



# Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>

## Newsletter

[www.healthwatchusa.org](http://www.healthwatchusa.org) Jan. 1, 2020

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times



### Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2019 Patient Advocacy Report.

2019 has been one of Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>'s most productive years. Our members have had coverage by top national news media and have published two major peer reviewed articles along with numerous op-eds and policy statements. In addition, our 2019 conference was a huge success.

Topics ranged from control of multi-drug resistant organisms, better medical device tracking, to the full disclosure of medical errors. The 2019 Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> patient advocacy report lists of resources Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> has produced along with links to major articles, meeting presentations and radio shows. Download Report:

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20191231-HWUSA-Report-4.pdf>

If you would like to support our important work, please make a donation using the following

link: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-donation.htm>



## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2020 Patient Safety Conference is scheduled for Monday Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> in Lexington, Kentucky.

The Keynote speakers will be Dr. Stephanie Strathdee and Dr. Thomas Patterson who will present the unbelievable story of Dr. Strathdee to save her husband, Dr. Patterson's life from a totally antibiotic resistant bacteria, *acinetobacter baumannii*. Her search discovered a 100 year old therapy, bacterial viruses or phages. With the help of the Naval Research Department, Texas A & M, University of California at San Diego the treatment

was given to her husband who was on the brink of death. And it worked, placing bacterial phages at the forefront of medical research to stop the epidemic of drug resistant bacteria. Now a best-selling book "The Perfect Predator". Registration information to be announced. Check for details at [www.healthconference.com](http://www.healthconference.com)



## Infection Preventionists Are Underutilized and Underappreciated.

The CDC estimates (at a minimum) that 35,000 individuals die each year from resistant organisms with another 12,800 patients dying from *C. difficile*. This does not count the long-term disability many of the survivors will endure. The United Kingdom's Wellcome Trust report estimated that by 2050 antibiotic resistance will have a cumulative cost to the world of \$100 trillion dollars and 10 million lives will be lost each year.

The following ICT questions were answered:

- How important do you think infection preventionists are to the workings of infection control in hospitals?
- Do you think that most hospitals utilize infection preventionists properly?
- How do you weigh the goal of infection prevention against the costs of trying to do so? Does it become too costly at some point?
- Do you think environmental services departments are properly integrated into the infection control process?

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/hand-hygiene/conversation-kevin-kavanagh-md-infection-preventionists-are-underutilized-and-underappreciated>

## **Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Action Letters to CMS and FDA for the promotion of record retention and Ready Access for Patients Regarding the Unique Device Identifier of Implanted Medical Devices.**

1. Action letter to CMS requesting that informing a patient of an implanted medical device's information and UDI should become a condition of participation (COP) for a facility. Dec. 12, 2019. <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20191217-MedicareUDI-Info-Patients-5.pdf>

2. Comment letter from Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> (lead organization) and 14 non-profit advocacy organizations regarding tracking and preserving the medical device's Unique Device Indicator records, along with information regarding the distributor and prescribing physician. The UDI is a code which identifies the device. However, in the event the device is removed from the patient or the patient dies the records of the UDI may be deleted. In addition, there are no requirements for medical device implants to directly contain the UDI. Dec. 12, 2019. [http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20191212\\_Letter\\_to\\_FDA\\_re\\_UDI\\_December\\_12-Final3.pdf](http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20191212_Letter_to_FDA_re_UDI_December_12-Final3.pdf)

## **Newly Approved Test Can Diagnose MRSA in 5 Hours.**

"Kevin Kavanagh, MD, the founder of Health Watch USA, a not-for-profit patient advocacy group, has been an outspoken proponent for better approaches to MRSA detection. "The cobas vivoDx MRSA diagnostic test has great potential," Kavanagh tells Infection Control Today. "Rapid testing and screening for MRSA is of utmost importance in the identifying of carriers and in the control of spread of this dangerous pathogen. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United Kingdoms' National Health Service has reported great success in strategies aimed at carrier identification along with isolation and decolonization. These targeted strategies have the advantage of reducing the microbiome's exposure to antiseptics and antibiotics which will lessen the (chances) of promoting the development of antibiotic resistance."

Infection Control Today. Dec. 11, 2019.: <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/article/newly-approved-test-can-diagnose-mrsa-5-hours>

## **Crisis Looms in Antibiotic Drug Makers Go Bankrupt**

"At a time when germs are growing more resistant to common antibiotics, many companies that are developing new versions of the drugs are hemorrhaging money and going out of business, gravely undermining efforts to contain the spread of deadly, drug-resistant bacteria."

New York Times: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/Health/medical/crisis-looms-in-antibiotics-as-drug-makers-go-bankrupt/ar-BBYkqckK>

## **How drug companies over-rely on China**

China has become the world's largest producer and exporter of "active pharmaceutical ingredients," the base components drug companies use to manufacture most of the medications we rely on. China's dominance puts both the health of Americans and our national security at risk.

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2019-12-10/worry-about-drug-companies-reliance-on-chinese-ingredients>

## **The White House Says Nursing Home Regulations Are Too Tough**

"...the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, known as CMS, has spent years trying to get nursing homes to reduce the use of antipsychotics. But critics say the proposed new rule would actually make it easier to prescribe them."

NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/30/783819886/the-white-house-says-nursing-home-regulations-are-too-tough>

## **U.S. Health Care Ranked Worst in the Developed World**

"The U.S. health care system has been subject to heated debate over the past decade, but one thing that has remained consistent is the level of performance, which has been ranked as the worst among industrialized nations for the fifth time, according to the 2014 Commonwealth Fund survey 2014(sic). The U.K. ranked best with Switzerland following a close second."

Time: <https://time.com/2888403/u-s-health-care-ranked-worst-in-the-developed-world/>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Oct. 17, 2019 Conference



### **Public Health in Crisis MDRO Epidemics & FDA Oversight Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Patient Safety Conference Oct 17, 2019 in Lexington, Kentucky**

**Conference Website is now online with presentation slides:** <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2019/>

#### **View Presentations:**

- 1) Lisa Middleton, PhD: The high cost of insulin and diabetic healthcare, <https://youtu.be/HnhodaAdHdE>
- 2) Steve Roach: Resistant bacteria: Risks of antibiotic use in livestock and non-prescription antibiotics, <https://youtu.be/qDPLOXKgRBc>
- 3) Suzanne Robotti - CEO and Founder MedShadow: Fosamax post approval label changes - protecting the patient or the pharmaceutical company? <https://youtu.be/1MripZTWMBQ>
- 4) Lindsay Calderon, PhD, MPH: FDA MAUDE Database. Who is reporting and potential biases this creates. [https://youtu.be/yKomHc\\_DWtw](https://youtu.be/yKomHc_DWtw)
- 5) Melissa Clarkson, PhD: The term "Second Victim" & Candor Legislation. <https://youtu.be/0bJq0k2UogM>
- 6) Jayne O'Donnell, USA TODAY & Laura Ungar, Kaiser Health News. The importance of Patient Advocate Stories in National News Reports. <https://youtu.be/CD1pByr-qUQ>

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