



**April 14, 2023**

## **Weekly Situational Awareness Brief**

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### **Clickable Air Quality and Weather Links**



**UV Index**



**Air Quality Index**



**Asthma Index**



Weather

## Awareness Topics

### **[Stress linked to 37 percent higher chance of cognitive issues after 45](#)**

“People 45 and older who have elevated stress levels have been found to be 37 percent more likely to have cognitive problems, including memory and thinking issues, than those who are not stressed, according to research published in the journal JAMA Network Open.”

### **[Authorities warn public about TikTok Gum Challenge, which sent Mass. children to hospital](#)**

“ORANGE, Mass. — Police sent out a warning advising people of a popular spicy gum TikTok challenge that sent several Franklin County children to a hospital with pepper burn injuries on Tuesday afternoon.”

### **[EPA Proposes New Standards to Protect Public Health, Reduce Exposure to Ethylene Oxide Pollution](#)**

“WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing new health protections to reduce exposure to Ethylene Oxide (EtO), including more stringent air emissions standards and additional protections for workers who are exposed to the gas used to sterilize medical devices and certain spices. If finalized, EPA’s proposals are estimated to cut EtO emissions to the air from commercial sterilization facilities by 80% per year and apply more protective standards to control those emissions under the law. Together, these proposals will provide a comprehensive approach to addressing EtO pollution concerns, including cancer risk, that will increase safety in communities and for workers while providing a path to maintain a robust supply chain for sterilized medical equipment.”

## **The State of Health Surveillance Across the Public Safety Sector**

“Surveillance is the cornerstone of public health practice, including in occupational safety and health (OSH). OSH surveillance systems have the ability to generate data that drives decision making and action.<sup>1, 2</sup> There are multiple steps in a surveillance system including timely and accurate data collection; data quality monitoring; data management; data analysis; interpretation of results; and dissemination and application of information.<sup>1</sup> OSH researchers have used surveillance systems to improve understanding of occupational exposures, injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. These systems have also contributed to improved injury prevention and intervention efforts. However, more comprehensive surveillance systems are needed to fully understand and improve OSH among the public safety workforces.”

## **Wheat disease's global spread concerns researchers**

“Genomic analysis reveals that the wheat blast fungus spread independently from South America to two other continents. Could the next pandemic hit global food supplies? Scientists warn that a fungal pathogen that threatens wheat production in South America is poised to go global. Outbreaks of the ‘wheat blast’ pathogen *Magnaporthe oryzae* in parts of Africa and Asia originated from a single family of the fungus that was imported from South America, researchers report on 11 April in *PLoS Biology*<sup>1</sup>. Scientists warn that this lineage could strike elsewhere, or develop worrying traits such as resistance to fungicides and the ability to affect other important food crops.”

## **Biden-Harris Administration Designates Fentanyl Combined with Xylazine as an Emerging Threat to the United States**

“Xylazine’s growing role in overdose deaths nationwide prompts Administration to make this designation for the first time in U.S. history. Today, Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), has officially designated fentanyl adulterated or associated with xylazine as an emerging threat to the United States. Xylazine is a non-opioid tranquilizer approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for veterinary use but not human use. This designation comes after careful review of the impact of xylazine on the opioid crisis, including its growing role in overdose deaths in every region of the United States.”

## **Remember the '80s? So does the computer system Minnesota counties rely on. It needs updates just like roads and bridges.**

“If you could travel back in time to 1989 and stop into a county office, you would find staff using MAXIS, a new, whiz-bang computer system to determine eligibility for assistance programs. No time travel is necessary, however, because that same system the state launched in 1989 is still what our counties must use today.”

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