

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

3 September 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

<b>HOT TOPICS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Chernobyl Study: Risk of Thyroid Cancer Rises with Radiation Dose.....	2
China Defends Initial Silence on Bird Flu.....	2
Choose Your Fish Carefully.....	2
Flame Retardants Found on Supermarket Shelves.....	3
Folding@Home Uses Spare Computer Time to Benefit Biomedical Research.....	3
Mesh Cage in Shoulder Blade Used To Grow New Jaw Bone.....	4
Minorities Worry Public Health System Won't Act Fairly in a Bioterrorist Event.....	4
Most Heart Attacks Easily Predictable-Study.....	4
Pill May Tackle Obesity Epidemic.....	4
Report: Al-Qaida May Target VA Hospitals.....	5
Smoking, Obesity, Poor Eating Highest Among Young People.....	5
Streptococcus Infects Humans by Thwarting Blood Clotting.....	5
Study Identifies Rapidly Rising Disorder.....	5
The Kind of Carbs You Eat May Make Big Difference.....	6
Unsafe Abortions Kill 70,000 Women Each Year.....	6
Viruses Have Mutated To Outwit Widely Used Tamiflu.....	6
West Nile Vaccine in the Works.....	6
Yearly Full Body Scan Ups Cancer Risk from 1 in 1200 To 1 in 50.....	7
<b>FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Health Disparities Experienced by Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations.....	7
Flu Shots for the 2004-2005 Season.....	7
DoD-GEIS: Pandemic Influenza Plan.....	7
<b>USCENTCOM</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Hepatitis E in Sudan - WHO update.....	8
Iraq Northern Pipeline on Fire.....	8
Kazakhstan: Meningitis Outbreak in Almaty and Semipalatinsk.....	8
<b>USEUCOM</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Cases of Travel-associated Hepatitis A in Germany.....	9
Cholera in Chad.....	9
Ebola Outbreak May Explain Sudden Gorilla Disappearance.....	9
Sierra Leone: Cholera Kills 40 People in First Outbreak in Five Years.....	10
Uganda: Lc3 Warns Nakawa of Cholera Outbreak.....	10
Village Crier Joins Cameroon's War on Cholera.....	10
<b>USNORTHCOM</b> .....	<b>10</b>
California Becomes West Nile Capital of U.S.....	10
High Level of PCBs Taints Lake Washington Fish.....	11

Ranks of Uninsured Grow to Highest Since '98.....	11
Tainted Wells Found on Ohio Resort Island.....	11
US Gives Texas Bird Flu All-Clear.....	12
Washington State Bioterror Monitoring Expanded To Animals.....	12
<b>USPACOM .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Chickens at Four Farms Free of Bird Flu.....	12
China Acts to Tackle AIDS Spread.....	12
Indonesia: Diarrhea Outbreak Strikes NTT.....	13
Mystery Illness Hits Indonesian Poultry Farms.....	13
<b>USSOUTHCOM.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Mexican President Fox Facing Protests.....	13

## HOT TOPICS

### Chernobyl Study: Risk of Thyroid Cancer Rises with Radiation Dose

1 September – EurekAlert reported that the risk of thyroid cancer rises with increasing radiation dose, according to the most thorough risk analysis for [thyroid cancer](#) to date among people who grew up in the shadow of the 1986 Chernobyl power-plant disaster. The incidence of thyroid cancer was 45 times greater among those who received the highest radiation dose as compared to those in the lowest-dose group, according to a team of American and Russian researchers led by Scott Davis, Ph.D., and colleagues at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Such information, Davis said, may help officials better predict what long-term health effects to expect in the event of a similar nuclear accident or terrorist attack. About 30 people were killed immediately from the Chernobyl blast; an estimated 5 million people were exposed to the resulting radiation. "Prior to Chernobyl, thyroid cancer in children was practically nonexistent. Today we see dozens and dozens of cases a year in the regions contaminated by the disaster, and the incidence continues to rise," Davis said. This study is the first to use individualized estimates of radiation dose based on in-person interviews about diet and other lifestyle factors, said Davis. [View Article](#)

### China Defends Initial Silence on Bird Flu

26 August – The Miami Herald reported that Chinese officials tried to deflect possible criticism of their decision not to publicize their discovery of a deadly [bird flu](#) strain in pigs last year, saying the animals weren't sick and the cases were not a threat to humans. The pigs carried a flu strain - H5N1 - found in ducks rather than a new version that might be more dangerous to people, said Jia Youling, China's chief veterinary official. He said the pigs were quickly isolated. Jia insisted Beijing had no obligation to tell international agencies about it. The World Health Organization has appealed for more information following China's disclosure that it found two strains of avian flu in pigs. Pigs are genetically similar to humans and experts worry that a version of bird flu that can infect pigs might spread to people more easily. China's government insisted earlier that the discovery of the virus in pigs had been reported in scientific journals. It says it informed WHO of the results of a later study of 1.5 million pigs and poultry that found no sign of the virus. [View Article](#) (registration required)

### Choose Your Fish Carefully

30 August – CBS News reported that women who might become pregnant, women who are pregnant, nursing mothers and young children should stay away from certain fish and shellfish. High [mercury](#)

levels particularly affect the development of the fetus. Dr. David Acheson, the director of the Food Safety and Security Staff at the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, says, "The FDA and EPA have put out advice that recommend fish that is low in mercury, such as salmon, catfish, pollock, shrimp and canned light tuna. We warn people to avoid shark and swordfish and tilefish and king mackerel. It's about gaining the nutrition benefits of fish and avoiding the mercury that's present in fish." The FDA and U.S. EPA recommend eating up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. "We encourage people to do that because of the nutrition benefits from fish," Acheson says. He also advises consumers to check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. If no advice is available, eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) per week of fish you catch from local waters, but don't consume any other fish during that week. [View Article](#)

## Essential Smell Gene May Provide Key to New Insect Repellents

1 September – EurekAlert reported that insects navigate by smell to find food, mates and -- in the case of disease-spreading mosquitoes -- humans to bite. Researchers report that insects' ability to detect odors depends on a single gene. Fruit flies lacking the gene, known as Or83b, cannot smell. Because the gene is found in a wide variety of insect species, the results point to a new strategy for developing insect repellents. Repellents that block the gene, and thus prevent disease-carrying insects from finding human hosts, might eventually help fight [malaria](#) and other infectious diseases. [View Article](#)

## Flame Retardants Found on Supermarket Shelves

1 September – EurekAlert reported that a new study has found flame retardant chemicals, called [Polybrominated diphenyl ethers](#) (PBDEs), in foods taken straight from supermarket shelves in Dallas, Texas. PBDEs, used widely as flame-retardant additives in electronics and in polyurethane foam used for carpet padding, mattresses, chairs, and sofas — have been detected in humans across the globe, but scientists are not certain how they are getting there. Researchers tested 32 food samples from three major supermarket chains in Dallas. "We found PBDE contamination in all food containing animal fats," said the lead researcher, with the highest levels in fish, followed by meat and then dairy products. PBDEs are most soluble in fats, so they tend to accumulate in animal and human tissues. Only two other similar market basket studies have been done — in Spain and Japan — and the U.S. levels were higher than both. PBDEs have been associated with cancer, endocrine disruption and impaired brain development in animal studies. [View Article](#)

## Folding@Home Uses Spare Computer Time to Benefit Biomedical Research

25 August – VOA News reported that a project called Folding@Home allows you to donate spare time on your computer to help biomedical researchers at Stanford University in California. Research team leader Vijay Pande describes Folding@Home as a new way of supercomputing. A supercomputer may have thousands of processors linked together, which provides awesome computing ability. "The problem is that we have problems that maybe require 100 or 1,000 times more power than that," says Mr. Pande. "So we have to turn to a new approach . . . where we go out to people on the Internet and ask them to donate computer time to make a supercomputer greater than any other possibility that one could have." About 160,000 participants donate that time by downloading a small program, which runs "in the background," using computing power that would otherwise go unused. The calculations help scientists understand how proteins take on particular shapes to perform certain functions, a process called "folding." Incorrect folding is believed to cause certain diseases, such as Alzheimer's and some cancers. [View Article](#) [View Folding@Home](#)

## Mesh Cage in Shoulder Blade Used To Grow New Jaw Bone

27 August – The Seattle Times reported that a German whose lower jaw was cut out because of cancer has enjoyed his first meal in nine years — a bratwurst sandwich — after surgeons grew a new jaw bone in his back muscle and transplanted it to his mouth in what experts call an "ambitious" experiment. The German doctors used a mesh cage, a growth chemical and the patient's bone marrow, containing stem cells, to create a new jaw bone that fit exactly into the gap left by the cancer surgery. Tests have not been done to verify whether the bone was created by the blank-slate stem cells, and it is too early to determine whether the jaw will function normally in the long term. But the operation is the first published report of a whole bone being engineered and incubated inside a patient's body and transplanted. [View Article](#)

## Minorities Worry Public Health System Won't Act Fairly in a Bioterrorist Event

30 August – EurekAlert reported that while 72 percent of Americans believe that the public health system would respond fairly in a [bioterrorist](#) event, African-Americans and Asians adhere to this view in smaller proportions, perhaps because of past discriminatory policies put in place by health officials, according to a new UCLA study. Breaking the results down by ethnicity revealed that only 63 percent of African Americans and 68 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders--groups often discriminated against by the system-- believe that the public health system would respond fairly. By contrast, 73 percent of Latinos and 77 percent of whites thought the system's response would be fair. [View Article](#)

## Most Heart Attacks Easily Predictable-Study

29 August – Reuters reported that virtually the entire risk of [heart attack](#) can be predicted and the impact of factors causing attacks is the same whether you live in a rich country or a poor one. Results of the study of more than 29,000 people in 52 countries showed that two factors alone -- an abnormal ratio of bad to good cholesterol and smoking -- were responsible for two-thirds of the global risk of heart attack. Other risk factors were high blood pressure, diabetes, abdominal obesity, stress, a lack of daily consumption of fruits and vegetables, and lack of daily exercise. Drinking small amounts of alcohol regularly was found to reduce risk slightly. Non-smokers who ate fruits and vegetables regularly, exercised three times a week and drank a little alcohol cut their risk by more than 80 percent. Researcher Salim Yusuf, a professor of medicine at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, said, "The impact of risk factors is the same in every ethnic group and every region of the world," Yusuf said, adding that this meant the message of preventing heart disease could be quite simple and fairly uniform across the world. [View Article](#)

## Pill May Tackle Obesity Epidemic

30 August - The Guardian reported that rimonabant, a pill that that could help people [lose weight](#), [stop smoking](#), and may even reduce the risk of [heart disease](#) could be available within two years. Results from the first 12 months of a two-year trial into rimonabant showed that 40% to 45% of overweight and obese people in the trial lost 10% of their weight. The drug also reduced the harmful blood fats and the metabolic syndrome which leads to diabetes. Being overweight, smoking and diabetes are all factors in heart disease. Rimonabant works on a newly-discovered system in the brain which is involved in motivation and control of appetite as well as the urge to smoke. Patients in the study on Rimonabant lost an average of 3.5 inches around their waists over the year, with some 39% on the drug losing more than 10% of their initial body weight. Insulin response improved, and HDL cholesterol increased by 27% in those on the drug. [View Article](#)

## Report: Al-Qaida May Target VA Hospitals

27 August - The New York Times reported that Al-Qaida may attempt to attack Veterans Affairs hospitals as an alternative to more heavily guarded U.S. military installations, the FBI and Homeland Security Department warn in a new nationwide terrorism bulletin. Although U.S. authorities say there is no credible intelligence regarding a specific threat against such hospitals, the bulletin said there have been persistent reports of "suspicious activity" at medical facilities throughout the United States. That includes "possible reconnaissance activities" this year at unspecified military medical facilities in Bethesda, Md., and Aurora, Colo., the bulletin said. Even though later investigation of these two incidents uncovered no links to terrorism, the bulletin urges vigilance at VA hospitals on the part of police and security personnel. [View Article](#) (registration required)

## Smoking, Obesity, Poor Eating Highest Among Young People

31 August – EurekAlert reported that young adults, apparently believing they are immune from risk, had large increases in [smoking](#) and [obesity](#) and had continued poor eating habits during the 1990s, according to surveys of more than 120,000 people. Older Hispanics and older black men showed decreases in these behaviors, the survey found. The information was gathered from black, Hispanic and white women and men in 1990 and 2000 as part of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. More than one-third of white men and women ages 18 to 24 smoked, the highest rate among all the groups covered in the survey in 2000. Those young people and Hispanic women the same age produced the largest increases in smoking rates from 1990 to 2000. Obesity increased among every ethnic group and was especially a problem for black women. "Almost 20 percent of black women were obese by ages 18 to 24, and this increased to over 35 percent by ages 25 to 44," they say. [View Article](#)

## Streptococcus Infects Humans by Thwarting Blood Clotting

26 August – EurekAlert reported that [streptococcal bacteria](#) may infect humans by using a bacterial enzyme to "hijack" the blood-clotting system. The enzyme streptokinase is responsible for the pathogen's ability to infect humans while exhibiting little activity against other mammals. A Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator David Ginsburg and his colleagues theorized that streptokinase "hijacks" the human clot-forming system for the bacteria's own infective ends. "The theory is that the bacteria cause a local infection and begin to grow. Many of the bacterial products, as well as our immune cells, trigger the human clotting system, which evolved in part as a defense against such infection," said Ginsburg. "This system produces clots in the blood vessels around the infection, closing the highways that the bacteria would use to spread. However, the bacterial streptokinase bypasses this system causing the blood clot to dissolve so the bacteria can spread." [View Article](#)

## Study Identifies Rapidly Rising Disorder

25 August – EurekAlert reported that rates of a recently identified and debilitating disorder called eosinophilic esophagitis have risen so dramatically in recent years that they may be at higher levels than that of other inflammatory gastrointestinal disorders, such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Eosinophilic esophagitis (EE) is characterized by severely elevated levels of eosinophils -- a type of white blood cell -- in the esophagus. These eosinophils grow in an uncontrolled manner and attack the gastrointestinal system, leading to vomiting and difficulty with growth and swallowing food. EE differs from esophageal reflux in the magnitude of eosinophils that are recruited into the gastrointestinal tract and the lack of response to anti-reflux medications. EE is just one a group of disorders called eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases that are often associated with allergies. EE is an emerging

disease throughout the world, as documented by recent series of cases in the United States, England, Japan, Spain, Australia, Switzerland and Italy. [View Article](#)

## The Kind of Carbs You Eat May Make Big Difference

29 August – The IndyStar.com reported that popular diets such as Atkins and South Beach recommend eating few or no carbohydrates to lose weight. But not all carbs are created equal, and now evidence suggests that using the "[glycemic index](#)" may be the way to lose weight, reduce body fat and trim risk factors for diabetes and heart disease. The glycemic index ranks carbohydrates based on their immediate effect on blood sugar levels. Carbohydrates that break down quickly during digestion have the highest glycemic index. Carbohydrates that break down slowly, releasing sugar gradually into the blood stream, have a low glycemic index. Rats were fed a diet of 69 percent carbohydrates. Eleven rats were randomly assigned to a high-glycemic-index diet and 10 to a low-glycemic-index diet. After two to four months, the researchers found that the rats given the high-glycemic-index diet had 71 percent more body fat and 8 percent less lean muscle mass than the other rats. [View Article](#)

## Unsafe Abortions Kill 70,000 Women Each Year

1 September – Health Day News reported that about 70,000 women -- nearly 200 a day -- die each year around the world due to botched [abortions](#). In addition to the deaths, unsafe abortions also leave thousands of women with long-term debilitating injuries. Most of the problems occur in Asia. The report was presented in London at Countdown 2015, a conference examining what progress has been made since the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994. "Until nations everywhere take steps to make abortion legal and readily available as well as helping to remove the stigma that surrounds it, women will suffer," Elizabeth Maguire, president of Ipas, said in a prepared statement. [View Article](#)

## Viruses Have Mutated To Outwit Widely Used Tamiflu

26 August – MSNBC reported that resistance to a popular anti-[influenza](#) drug from Switzerland's Roche may be more common than previously thought, raising questions about how it should be used in a major pandemic. Tamiflu, or oseltamivir, belongs to a class of drugs known as neuraminidase inhibitors which work by blocking the action of viral enzymes. But Yoshihiro Kawaoka and colleagues at the University of Tokyo, who analyzed samples from a group of 50 Japanese children given the drug, found that flu viruses had mutated to outwit the medicine in 18 percent of the patients. They said that resistant strains of viruses were first detected 4 days after the start of treatment and on each successive day of the study. [View Article](#)

## West Nile Vaccine in the Works

27 August – CBSNews.com reported that Japanese scientists have developed a vaccine for the mosquito-borne [West Nile virus](#) and will start testing on humans in the coming months. The West Nile virus has spread across the US since 1999, but Japan has reported no cases so far. Koichi Morita, virology professor at Nagasaki University's Institute of Tropical Medicine, said his team made the vaccine from an inactive form of the virus sent by American researchers two years ago. Morita said he would begin small-scale clinical trials on humans to determine whether the vaccine is safe, pending approval from the university's ethics board expected later this year. Participants will be monitored for side-effects and undergo tests to detect the presence of antibodies — a sign that the body's immune system is responding to fight off the disease. [View Article](#)

## Yearly Full Body Scan Ups Cancer Risk from 1 in 1200 To 1 in 50

31 August – Medical News Today reported that if you have a full body computed tomography screening (CT scan) once a year for 30 years your chances of getting cancer go up from 1 in 1200 to 1 in 50, say researchers in a new study. Researchers found that a 45 year old who has one CT scan has a lifetime risk of developing cancer of 0.08%. But if that person were to have a full body scan every year for thirty years his/her cancer risk goes up to 1.9%. CT scans affect internal organs much more than traditional X-rays. The organs receive 100 times more [radiation](#) than what is delivered from a mammogram screening. [View Article](#)

## Focus on Epidemiology

### Health Disparities Experienced by Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations

27 August – MMWR reported that in the United States, blacks, Hispanics, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPIs) bear a disproportionate burden of disease, injury, premature death, and disability. For persons of these racial/ethnic minority populations, [health disparities](#) can mean lower life expectancy, decreased quality of life, loss of economic opportunities, and perceptions of injustice. For society, these disparities translate into decreased productivity, increased health-care costs, and social inequity. Despite recent progress, racial/ethnic disparities persist among the 10 leading health indicators identified in the 2010 national health objectives. Socioeconomic factors, lifestyle behaviors, social environment, and access to clinical preventive services contribute to racial/ethnic health disparities. Level of education has been correlated with the prevalence of certain health risks (e.g., obesity, lack of physical activity, and cigarette smoking). The elimination of racial/ethnic disparities in health status will require important changes in the ways health care is delivered and financed. Unequal access to care and unequal treatment of persons who receive care are key determinants of racial/ethnic disparities in health care and health status. [View Article](#)

### Flu Shots for the 2004-2005 Season

26 August – DoD-GEIS has posted the Army Surgeon General's Policy for [Influenza Vaccination for the 2004-2005 Season](#).

### DoD-GEIS: Pandemic Influenza Plan

1 September – The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its draft [Pandemic Influenza Response and Preparedness Plan](#) that outlines a coordinated national strategy to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. It provides guidance to national, state, and local policy makers and health departments for public health preparation and response in the event of pandemic influenza outbreak. HHS supports pandemic influenza activities in five key areas: surveillance, vaccine development and production, antiviral stockpiling, research, and public health preparedness. DoD contributes significantly to surveillance for influenza and isolates for vaccine development cooperatively with CDC; DoD influenza data and isolates from the military health system and DoD overseas laboratories are routinely shared with CDC and WHO. The AF Institute for Operational Health (AFIOH) at Brooks City Base, TX, heads the DoD influenza program, established from former AF "Project Gargle" as a DoD Executive Agency, with DoD-GEIS funding and professional support. In a related announcement on 27 August CDC's Director Dr. Julie Gerberding said that there is an expected delay in the nation's supply of inactivated influenza vaccine manufactured by Chiron, one of

two manufacturers for US vaccine. Chiron is responsible for approximately 50% of the US supply. For use in the US, CDC expects 100 million doses to be available. Aventis-Pasteur, the other manufacturer of inactivated vaccine, supplying about 60% of DoD's flu vaccine, is not delayed. The live-virus nasal vaccine made by MedImmune is also not affected. Further information and presentations from the IOM's recent workshop, [Pandemic Influenza: Assessing Capabilities for Prevention and Response](#), are now available. Strengthening global surveillance and detection capabilities, according to IOM participants and international experts, is a priority. *Information on many "hot topics" such as Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#); for information on ongoing investigations see the [DoD-GEIS secure website](#) (registration required).*

**Other timely information can be found in:**

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)  
This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Hepatitis E in Sudan - WHO update

30 August – ProMED reported that from 22 May to 20 Aug 2004 a total of 2431 cases and 41 deaths of suspected [hepatitis E](#) virus infection was reported from health clinics in the Greater Darfur. The most affected area is West Darfur state with 66 percent of the total reported cases. UNICEF is continuing to work with federal and state ministries of health and nongovernmental organizations to increase the quality and quantity of the water supply. [View Article](#)

### Iraq Northern Pipeline on Fire

1 September – Reuters reported that an oil pipeline was on fire in northern Iraq in the vicinity of the main export route from the Kirkuk fields to Turkey's Mediterranean coast. Smoke was rising from the pipeline in the lawless Hadar area west of the city of Mosul. Pumping along the line between Iraq's giant Kirkuk oilfields and the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan had been running at 600,000 barrels per day (bpd). There was no confirmation on whether the export pipeline was the one that was on fire, or of any impact on exports. Saboteurs have attacked the export pipeline in Hadar several times since the U.S. invasion. [View Article](#)

### Kazakhstan: Meningitis Outbreak in Almaty and Semipalatinsk

25 August – IRIN News reported that more than one thousand people, mostly children, have been hospitalized in Kazakhstan over the past three months with [meningitis](#), according to a Kazakh health official. "There is a meningitis outbreak in Almaty and Semipalatinsk cities going on now and some 85 percent of the patients are children," said Ayzad Moldogasimova, head of the epidemiological control department. According to the country's epidemiological department, 1,005 meningitis cases have been registered in the Kazakh commercial capital of Almaty, including 96 meningococcal infections, 474 viral and 435 bacterial forms. Four people have died of the disease. In the northeastern Kazakh city of Semipalatinsk, 88 meningitis cases have been reported since July 2004, of which 86 cases were viral and two were bacterial forms, with no casualties. "In Semipalatinsk all the infected children have a mild form of the disease and they are getting over it quite quickly," Moldogasimova pointed out. Given that some 46 percent of patients in Almaty had the viral form, health officials believe that



the recent outbreak was mainly contracted by swimming in open reservoirs contaminated by sewage. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Cases of Travel-associated Hepatitis A in Germany

29 August – ProMED reported that an outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) has been detected among tourists returning to Germany from holidays in Egypt. The patients stayed at a particular hotel by the Red Sea. Interviews with German tourists have determined that people from Russia, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden stayed at the same hotel. A warning has been issued through the European Early Warning System. Up to 26 August, 100 cases linked to the hotel have been reported in Germany and 16 in other countries. Egypt is a country where there is a high endemic risk of hepatitis A infection. [View Article](#)

### Cholera in Chad

1 September – The WHO reported that a total of 2,046 cases and 98 deaths from [cholera](#) have been reported from 14 June to 22 August in Western Chad, some distance from the refugee camps in the east of the country. The outbreak started in Massaguet (Hadjar Lamine) North of N'Djaména; from there it spread to Lac and Kanem provinces as well as to the capital city N'Djaména. The previous week a total of 453 new cases occurred in N'Djaména. No cases have been reported from the Eastern part of Chad where the refugees from Darfur are gathering, though they are seen to be at high risk. They have only limited access to water and proper sanitation is scarce, with the rainy season ongoing. [View Article](#)

### Ebola Outbreak May Explain Sudden Gorilla Disappearance

30 August – Innovations Reported stated that scientists fear that a new outbreak of the [Ebola virus](#), which, in addition to threatening human lives, would threaten tens of thousands of great apes – in this case gorillas and chimpanzees – in the Republic of Congo. Congo's Odzala National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, contains an estimated 30,000 western lowland gorillas, the largest such population of the endangered species in the world. Until late last year, hundreds could regularly be spotted in Lokoue Bai, a natural clearing in the park where separate groups of the gorillas predictably congregated. But whereas 45 groups of gorillas were once normally observed there, the number since May has plummeted to only nine groups. Ebola outbreaks have already occurred in this general area. In the past two years, two reported cases were confirmed in Lossi Forest, approximately 50 kilometers south of Odzala. In both cases, more than 80 percent of all lowland gorillas and roughly 70 percent of all chimpanzees living there died. [View Article](#)

### Q fever Outbreak in Botevgrad, Bulgaria: May-June 2004

29 August – ProMED reported that [Q fever](#) is a widespread zoonosis in Bulgaria caused by *Coxiella burnetii*. The major route of transmission from animals to humans is by infectious aerosols. Over the past decade, the number of sporadic cases and outbreaks in Bulgaria has increased. Since the 1990s an increase in cattle kept on small farms has intensified contact between farm animals and people. In early May 2004, an increase was noted in the number of pneumonia cases in a clinic in Botevgrad. An epidemiological and clinical investigation suggested Q fever. The public was informed of the risk of

the disease, of the route and prevention of transmission. Despite this information about the disease, the number of patients continued to grow due to the large number of people already infected who were incubating the disease. From 1 May - 9 June, the number of patients admitted to the hospital diagnosed with atypical pneumonia in Botevgrad reached 220. During the investigation, patients often reported that they had been in a dust storm. Only a few patients reported direct contact with animals.

[View Article](#)

## Sierra Leone: Cholera Kills 40 People in First Outbreak in Five Years

27 August – Irin News reported that the [cholera](#) outbreak in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, has killed 40 people so far this month. A senior government health official blamed overcrowded slums, torrential rains and infected traders arriving from neighboring Guinea into Sierra Leone for the country's first cholera outbreak in five years. Since 6 August authorities have recorded 374 cases of the disease and 40 deaths. Only 20 percent of Sierra Leone's cholera cases were children. The disease had mainly struck down adults living in the east end of Freetown. [View Article](#)

## Uganda: Lc3 Warns Nakawa of Cholera Outbreak

25 August – AllAfrica.com reported that Nakawa division is likely to face another [cholera](#) outbreak due to poor sanitation, the LC3 chairman, Protazio Kintu, has said. He said most residents in the division lacked toilets and were using polythene bags to dispose of their waste which end in water channels. He said areas with the worst sanitation were slums. He cited Banda parish with a population of over 1,000 people using one toilet. "Now that the rains are on, we are likely to get another cholera outbreak. Pit-latrines coverage is still low and people have resorted to polythene bags. The channels are now blocked," Kintu said. [View Article](#)

## Village Crier Joins Cameroon's War on Cholera

29 August – Reuters reported that in Fessett, Cameroon the village crier sounds his horn and says, "When you come home after the day's labor in the field, make sure you have a wash. Always wash your hands before and after your meals." [Cholera](#), a deadly intestinal infection spread by contaminated water and food has broken out in this part of Cameroon for the first time since 1997. Africa had been free of cholera for more than century when the disease hit western regions in 1970. It spread quickly and eventually became endemic across most of the continent. This year there have been deadly outbreaks in Mozambique in the south, Chad, Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo in the centre and Guinea in the west, killing at least 333 people. A concerted public health campaign included free treatment for all cholera patients, rushing extra doctors to hospitals in hard-hit towns and sending mobile teams to rural areas to teach people basic hygiene in house-to-house missions. [View Article](#)

# USNORTHCOM

## California Becomes West Nile Capital of U.S.

30 August – The Los Angeles Times reported that the spread of [West Nile virus](#) throughout the state accelerated last week as Los Angeles County became the new epicenter for the disease and California surpassed Arizona with the most human cases in the nation this year. West Nile virus can feel as mild as a simple itch, escalate into a fever and headaches, and, in less than 1% of cases,

eventually cause death. The virus so far has killed 10 Californians, and health officials expect more deaths before the end of summer. California moved ahead of Arizona in the number of human cases — 343 compared with 309, respectively. One-third of the 300 Californians to test positive with West Nile have been hospitalized with encephalitis or meningitis — the deadliest forms of the disease. [View Article](#) (registration required)

## Flu Vaccine Is Found Tainted in Factory

26 August – The Kansas City Star reported that the nation's supply of vaccine for the impending [flu](#) season took a big hit when Chiron Corp. announced it had found tainted doses in its factory. The company said it will hold up shipment of about 50 million shots - about half the supply U.S. health officials had hoped to have on hand this year - while it investigates what went wrong and determines whether the vaccine is safe to use. U.S. health officials said some people may not get flu shots when they want this year, but that they were hopeful Chiron's production problems are only temporary. The company hopes to ship between 46 million and 48 million doses by early October, about month later than usual. [View Article](#)

## High Level of PCBs Taints Lake Washington Fish

1 September – The Seattle Times reported that some of the most popular sport fish in Lake Washington contain surprisingly dangerous levels of toxic chemicals called [PCBs](#). People should not eat large perch or cutthroat, which are among the most commonly caught fish in the lake, more than once a month, officials said. For cutthroat under 12 inches, the recommended maximum is three meals a month, and for perch under 10½ inches, no more than four meals monthly. The Washington Department of Health also warned people never to eat the lake's northern pikeminnow, also known as squawfish which contained up to 1,000 parts per billion (ppb) of PCBs. PCBs are suspected human carcinogens, and consumption of tainted fish has been linked to learning deficits in children. Levels of PCBs in sockeye salmon were very low and pose no health risk. [View Article](#)

## Ranks of Uninsured Grow to Highest Since '98

26 August - USA TODAY reported that a stagnant economy and rising health care costs helped push the percentage of people in the US without [health insurance](#) last year to 15.6% of the population, the highest since the share hit a peak of 16.3% in 1998. The main way US residents get insurance is through their jobs, but a smaller percentage did so last year, either because they were unemployed, worked for a firm that didn't offer coverage or chose not to enroll. Numbers from the Census Bureau showed that 45 million U.S. residents lacked health insurance last year, their ranks growing by 1.4 million over 2002. That's the highest total ever. Still, the numbers could have been higher: Government programs like Medicaid saw increased enrollment, helping offset the losses in the private sector. And the proportion of children without health insurance did not change, remaining at 11.4%. The US alone among the industrialized countries does not provide taxpayer-supported universal health coverage, instead relying on a mix of employer coverage, individual purchases and government programs. [View Article](#)

## Tainted Wells Found on Ohio Resort Island

27 August – Reuters reported that contaminated wells may be the source of the illness that has stricken more than 1,000 visitors to an Ohio island getaway in Lake Erie. [E. coli](#), a bacteria found in fecal matter, was found in six wells belonging to a deli, a winery, resort cabins, a cave that is a tourist attraction and two residences on South Bass Island, Jay Carey of the Ohio Department of Public Health said. The contamination with *E. coli* may indicate the presence of the three types of bacteria

and one virus identified in 19 of the 1,054 people sickened so far, Carey said. Fourteen of the cases were traced to the bacteria campylobacter. A team of 30 investigators, including three from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, were trying to determine if septic systems had somehow contaminated the wells or private water systems. [View Article](#)

## US Gives Texas Bird Flu All-Clear

25 August – Farming Lifer reported that the US considers itself free from highly pathogenic [avian influenza](#). Dr Peter Fernandez, Associate Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), said that the avian influenza virus strain (H5N2) detected in one non-commercial flock and two live bird markets in Gonzalez County, Texas, had been completely eradicated. "Targeted and extensive surveillance has not detected any further evidence of the virus," he said. "Also, as previously mentioned, with the successful eradication of the virus, the State quarantine orders on affected premises were released. The virus has been completely stamped out and in accordance with Article 2.1.14.2 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code; the United States of America considers itself free from highly pathogenic avian influenza." [View Article](#)

## Washington State Bioterror Monitoring Expanded To Animals

30 August – The Seattle Times reported that state health officials are expanding their early warning system for a bioterrorist attack by employing the help of rabbits, squirrels, mice and other critters. As part of the state's [biological-warfare](#) defense, state veterinarians recently began monitoring unusual small-animal deaths for evidence of tularemia, plague or other diseases that could be caused by lethal agents. Small animals likely would show symptoms and die faster than humans after being exposed to a lethal biological agent. The project uses citizen reports of dead wildlife to collect animals for examination. Veterinarians from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife receive the reports, sometime retrieve the animals, conduct preliminary exams, and then send them to a Washington State University lab for extensive analysis. In the animal reporting system, plague and tularemia are receiving special emphasis because they are considered among the highest risks for an attack and can infect both animals and humans. Anthrax, often mentioned as a threat, also could be detected in animals, especially cattle, sheep and goats, where it occurs naturally. [View Article](#)

# USPACOM

## Chickens at Four Farms Free of Bird Flu

25 August – The Star Online reported that chickens at four poultry farms in Kelantan are free from the [avian influenza](#) following checks by the Kelantan Veterinary Health Department (JPH) on 385,000 broilers in the state. No new cases have been reported in the village or other areas in Kelantan, according to the JPH director. The first phase of the checks will end Aug 26 and the second phase, is scheduled to end Sept 2. More personnel have been deployed in Bukit Bunga, Rantau Panjang and Pengkalan Kubor, Tumpat to prevent chicken from being smuggled into the country. [View Article](#)

## China Acts to Tackle AIDS Spread

28 August – BBC News reported that China has for the first time introduced laws specifically targeting the spread of [AIDS](#) and outlawing discrimination against victims of infectious diseases. The laws passed by parliament guarantee funding from central government to local authorities to tackle the fast-spreading disease, state media said. China's regions must also strengthen AIDS prevention

programs, including tightening up blood donation measures. Some 840,000 people in China have HIV, which causes AIDS, officials say, but unofficial estimates are much higher. The laws ban buying and selling of blood and prohibit discrimination against people infected with, or suspected of having contagious diseases. [View Article](#)

## Indonesia: Diarrhea Outbreak Strikes NTT

27 August – The Jakarta Post reported that a [diarrhea](#) outbreak has struck at least two regencies in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province, affecting hundreds of people, many of them infants. No fatalities have been reported. The head of Kupang regency's health office, blamed a lack of clean water for the outbreak. In Alor regency, Alor Hospital director Yoseph Usen Aman said 47 people had been treated at the hospital for diarrhea, 33 of them infants. [View Article](#)

## Mystery Illness Hits Indonesian Poultry Farms

31 August – ProMED reported that Indonesian poultry farmers, still reeling from a bird flu outbreak, are worried a disease which has killed thousands of chickens in the past few days could again wipe out their livelihood. Apart from the deaths, farmers in Yogyakarta's Sleman regency say the problem has been aggravated by the fact that the surviving chickens are not breeding. And the disease is spreading rapidly. The head of the poultry division of Sleman agriculture agency, Mr Suwadi Azis, said his office had not received any reports from poultry farmers on the disease outbreak. But he said the symptoms indicated the outbreak could be [Newcastle Disease](#). "If that is the disease, we already have the vaccine to prevent its further spread," he said. [View Article](#)

# USSOUTHCOM

## Mexican President Fox Facing Protests

1 September – Yahoo News! reported that 200,000 health care workers walked off the job and other union members began gathering, promising to encircle Congress and mar President Vicente Fox's fourth state-of-the-nation address. They are angry over recent reforms that require the powerful social security and government employees' unions to pay more of their pension costs. [View Article](#)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report. This report is also available on the [USACHPPM website](#).

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