



March 3, 2023

Weekly Situational Awareness Brief

Awareness Topics

2 dead and others treated after exposure to an unknown substance at a senior living facility

"Two people are dead and several others were treated Wednesday after they were exposed to an unknown substance at a senior residential community in Syracuse, New York, authorities said."

Amid extreme weather, congressional investigation sounds alarm on nursing homes' emergency preparedness

"As the latest onslaught of extreme weather affects much of the U.S., Senate Democrats on Thursday released an investigation finding shortcomings in long-term care facilities' emergency preparedness. The report, by the majority staff of the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Special Committee on Aging, examined the impact of the February 2021 winter storm that caused blackouts across Texas. The report cites MarketWatch reporting on the aftermath of that storm, finding that residents had little defense against frigid temperatures in some nursing homes and assisted-living facilities that lacked backup power for their heating systems."

Guidelines Urge Proactive De-Labeling of Penicillin Allergy

“When seeing a patient whose chart notes a penicillin allergy, allergists should be diligent about initiating a conversation, David Khan, MD, told attendees of a presidential plenary session at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) 2023 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. There's a high chance that the patient is not allergic, and often "they are interested in finding out — especially if you tell them the downsides of carrying that label," said Khan, professor of internal medicine and pediatrics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and current AAAAI president.”

FDA Authorizes First Over-the-Counter At-Home Test to Detect Both Influenza and COVID-19 Viruses

“Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the first over-the-counter (OTC) at-home diagnostic test that can differentiate and detect influenza A and B, commonly known as the flu, and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The Lucira COVID-19 & Flu Home Test is a single-use at-home test kit that provides results from self-collected nasal swab samples in roughly 30 minutes.”

Access to Critical Health Information for Children During Emergencies: Emergency Information Forms and Beyond

“Children with chronic medical conditions rely on complex management plans for problems that cause them to be at increased risk for suboptimal outcomes in emergency situations. The emergency information form (EIF) is a medical summary that provides rapid access to critical information to physicians and other members of the health care team so that optimal emergency medical care can be provided. This statement describes an updated approach to EIFs and the information they contain. Essential common data elements are reviewed, integration with electronic health records is discussed, and broadening the rapid availability and use of health data for all children and youth is proposed. A broader approach to data accessibility and use could extend the benefits of rapid access to critical information for all children receiving emergency care as well as further facilitating emergency preparedness during disaster management.”

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