

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER
AMERICAN EMBASSY
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Health Issues

April 2005

NEWSLETTER NO. 13

PUBLIC HEALTH, DIET, NUTRITION AND PREVENTION

THE NEW LOOK AND MESSAGES OF USDA'S MYPYRAMID

The original Food Guide Pyramid, released in 1992, has been updated and revised. The overall purposes of the revision were 1) to improve its effectiveness in motivating consumers to make healthier food choices and 2) ensure that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food guidance system reflects the latest nutritional science. The revision has paralleled and been coordinated with the development of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released in January 2005.

Along with the new MyPyramid symbol, the system provides many options to help Americans make healthy food choices and to be active every day.

MyPyramid.gov is your access point for the USDA food guidance system. This section contains the latest news, background information, and resources about the food guidance system.

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

Twelve Best Practices for Public Health Preparedness

Terri Tanielian, Karen Ricci, Michael A. Stoto, et.al.

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness

RAND Apr. 20, 2005

U.S. state and local health departments have done much in the past three years to improve their bioterrorism and public health emergency preparedness. Twelve best practices can serve as examples for other communities.

<http://www.rand.org/publications/TR/TR239/index.html>

Physicians remain unconvinced about alternative medicine programs. Though U.S. medical schools are increasing their programs in alternative and complementary medicine, primary care physicians' referrals to such programs are still relatively low.

RAND. Original article:

Coulter ID, Singh BB, Riley D, Der-Martirosian C. Interprofessional Patterns in an Integrated Medical System, *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, Vol. 28, No. 3, March-April 2005, pp. 170-174.

In the United States, by 1998, 65 of 125 accredited medical schools had programs in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), and this is increasing annually (it was 32 in 1995, 42 in 1997). Although this growth in interest may be greater in the United States, a 1998 survey in the United Kingdom found that 26% of medical schools were teaching CAM, but this had doubled in a single year.

It is clear that a major paradigm shift, as defined in Kuhn's seminal work, is occurring. Within a very short period, medicine has moved from simply acknowledging the existence of CAM, to cooperating with CAM, to embracing CAM. Increasingly, medicine is incorporating CAM into medical education and practice. It should not be assumed, however, that acceptance of courses in medical schools necessarily means acceptance by the entire medical faculty. The response to these courses has been mixed.⁵ Surveys of medical providers indicate that physicians perceive some CAM therapies as moderately effective,⁶ and 50% of family physicians thought CAM represents legitimate medical practices.⁷ With 40% of their patients having used CAM,⁸ it is increasingly necessary for medical physicians to be at least conversant with the more common CAM practices, even more so when they involve herbs or natural substances and supplements. This paradigm is increasingly being identified as integrative medicine.

In the United States, integrative medicine is being developed in a highly individualistic manner, and there is an increasing body of literature on individual experiments in creating integrative centers. By 1998, at least a dozen major medical schools had created programs in integrative medicine. Most of these have occurred within schools of medicine, although some, such as that at Stony Brook, brought together several schools such as nursing, medicine, social welfare, dentistry, and health technology and management.

http://www2.us.elsevierhealth.com/scripts/om.dll/serve?action=searchDB&searchDBfor=art&artType=full&id=as0161475405000539#head_abstract

Monthly updates to Congress on RAND's work in health policy

April 2005: <http://www.rand.org/publications/newsletters/health/0405/issue.pdf>

March 2005: <http://www.rand.org/publications/newsletters/health/0305/issue.pdf>

Guinea Worm Eradication Program Gets \$25 Million Challenge Grant From Gates Foundation Carter Center, 5 Apr 2005

Today, through efforts of The Carter Center and its partners, Guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis) has been reduced by more than 99.5 percent: from an estimated 3.5 million cases in 1986 to approximately 15,500 cases reported in 2004. Guinea worm is a water-borne, parasitic disease contracted when contaminated water is consumed. People with the disease are often unable to go to school, farm their crops, or do other work, resulting in serious economic losses and increased poverty. The disease can be controlled through public health measures such as treating drinking water and educating people who are infected to take precautions that prevent trans-

mission. It will be the first disease to be eradicated without medicines or vaccines.

<http://www.cartercenter.org/doc2054.htm>

05AD436 TOBACCO SETTLEMENT: STATES' ALLOCATIONS OF FISCAL YEAR 2004 AND EXPECTED FISCAL YEAR 2005 PAYMENTS. [GAO-05-312]

United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). March 21, 2005; Web-posted March 22, 2005.

In the 1990s, states sued major tobacco companies to obtain reimbursement for health impairments caused by the public's use of tobacco. In 1998, 46 states (all but Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi and Texas) and four of the nation's largest tobacco companies signed a Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) that requires the tobacco companies to make annual payments to the states in perpetuity as reimbursement for past tobacco-related health care costs. The MSA commits the tobacco companies to pay the states approximately \$206 billion over the first 25 years. Some of the states have arranged to receive upfront proceeds based on the amounts that tobacco companies owe by issuing bonds backed by future payments.

The MSA allows states to use their tobacco settlement payments for any purpose. States reported that they used the largest portions of the fiscal year 2004 payments to address budget shortfalls (about 44 percent) and to fund health-related programs (20 percent). Compared with fiscal year 2004, states in fiscal year 2005 expect to decrease allocations to address budget shortfalls (11 percent) and to increase allocations to both health-related programs (32 percent) and debt service on securitized funds (23 percent).

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05312.pdf> [pdf format, 78 pages]

Guaranteed Future Pain and Suffering: The Recent Research on Drug Price Controls

by Derek Hunter

Heritage Foundation, WebMemo #680

March 9, 2005

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's recent survey research, most Americans say they favor price controls on prescription drugs.[1] But the good news is that there is a rich professional literature on the history and the disastrous consequences of price controls.[2] As applied to prescription drugs, recent research shows that price controls would lead to less drug research, fewer new prescription drugs, and reduced availability of prescription drugs. That is a tradeoff that Americans might be less inclined to make.

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/HealthCare/wm680.cfm>

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NEWS

Health Officials Aim To Immunize 44 Million in Americas

Washington – With 35 nations participating, a vaccination blitz is under way in the Western Hemisphere with the goal of immunizing 44 million individuals – young and old – against disease.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Apr/26-254559.html>

Angolan Optimistic About Containing Marburg Virus Outbreak

An outbreak of the killer Marburg virus beyond northern Angola is being successfully controlled thanks to a combination of frontline assistance by international health agencies and "social mobilization," says Angola's top health official.

Speaking April 19 via a video satellite hookup from Luanda, Angolan Vice Minister of Health Dr. Jose Van-Dunem told a workshop in Washington, sponsored by the Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS), he was "hopeful about stopping an outbreak" of the disease because of foreign help and efforts to galvanize public action in a process called "social mobilization."

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200504200175.html>

Research on Mad Cow Disease To Receive Extra U.S. Funding, March 18, 2005

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is directing \$2 million in additional funds to domestic and international research on the cattle disease bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as mad cow disease.

The funding builds on the \$5 million already awarded to selected U.S. colleges for a Food Safety and Response Network to conduct research on controlling major episodes of food-related illnesses, said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, who spoke March 18 at a food safety conference in Washington.

http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_03/alia/a5032207.htm

Bird Flu

Destruction of Asian Flu Virus Nearly Done, United Nations Says, April 15, 2005

Washington – World Health Organization (WHO) officials reported April 15 that they anticipate laboratories

in 16 countries would complete the destruction of potentially lethal Asian flu virus samples sent around the world in a testing proficiency exercise.

<http://tokyo.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20050418-04.html>

Vietnam Reports More Bird Flu Cases in Humans, April 15, 2005

Vietnamese health officials have confirmed eight new human cases of the H5N1 bird flu virus, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) update April 14.

The latest detection of the often-fatal avian influenza strain pushes the total number of cases discovered in Vietnam to 68. Cambodia, with three cases discovered, and Thailand, with 17 humans infected by H5N1, are the only other nations to report cases where people have become ill.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Apr/15-390425.html>

New Analysis Finds Worrisome Gaps In U.S. Planning For An Avian Flu Outbreak Trust for America's Health (TFAH) Washington, April 12, 2005

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) today released a review of U.S. pandemic flu plans that found many planning topics remain under-addressed and additional actions could be taken to improve preparations and reduce the risks posed by an outbreak. Some key areas of concern include vaccine and treatment shortfalls, gaps in containment strategies, limited plans for how to keep the public informed, and inadequate review of state plans for quality and feasibility.

The findings are particularly troubling in light of the severity of the avian influenza virus circulating in Asia. TFAH's analysis follows warnings issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) about the pandemic, "killer flu" threat. Preparations for an outbreak of the avian or pandemic flu are the topic of a Congressional hearing being held today by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

<http://healthyamericans.org/>

HIV/AIDS

United Nations Seeks to Protect Health Workers from HIV/AIDS ILO, April 21, 2005

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are developing guidelines to protect the safety of health workers, an occupation facing great risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS.

ILO reports an April 19-21 meeting of experts to develop practical ways to protect, train and inform health care workers about matters such as HIV screening, confidentiality for AIDS treatment and minimization of

professional risk.

<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/hyper/2005/0421/epf410.htm>

Global Health Service Needed To Beat AIDS, Study Finds

April 20, 2005

The United States should develop a Global Health Service that sends U.S. medical personnel to serve in developing countries, many of which are struggling to combat HIV/AIDS with a limited cadre of trained health care workers.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Apr/21-360826.html>

Link AIDS Fight, Women's Health Issues, World Bank Official Says

April 17, 2005

Washington -- Global approaches to dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and women's and children's health issues should be more closely tied together, says a World Bank African specialist.

Speaking to reporters April 16 during the annual spring meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, World Bank health advisor Elizabeth Lule said African country leaders should be speaking more openly about the "silent epidemic" of women and children dying in childbirth.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200504180076.html>

Media Executives To Expand Campaign Against AIDS

April 13, 2005

Media executives from around the world are boosting their commitment and expanding the activities of the Global Media AIDS Initiative created in early 2004.

At a meeting in Cannes, France, convened April 12 by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, media leaders reported on accomplishments in 2004, including the launch of new public education campaigns in Russia and India, and plans among media programmers from many major companies to promote more HIV messaging in entertainment programming.

<http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/shanghai/pas/hyper/2005/0413/epf307.htm>

New World Bank Grant To Help Fight HIV/AIDS in Central America

Washington -- The World Bank has approved an \$8 million grant to help fight HIV/AIDS in Central America.

The new funds are timely because HIV/AIDS is a growing health issue in Central America, the World Bank said in a March 29 statement.

Jane Armitage, the World Bank's country director for Central America, said that, if unchecked, HIV/AIDS has the "potential to erode human welfare, socio-economic progress, productivity, and social cohesion" in the region.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Apr/01-123224.html>

AIDS Still Destroying Lives and Hopes, Despite U.S. Efforts, March 28, 2005

Washington – Despite progress in the worldwide fight against HIV/AIDS, the disease continues to devastate families, communities and nations around the world, says the coordinator of the U.S. Global AIDS Office, Ambassador Randall L. Tobias.

Speaking at Peace Corps headquarters March 24, Tobias, who coordinates all U.S. programs to fight HIV/AIDS, highlighted some of the early successes of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) while lamenting the continuing impact the AIDS pandemic is having on developing nations. He spoke one day after the release of a progress report to the Congress on PEPFAR.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Mar/28-335103.html>

U.S. AIDS Campaign Reports Success in First Year, March 23, 2005

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) achieved "unprecedented success" during 2004, according to a progress report provided to the U.S. Congress by the global AIDS coordinator of the U.S. Department of State March 23.

"The United States' rapid and strategically targeted deployment of resources has led to remarkable results," according to the report. Treatment programs -- bringing life-saving medicines to people who have never before had access to treatment -- reached more than 150,000 people in the first months after the programs were initiated in June 2004. The report, *Engendering Bold Leadership*, says the effort is on schedule to meet its goal of getting 200,000 people into treatment by June 2005.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2005/Mar/23-669934.html>

New \$4 Million Project Targets HIV/AIDS in Latin America, Africa, March 15, 2005

Washington – The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the International Labor Organization are launching a \$4 million, two-year project aimed at preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in 12 countries in Latin America and Africa.

In a March 15 statement, OPEC's Fund for International Development said the joint initiative aims to "sensitize" government ministries, workers' and employers' organizations, and associated civil-society organizations to the idea that HIV/AIDS is an issue that needs to be discussed and identified in the workplace. The outcomes of the project are expected to be raised awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS, greater support for those infected, and less discrimination among employers against those who have the disease.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Mar/23-640183.html>

U.S. Lawmakers Focus on International AIDS Program, March 2, 2005

Washington – Members of the U.S. Congress remain focused on the 2003 legislation that established the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and some lawmakers believe elements of the policy might need revision.

The House of Representatives Foreign Operations Subcommittee discussed the program March 2 with Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias. His office was created by the 2003 law in order to better manage the emergency aid program enacted at that time and to improve oversight for a wide array of HIV/AIDS programs in which diverse government agencies are involved.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Mar/03-306319.html>

05AD441 HIV/AIDS AND FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY: FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION. Stuart Gillespie and Suneetha Kadiyala. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). March 2005.

HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition insecurity are becoming increasingly entwined in a vicious cycle, with food insecurity heightening susceptibility to HIV exposure and infection, and HIV/AIDS in turn heightening vulnerability to food insecurity. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global crisis with consequences that will be felt for decades to come. Thirty-nine million people are currently infected with the virus, including more than 25 million from Sub-Saharan Africa. More and more the focus of the spread of the disease is turning to other areas, such as parts of Asia and Eastern Europe. The ability of households and communities to ensure their own food and nutrition security is increasingly being threatened. With the most detailed evidence base yet assembled, this review systematically maps our growing knowledge of the interactions between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security, pointing to where and how future policy needs to change to remain relevant and effective.

[Note: Contains copyrighted material.]

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/fpreview/pv07/pv07.pdf> [pdf format, 184 pages] ,

NARCOTICS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**Opium Production Threatens Afghanistan's Future, Officials Say
March 17, 2005**

Washington -- Three key U.S. officials testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations March 17 about what one called "the greatest challenge facing Afghanistan today" -- opium production and trafficking in that country.

Each of the three -- Ambassador Maureen Quinn, Afghanistan coordinator at the Department of State; Mary Beth Long, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics; and Michael A. Braun, chief of operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) -- agreed that the problem threatens Afghanistan's fu-

ture and has a global impact.

http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_03/alia/a5032307.htm

Drug Consumption Knows No Borders, White House Official Says, March 10, 2005

Consumption of narcotics "doesn't know the limits of borders" and "almost all the countries of Europe are concerned about people moving across borders, both moving drugs and coming across borders to consume them," said the director of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy in Washington March 10.

http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_03/alia/a5031104.htm

Empowering Community Coalitions to Prevent Substance Abuse RAND Mar. 10, 2005

Substance abuse exacts a high toll in local communities, and implementing prevention programs can be difficult. A joint project of RAND and the University of South Carolina is trying to aid community coalitions to prevent substance abuse and improve health.

http://www.rand.org/health/projects/substance_abuse/

World Makes Significant Progress Against Narcotics Trafficking March 4, 2005

There has been significant progress globally against narcotics trafficking in 2004, especially in Latin America and Southeast Asia, says Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky.

Despite the successes however, Dobriansky said, "we still have a long way to go and that all nations must re-double their efforts to meet the challenge posed by drug trafficking."

http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_03/alia/a5030402.htm

Full report at <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2005/>.



Growing Up Healthy

An Electronic Journal of
the U.S. Department of State
January 2005

The notion that "children represent the future" is an old one, but it has never been more true than today. Adolescents (defined in this journal as persons between childhood and adults—roughly age 10 to 24) make up fully 20 percent of the world's population, a larger proportion than ever before.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0105/ijge/ijge0105.htm>

Disclaimer:

The opinions expressed in these publications do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Government

Szilágyi Ágota
475-4442

Keve Ildikó
475-4478

Bíró Katalin
475-4514

Staff of the Information Resource Center

e-mail: infousa@usembassy.hu
FAX: 475-47-08