the disease can be cared for and isolated.

"There's a lot of discussion about the vaccine," said Bausch, "but the vaccine is still considered an experimental compound." That means health workers can't just buy and distribute the shot without getting ethics approval to use it and setting up a research plan. Last year's DRC Ebola outbreak ended before a vaccine could be deployed — and the same thing could happen in this outbreak, or it could become a much larger threat. Again, it's too early to tell.

The US isn't ready for another Ebola outbreak

On the home front, health experts have long said the US is [underprepared for a pandemic](#). But right now the situation looks even more precarious.

Just one day after DRC's Ebola outbreak was declared, the head of global health security on the White House's National Security Council, Rear Adm. Tim Ziemer, left the Trump administration amid a reorganization by national security adviser John Bolton, the [Huffington Post reported this week](#).

The health security team [Ziemer was leading has also been dismantled](#). That means the top White House official who would lead a pandemic response, along with his team, are gone.

"[The departure] at this moment is definitely a cause for concern," said [Jennifer Kates](#), director of global health and HIV policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation. "At this time, it's not yet known what the White House's plan for coordinating such a response will be."

To make matters worse, the Trump administration just requested a rescinding of \$252 million from the 2018 budget in unspent Ebola funding. (The money had been appropriated in 2015 to address the West Africa Ebola outbreak.) And those proposed cuts are part of a larger [rescission package](#), Kates added, focused on the 2018 budget for health and emergency responses overseas.

Congress now has [more than a month to accept or reject Trump's proposal](#), but talk of the reduced global health spending has already prompted USAID and officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to retreat from 39 of the 49 foreign countries where they'd been working on pandemic preparedness, the [Wall Street Journal](#) and [Washington Post](#) reported earlier this year.

The Most Dangerous City in Every State

(NEWSER) – The rate of violent crime in the US has been steadily declining and is about half of what it was in 1991 when it peaked at 758 crimes for every 100,000 people. But that may be scant consolation for people living in the cities that have not benefited from the trend. [24/7 Wall St](#) has identified the most dangerous city in every state, and some of the results are surprising.

#1 - Anniston, Alabama: City violent crime rate: 3,310 per 100,000 (the worst in the country); state violent crime rate: 532 per 100,000

[Next time you go visit the CDP facility in Anniston, be a little careful on your evening forays into town!]

#17 - Louisville, Kentucky

> City violent crime rate: 676 per 100,000

> State violent crime rate: 232 per 100,000 (7th lowest)

> City poverty rate: 17.7%

> City unemployment rate: 4.4%

- About 45% of the 10,308 violent crimes reported in Kentucky for 2016 took place in Louisville. Louisville's violent crime rate for 2016 — 676 incidents per 100,000 residents — is nearly three times the state's rate, and this city ranks as the state's most dangerous.
- According to crime analyst John Roman, violent cities are often situated at the confluence of major intersections, which criminal enterprises take advantage of to transport drugs. Indeed Interstates 71, 65, and 64 all converge in Louisville.

'Good' Bacteria Might Fight Common Hospital Infection

(HealthDay News) -- Researchers may have found a new way to combat a stubborn and potentially deadly gut infection: a friendly version of the culprit bacteria itself.

The infection, caused by the bug [Clostridium difficile](#), is a common scourge in hospitals. And experts say the findings, published May 5 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, are important.

The infection commonly strikes people during or after a hospital stay -- usually those who've had a long course of antibiotics or have a weakened immune system.

C. difficile infections are at an all-time high in U.S. hospitals, said lead researcher Dr. Dale Gerding, a professor of medicine at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

A recent U.S. government report said almost half a million Americans were sickened by *C. difficile* in 2011, and 29,000 died within a month.

So, his team tried something new: After patients were successfully treated with an antibiotic, the researchers gave them a non-toxic strain of *C. difficile* -- theorizing that the good bug would crowd out what remained of its toxic cousin. *And it appeared to work.*

There is another treatment that works against recurrent *C. difficile* infections: fecal transplants. This involves giving patients an infusion of stool from a healthy donor, and doctors at Montefiore have used the approach for a decade, Brandt said.

The basic principle behind fecal transplants and the non-toxic *C. difficile* therapy is the same: restore a healthier bacterial balance in the gut.

"But this [new therapy] would, in theory, be safer and more reliable than a fecal transplant," said Dr. Erik Dubberke, a spokesman for the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

Full story: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=188328>

Can A Cocktail Of Vitamins And Steroids Cure A Major Killer In Hospitals?

(NPR) Scientists have launched two large studies to test a medical treatment that, if proven effective, could have an enormous impact on the leading cause of death in American hospitals.

The treatment is aimed at [sepsis](#), a condition in which the body's inflammatory response rages out of control in reaction to an infection, often leading to organ damage or failure. There's no proven cure for sepsis, which strikes well over 1 million Americans a year and kills more than 700 a day.

The treatment is a cocktail of intravenous vitamin C, vitamin B1 (thiamine) and corticosteroids. The use of vitamin C in sepsis was pioneered by Dr. Alpha Fowler at Virginia Commonwealth University. Marik has been using the combination treatment since 2016 at his hospital in Norfolk, Va., where he also teaches at the Eastern Virginia Medical School.

Listen to, or read the full story: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/11/609149556/can-a-cocktail-of-vitamins-and-steroids-cure-a-major-killer-in-hospitals>

[Trump wants foreign countries to pay more for U.S. drugs](#)

(Modern Healthcare) President Donald Trump on Friday is expected to suggest using trade negotiations to convince foreign countries to increase what they pay for prescription drugs made in the U.S., according to sources. [READ MORE](#)

Expired EpiPens May Still Help Save a Life: Study

(HealthDay News) -- EpiPens -- devices used to rescue people during a [severe allergic reaction](#) -- can remain effective years after their expiration date, a new study reports.

An evaluation of almost 40 expired, unused EpiPens brought in by patients revealed that all of the devices contained more than 80 percent of their initial dose of epinephrine. This was true even as long as four years past the expiration date on the device, said study lead researcher F. Lee Cantrell, director of the California Poison Control System - San Diego Division.

People unable to replace an old [EpiPen](#) due to pharmacy shortages should hold onto it past expiration, because the device could still contain a lifesaving dose, Cantrell concluded.

"There's still a dose that would be therapeutic in there," he said. "If this is all you have, this is better than nothing." Cantrell still recommends people replace expired EpiPens if fresh ones are available, as a matter of safety.

Read more: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=203441>

Attorney general and Kentucky leaders looking for new way to fight opioids

(WDRB) -- Kentucky leaders gathered at a four-hour Louisville forum Saturday looking for new ways to address Kentucky's opioid crisis.

Attorney General Andy Beshear was among several speakers at the event hosted by the Bridges of Hope Neighborhood Place. Psychologist Dr. Pat McKiernan with Sober Solutions House spoke about the addictive hold opioids have on the brain.

Beshear said more people need access to treatment, but he also believes more needs to be done to go after the supply. Beshear said the overdose death rate is likely even higher because many coroners do not have the funds to test everyone for opioid overdoses.

Full story: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38176821/attorney-general-and-kentucky-leaders-looking-for-new-way-to-fight-opioids>

Walmart Will Implement New Opioid Prescription Limits By End Of Summer

(NPR) Walmart [announced](#) [last] Monday it is introducing new restrictions on how it will fill opioid medication prescriptions in all of its in-store and Sam's Club pharmacies.

It is the company's latest expansion of its [Opioid Stewardship Initiative](#), intended to stem the spread of opioid addiction, prevent overdoses and curb over-prescribing by doctors. It follows a [similar initiative by CVS](#) that went into effect in February.

Over the next 60 days, the fourth-largest pharmacy chain will cap acute painkiller supplies to cover a maximum of seven days. It will also limit a day's total dose to no more than the equivalent of 50

morphine milligrams. And, in states where prescriptions are restricted to fewer than seven days, Walmart will abide by the governing law.

Walmart said the new policies align with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations](#) established in 2016. Those rules were meant for doctors prescribing chronic pain medication and encourage primary care physicians to prescribe the "lowest effective dose."

Full story: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/08/609442939/walmart-will-implement-new-opioid-prescription-limits-by-end-of-summer>

Hit hard by opioid crisis, Appalachian states expand clean-needle programs

(HealthDay)—In 2013, there was just one clean-needle program in all of West Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina, and the latter two states had laws banning such programs.

Fast-forward four years: All of those laws have now been overturned and the number of "syringe services programs" available to help addicts has risen to over 50 across the three states, researchers report.

Clean-needle programs are exactly what's needed, experts say, with Appalachia now an epicenter of the opioid addiction crisis ravaging the United States.

The free programs "have increased in **Kentucky**, North Carolina and West Virginia with support from government officials, community advocates and [health care professionals](#)," according to a team led by Dr. Danae Bixler. She's an epidemiologist at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That's a big turnaround in just a few years. But one expert pointed out that the programs do far more than help addicts avoid dirty needles and related infection with HIV, hepatitis C and other dangerous diseases.

Full story: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-hard-opioid-crisis-appalachian-states.html>

Deadly Synthetic Opioids Showing Up in Cocaine and Other Drugs

(HealthLine) Powerful synthetic opioids like fentanyl are now leading to more fatal overdoses in the United States than those caused either by heroin or by prescription opioids.

In 2016, an estimated [19,413 people](#) died due to synthetic opioid overdose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

But, there's an even more disturbing trend emerging.

According to a recent report in [JAMA](#), synthetic opioids are increasingly showing up in other illicit drug streams, including cocaine, methamphetamine, and counterfeit pills. The infiltration of fentanyl into other drugs means those who don't use opioids may be inadvertently swept up in the epidemic.

Read more: <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/deadly-synthetic-opioids-in-cocaine-and-other-drugs>

JAMA Link: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2679931?redirect=true>

From the Trust for America's Health

Working Group on Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness

Extract from 5/10/2018 newsletter

Government Operations:

- *Huffington Post:* [Sudden Departure Of White House Global Health Security Head Has Experts Worried.](#)

Emergency Preparedness & Response:

- *NPR:* [Listless And Lonely In Puerto Rico, Some Older Storm Survivors Consider Suicide.](#)
- CDC has revamped its preparedness newsletter as [EPIC - Emergency Partners Information Connection](#). To sign up, subscribe [here](#).

TFAH Report: Pain in the Nation

(TFAH) The Drug, Alcohol and Suicide Epidemics and the Need for a National Resilience Strategy
Pain in the Nation was supported by Well Being Trust and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The report calls for the creation of a National Resilience Strategy and includes past, present and future projections for drug, alcohol and suicide death rates. (April, 2018)

Researchers Tackle Gun Violence Despite Lack of Federal Funding

(NPR) February's mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., which left 17 dead and 17 more wounded, horrified people across the country, spurring student walkouts and marches in support of stricter gun control laws, including universal, comprehensive background checks and a ban on assault weapons. But gun debates in the United States have proven to be contentious and intractable. Even as thousands rally for new legislation, opponents contend that such measures won't prevent determined criminals from obtaining a firearm and that responsible gun ownership makes communities safer.

Despite a federal ban on funding the study of gun violence, researchers have published hundreds of studies in recent years exploring risk factors and solutions to the problem.

Read more: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/12/609701029/researchers-tackle-gun-violence-despite-lack-of-federal-funding>

'Smoke-Free' Rooms Still Loaded With Smoke Residues

(HealthDay News) -- Harmful [cigarette](#) smoke residue may be lurking in rooms where no one has ever lit up, researchers report.

In a new study, scientists from Drexel University in Philadelphia found that in an empty, nonsmoking classroom, nearly 30 percent of the tiny particles in the air were linked with cigarette smoke -- what is called "third-hand" smoke.

"We didn't expect to see a nonsmoking environment having such a signature of tobacco smoke," said lead researcher Peter DeCarlo, an associate professor of environmental engineering.

The dangers of [second-hand smoke](#) are well documented. But whether exposure to *third-hand smoke* carries the same health harms for people isn't known, DeCarlo noted. However, animal studies have found that exposure to third-hand smoke can have negative effects on health, he said.

In nonsmoking areas, particles from [smoking](#) enter through ventilation systems and on clothing, and these particles cling to walls and furniture. They are difficult to remove and can emit harmful chemicals for years, DeCarlo explained.

Full story: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=212279>

More people sickened as salmonella outbreak traced to eggs grows

(CNN) A salmonella outbreak [that led to the recall](#) of 207 million eggs has worsened -- [with 35 people reported ill in several states](#), federal health officials said. The number of illnesses is a dozen more [since the initial recall notice was issued](#) last month.

Read more: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/12/health/egg-recall-salmonella-outbreak-grows/index.html>

CDC outbreak site: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/braenderup-04-18/index.html>

FDA Site: <https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/UCM604644.htm>

Typhoid fever temporarily closes Massachusetts daycare

Read more: <https://news360.com/article/453722281>

Study Suggests Aerial Pesticide Spraying Tied to Higher Autism Rates

Read more: <https://news360.com/article/453865886>

Coming This Summer: More Ticks and a Deadly New Tick-Borne Disease

(HealthDay News) -- Scientists have a double-shot of bad news about [ticks](#): There's a new, and potentially fatal, tick-borne illness called Powassan, and this summer looks like it might be one of the worst on record for an increase in the tick population.

"Tick-borne diseases are on the rise, and prevention should be on everyone's mind, particularly during the spring and summer, and early fall when ticks are most active," said Rebecca Eisen. She is a research biologist in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's division of vector-borne diseases.

Laura Goodman, a senior research associate in population medicine and diagnostic sciences at Cornell University, concurred. "It's going to be a bad season," she said.



Powassan is a virus that can be transmitted through a [tick bite](#). Although rare, Powassan has been spreading, and more cases are likely this year, Goodman said.

Signs and symptoms of Powassan can include [fever](#), [headache](#), [vomiting](#), [weakness](#), [confusion](#), [seizures](#) and [memory loss](#). Long-term neurological damage also may occur, according to the CDC.

There's currently no specific treatment for the disease. People with severe Powassan often need to be hospitalized to receive respiratory support, intravenous fluids or medications to reduce swelling in the brain. If inflammation of the brain ([encephalitis](#)) occurs, the fatality rate is approximately 10 percent, the CDC warns. There's no [vaccine](#) to prevent Powassan. The best prevention is avoiding ticks.

Full story: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=203516>

CDC link: <https://www.cdc.gov/powassan/index.html>

Do doctors treat pregnant women differently based on race?

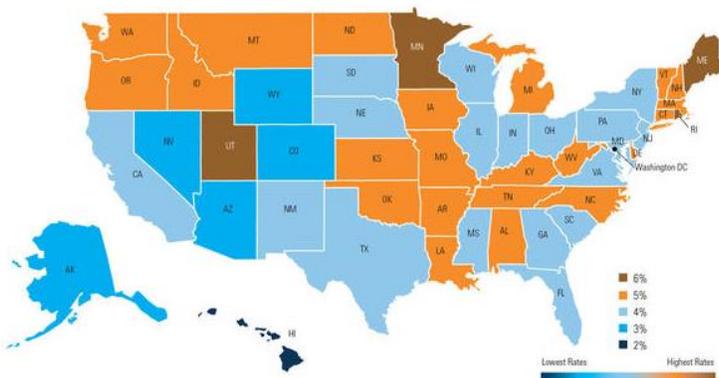
How training doctors in implicit bias could save the lives of black mothers

(NBC) Each year in the United States, about [700 women die as a result of pregnancy or delivery issues](#) — while [50,000 experience severe complications](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Black women are three to four times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes nationwide; in New York City, they are [12 times more likely to die](#). Postpartum hemorrhaging, or heavy blood loss, is one of the leading preventable causes.

Doctors are taking a new approach to the crisis. Read more: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/how-training-doctors-implicit-bias-could-save-lives-black-mothers-n873036>

How depressed is your state?

EXHIBIT 4: RATES OF MAJOR DEPRESSION DIAGNOSIS BY STATE (2016)



(CBS) Major depression is on the rise among Americans and certain groups and parts of the country have been hit harder than others, according to a new report from Blue Cross Blue Shield of America. The data looks at medical claims from Blue Cross Blue Shield members from 2013 to 2016 and found a 33 percent jump in diagnosis of major depression over that time. In total, more than 9 million commercially insured people across the United States suffer from major depression, the report estimates.

[Millennials and teenagers](#) have experienced the fastest climb in diagnosis rates, up 47 percent and 63 percent, respectively.

What's behind the rise in major depression diagnoses?

The surge in people being diagnosed for major depression is likely due to a number of factors. A 2017 study published in the journal Child Development found [nighttime usage of a cellphones can increase anxiety and depression](#) in teenagers and reduce self-esteem.

Read more: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-depressed-is-your-state/>

Demand for Veteran Counseling Puts Stress on the Counselors

(NPR) The VA's Vet Centers have changed the metrics by which they evaluate counselors who work with veterans. They're required to see at least 25 clients a week, which some say is untenable.

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/2018/05/09/609653871/veterans-counselors-feeling-overworked>

Survivors, Family Mark 30th Anniversary of Carrollton Bus Crash

(WFPL) - Today will mark the 30th anniversary of the nation's deadliest drunken driving crash. A commemoration of the anniversary will be held Saturday at North Hardin High School in Radcliff starting at 10 a.m.

Twenty-seven people, most of them children, were killed when their church bus was struck head-on by a pickup truck traveling the wrong way on Interstate-71 in Carroll County, Kentucky.

Members of the Assembly of God Church in Radcliff were returning from an amusement park outing in Ohio when the crash occurred on May 14, 1988. The driver of the pickup, Larry Mahoney, had a blood-alcohol level more than twice the state's legal limit at the time. He served nearly 11 years in prison for manslaughter and other offenses.

Karolyn Nunnallee will be among the speakers at Saturday's commemoration, sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Her 10-year-old daughter, Patty, was killed in the crash.

Read more: <http://wfpl.org/survivors-family-mark-30th-anniversary-of-carrollton-bus-crash/>

Another Alert Misfire: Alaska Warned of Tsunami

(NEWSEY) – It's not as bad as what happened [to people in Hawaii](#), but it wasn't too pleasant, either. Residents of Alaska got an alert Friday morning on their TVs and radios that a tsunami threatened pretty much the entire state. As it turns out, the alert went out in error, reports the [Alaska Dispatch News](#). State officials are still trying to figure out what happened, but it appears that the state's alert system broadcast what was supposed to be an internal test. One theory is that something went wrong with the coding as the test got passed along the computer chain from the National Tsunami Warning Center.

Read more: <http://www.newser.com/story/259148/accidental-tsunami-warning-startles-alaskans.html>

More eruptions Hawaii have residents, authorities on edge

(HawaiiNewsNow) - They just keep coming — eruptions, one after another, spewing out lava and toxic gas in parts of lower Puna (Big Island) where life has all but come to a standstill amid the fiery shows. Over the weekend, three new fissures opened up. The latest — no. 18 — was confirmed on Sunday evening and heightened fears about the possibility of a mass evacuation if the volcanic activity continues.

Officials said the outbreak was between fissures no. 16 and 17, and was actively spitting out lava and fumes. The USGS said aerial observations of the eruption indicated it was at least 1,000 feet long and producing lava spatter rising many tens of feet into the air. A slow-moving lava flow was moving away from the vent.

Read more: <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/38087728/geologist-seismic-activity-indicates-future-lava-outbreaks-are-likely>

Kentucky, Indiana move to keep elections safe from cyber threats

(WDRB) -- Bill Brasch cast an absentee ballot in the Kentucky primary last week with only a faint thought that hackers might be trying to disrupt the election. He was confident, he said, that his vote would be accurately counted.

Across Kentucky and Indiana, this spring's primaries are the first major elections since federal authorities disclosed Russian efforts to target voting systems in 21 states during the 2016 presidential campaign. And although there is no evidence that any votes were altered, the revelations have prompted officials in both states and across the U.S. to place a new emphasis on election security.

Kentucky has been working with a security consultant since last summer and recently announced a partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to train local election officials about online and other threats. Homeland Security representatives were in Indiana for last week's primary elections.

The left-leaning think tank Center for American Progress gave Kentucky a "D" grade, and Indiana an "F," in a report published in February on [election security in the U.S.](#) It cited the lack of a paper trail from voting machines in both states as one reason for the low ratings.

Full story: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/38170896/sunday-edition-kentucky-indiana-move-to-keep-elections-safe-from-cyber-threats>

**WannaCry ransomware crisis, one year on:
Are we ready for the next global cyber attack?**

(ZD Net) *WannaCry* caused chaos across the world. But have its lessons been learned?

It's been a year since the gigantic *WannaCry* ransomware cyber attack caused chaos across the world, hitting more than 230,000 computers in total. The attackers demanded \$300 of bitcoin to be sent to a specific address and threatened to double the ransom if it wasn't paid within three days. If the victim didn't pay within a week, they were threatened with their files being permanently deleted.

But a year on, have lessons been properly learned, or despite the hype around the attack, have people just forgotten about security again?

"There's still room for improvement when it comes to less technically interesting challenges like patch management and visibility into critical assets and infrastructure to ensure everything is protected, patched and updated whenever a patch is available from major vendors," Jens Monrad, principal intelligence analyst at FireEye told ZDNet.

Read full story: <https://www.zdnet.com/article/wannacry-ransomware-crisis-one-year-on-are-we-ready-for-the-next-global-cyber-attack/>

Internet of Broken Things? 10 key facts about IoT

(Global Banking) A recent survey shows 64 percent of organizations have deployed some level of IoT technology, and another 20 percent plan to do so within the next 12 months. *This is an astonishing fact when you consider the lack of basic security on these devices, or any established security standards.* Many companies are turning a blind eye to security issues, swayed by the potential benefits that IoT can bring.

Check out the list: <https://www.globalbankingandfinance.com/internet-of-broken-things-10-key-facts-about-iot/>

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.