



Health Watch USAsm

Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org Oct. 1, 2019

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



HW USA Meeting YouTube Video June 20, 2018:

<https://youtu.be/K6sqjBoWMm4>

Safety of the United States' Drug Supply

Rosemary Gibson, a long time supporter of HW USA, is receiving increased national attention for her book, China Rx, and the security problems created by China's manufacturing almost all of our key medication. This issue broke last week on a national level.

Ms. Gibson testified before the Federal oversight Committee, U.S. China Commission, on July 31, 2019. <https://vimeo.com/351501579?ref=embed>

On Sept. 10, 2019, U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff, Chair of the House Intelligence Committee and Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post entitled: "China's grip on pharmaceutical drugs is a national security issue" which quoted Ms. Gibson:

"... as Rosemary Gibson, a senior adviser at the Hastings Center, recently testified: "If China shut the door on exports of medicines and their key ingredients and raw material, U.S. hospitals and military hospitals and clinics would cease to function within months, if not days."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-rely-on-china-for-pharmaceutical-drugs-thats-a-security-threat/2019/09/10/5f35e1ce-d3ec-11e9-9343-40db57cf6abd_story.html



Jack Pattie Show WVLK AM 920 April 25, 2018.

Video URL: <https://youtu.be/4qbxJeRSIY8>

Jack Pattie Show WVLK AM 920 Sept. 28,

2019. Video URL: <https://youtu.be/3XApEUDymqk>

On September 12, 2019 NBC nightly news covered the segment.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-care/u-s-officials-worried-about-chinese-control-american-drug-supply-n1052376>

Health Watch USA helped bring attention to this issue on April 25, 2018 over a year ago, when few were listening.

U.S. officials worried about Chinese control of American drug supply:

Microsoft News: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/us-officials-worried-about-chinese-control-of-american-drug-supply/ar-AAHdao5?ocid=spartandhp>

Carcinogens Have Infiltrated the Generic Drug Supply of Blood Pressure Medications in the U.S.

"In July 2018 the FDA announced that NDMA had been found in the widely used blood-pressure medicine valsartan and started overseeing a recall of drugs from three companies. They'd all bought the active ingredient for their valsartan from Zhejiang Huahai Pharmaceutical Co., one of China's biggest generic companies. The recall has since been expanded 51 times, to include two related drugs, irbesartan and losartan, made by at least 10 companies—some since 2014. Drugs sold to millions of people in 30 countries could be tainted."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-09-12/how-carcinogen-tainted-generic-drug-valsartan-got-past-the-fda>

Zantac Has Low Levels of a Cancer-Causing Chemical, NDMA , the F.D.A. Says.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/13/health/zantac-cancer-ndma.html>

Kentucky Hospitals Suing Opioid Makers

"A group of Kentucky hospitals is suing dozens of opioid makers and distributors saying the companies misrepresented the benefits and dangers of the painkiller."

<https://www.wtvq.com/2019/09/05/kentucky-hospitals-suing-opioid-makers/>
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kentucky/articles/2019-09-05/kentucky-hospitals-suing-opioid-makers>

Health Care Infections

Nursing Homes Are a Breeding Ground for a Fatal Fungus

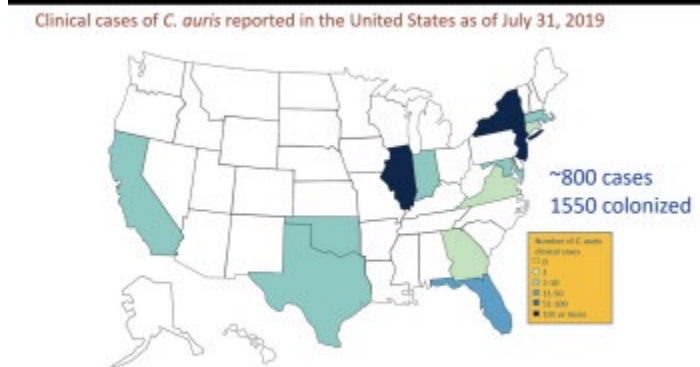
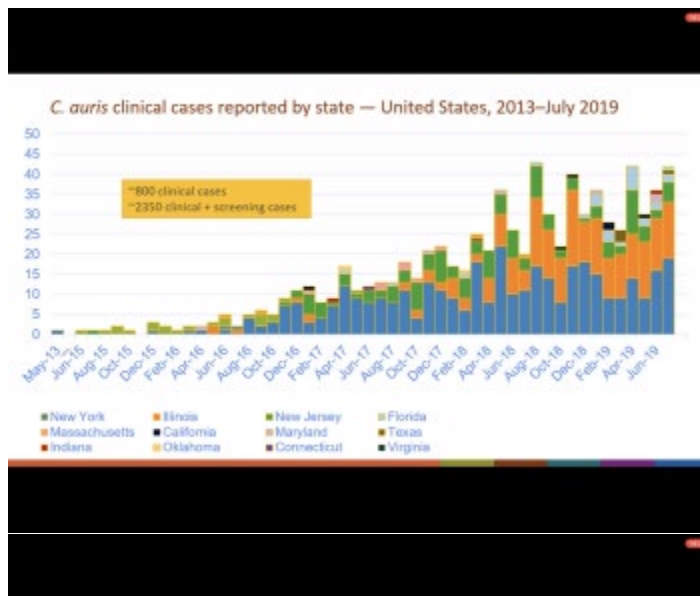
NYT: 'Drug-resistant germs, including *Candida auris*, prey on severely ill patients in skilled nursing facilities, a problem sometimes amplified by poor care and low staffing.'

"Doctors recently added another diagnosis to her medical chart: *Candida auris*, a highly contagious, drug-resistant fungus that has infected nearly 800 people since it arrived in the United States four years ago, with half of patients dying within 90 days. At least 38 other patients at Ms. Davila's nursing home, Palm Gardens Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Brooklyn, have been infected with or carry *C. auris*, a germ so virulent and hard to eradicate that some facilities will not accept patients with it."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/11/health/nursing-homes-fungus.html>

Candida auris is a Growing Threat and Difficult to Contain and Treat.

Presentation "*Candida auris*: Is it here to Stay? Dr. Shawn Lockhart is a Senior Clinical Laboratory Advisor in the Mycotic Diseases Branch at the CDC. Sept. 18, 2019.



US Resistance: *C. auris*



Major Points of the presentation:

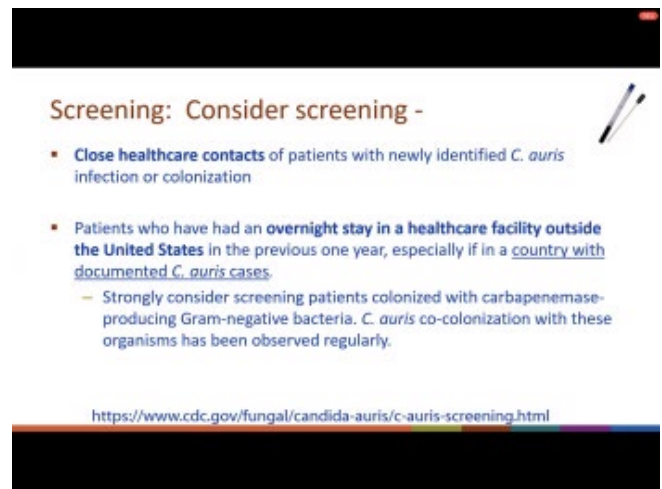
- Most U.S. cases have originated from travelers from four different clades (related bacteria). Almost 800 infections with over 1500 patients colonized in the United States so far .
- *Candida auris* lives and colonizes on the skin.
- Highly resistant to medications and resistance is worsening.
- Spreads easily on mobile facility equipment (blood pressure cuffs, etc.) and bed rails.
- Can live for months on a surface.
- One case in California spread to 100 patients in different facilities.
- To date, there are no recommendations on how to decolonize.
- Ammonia is ineffective. The CDC recommends using 10% bleach.
- May affect anyone with a treatment line, catheter, or with decreased immunity, such as those with diabetes. Similar to yeast infections.
- The number of cases are in addition to (does not replace) those of *Candida albicans*.

View Presentation Slides:

http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20190920-588-204-19_Candida_auris_slides.pdf

View Presentation (Available until Sept. 2020) <http://www.aphl.org/204-19SS>

Click on Pictures to Enlarge/Download



The screenshot shows a document titled "Screening: Consider screening -" with two bullet points. The first bullet point is "Close healthcare contacts of patients with newly identified *C. auris* infection or colonization". The second bullet point is "Patients who have had an overnight stay in a healthcare facility outside the United States in the previous one year, especially if in a country with documented *C. auris* cases." Below the second bullet point, there is a sub-bullet point: "Strongly consider screening patients colonized with carbapenemase-producing Gram-negative bacteria. *C. auris* co-colonization with these organisms has been observed regularly." At the bottom of the screenshot, the URL "https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/candida-auris/c-auris-screening.html" is visible.

Screening: Consider screening -

- Close healthcare contacts of patients with newly identified *C. auris* infection or colonization
- Patients who have had an overnight stay in a healthcare facility outside the United States in the previous one year, especially if in a country with documented *C. auris* cases.
 - Strongly consider screening patients colonized with carbapenemase-producing Gram-negative bacteria. *C. auris* co-colonization with these organisms has been observed regularly.

<https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/candida-auris/c-auris-screening.html>

Comment on Draft Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of *Staphylococcus aureus* in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Patients.

HW USA's comment stresses the importance of defining an outbreak and not to have optional recommendations with the use of "may." Recommendations should be either made or not made. In addition, if an outbreak is defined as greater than a single case, then a baseline infection rate is deemed acceptable and MRSA should be considered endemic. In this case, facility wide screening of patients and hospital staff should be enacted.

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20191103-MRSA-NICU-CDC-Letter.pdf>

Global trends in antimicrobial resistance in animals in low- and middle-income countries.

Science: "Areas where resistance is just starting to emerge are Kenya, Morocco, Uruguay, southern Brazil, central India, and southern China. . The portfolio of antimicrobials used to raise animals for food is rapidly getting depleted, with important consequences for animal health, farmers' livelihoods, and potentially for human health."

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/365/6459/eaaw1944>

Antibiotic Resistance in Sewage Treatment Plants in Sweden Correlates With That Found in Hospitals

<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2019.24.37.1800497>

Health Care Quality

HEALTH CARE QUALITY: CMS Could More Effectively Ensure Its Quality Measurement Activities Promote Its Objectives

GAO-19-628: "CMS takes different approaches for deciding which quality measures to develop and to use. However, CMS lacks assurance that the quality measures it chooses address its quality measurement strategic objectives. This is because CMS does not have procedures to ensure systematic assessments of quality measures under consideration against each of its quality measurement strategic objectives, which increases the risk that the quality measures it

selects will not help the agency achieve those objectives as effectively as possible. . . . In addition, CMS has not developed or implemented performance indicators for each of its quality measurement strategic objectives. Establishing these indicators and using them to evaluate its progress towards achieving its objectives would enable CMS to determine whether its quality measurement efforts are sufficient or changes are warranted."

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/701512.pdf>

Health Care Finances

We Asked Prosecutors if Health Insurance Companies Care About Fraud. They Laughed at Us.

Propublica: "To protect their networks and bottom lines, health insurers don't aggressively pursue widespread fraud, making it easy for scammers. Then they pass the costs off to you. "

<https://www.propublica.org/article/we-asked-prosecutors-if-health-insurance-companies-care-about-fraud-they-laughed-at-us>

Health Watch USA Oct. 17, 2019 Conference



**Public Health in Crisis
MDRO Epidemics & FDA Oversight
Health Watch USAsm Patient
Safety Conference
Oct 17, 2019 in Lexington,
Kentucky**

Speakers include: <http://www.healthconference.org>



- 1) Author & Epidemiologists: Ralph R. Frerichs, D.V.M., Dr.P.H. Ralph R. Frerichs
Truth, Lies and the Greater Good — Cholera's Unexpected Arrival in Haiti;
- 2) Past Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders; Importance of School Health and
Vaccinations;
- 3) USA Today Reporter, Jayne O'Donnell & Kaiser Healthcare News Reporter, Laura
Ungar: The Patient Safety Story: Lessons from Two Reporters in the Trenches;
- 4) FACT Food Safety Director and Senior Analyst for Keep Antibiotics Working, Steve
Roach.

Registration is now open for the 2019 HW USA Patient Safety

Conference: <http://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/payment.htm>

Download Brochure: http://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2019Conference_downloads/Brochure.pdf

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