



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for July 22, 2021

'Superbug' fungus spread in two US cities Nursing home and hospitals involved

(AP) U.S. health officials said Thursday they now have evidence of an untreatable fungus spreading in two hospitals and a nursing home. The "superbug" outbreaks were reported in a Washington, D.C. nursing home and at two Dallas-area hospitals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported. A handful of the patients had invasive fungal infections that were impervious to all three major classes of medications.

The fungus, [Candida auris](#), is a harmful form of yeast that is considered dangerous to hospital and nursing home patients with serious medical problems. It is most deadly when it enters the bloodstream, heart or brain. Outbreaks in health care facilities have been spurred when the fungus spread through patient contact or on contaminated surfaces.

Learn more: <https://apnews.com/article/business-science-health-f2c6f1712e7d6907e543bb9e3dc53d2d>

Massive internet outage: FedEx, Delta and McDonald's go down

(CNN) A sweeping internet disruption on Thursday briefly took out a wide range of major corporate websites — from FedEx and Delta Air Lines to HSBC and McDonald's.

The outages coincided with reports of system disruptions from Akamai ([AKAM](#)) and Oracle ([ORCL](#)), two key providers of [internet infrastructure services](#). Oracle said Thursday afternoon that its outage was the result of Akamai's service disruption. Akamai's Edge DNS service helps route web browsers to their correct destinations and also provides a security service.

Later Thursday afternoon, [Akamai explained](#) that the outage was caused by a "software configuration update triggered a bug in the DNS system." It confirmed that the disruption lasted "up to an hour" and was not the result of a cyberattack.

This is the third major internet outage in two months, and the second involving Akamai.

Full story: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/22/tech/website-outages-akamai-oracle-disruptions/index.html>

US renews 'public health emergency' due to Covid-19 pandemic

(CNN) The United States remains under a state of "public health emergency" due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On Monday, US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra [signed a renewal of the determination](#) that a "public health emergency" exists due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The determination was last renewed in April and was set to expire -- as it is up for renewal every 90 days. This latest renewal is effective starting Tuesday and will continue for another 90 days.

A [public health emergency declaration](#), which can last for the duration of the emergency or 90 days, allows for the emergency use authorization of vaccines, the access of certain funds to address the emergency, and the deployment of military trauma care providers, among other factors.

Full story: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/20/health/covid-19-public-health-emergency-renewal-bn/index.html>

Gov. Beshear reports 933 new COVID-19 cases; 6.63% positivity rate

(WKYT) - Governor Beshear reported 933 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, bringing the state total to 473,503 cases. The governor says the state is seeing a 6.63% positivity rate. Of Thursday's new cases, 220 are in kids 18 or younger. There were two new COVID-19 related deaths reported on Thursday. That brings the state total to 7,308.

As of Thursday, 423 people are hospitalized for COVID-19 related reasons, 124 are in the ICU, and 50 are on ventilators. The governor reported 2,256,171 Kentuckians have been vaccinated.

Story link: <https://www.wkyt.com/app/2021/07/22/gov-beshear-reports-933-new-covid-19-cases-663-positivity-rate/>

Related story – Beshear not ruling out more COVID-19 mandates, says most new cases are unvaccinated people

Read more: <https://www.wkyt.com/app/2021/07/22/watch-live-gov-beshear-holds-another-team-kentucky-update/>

Note: Gov. Beshear says he will provide weekly updates on various issues on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

The Lambda Variant Of The Coronavirus: What You Should Know

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/07/22/1019293200/the-lambda-variant-coronavirus-what-you-should-know>

Vaccinations rise in some states with soaring infections

(AP) Vaccinations are beginning to rise in some states where COVID-19 cases are soaring, White House officials said Thursday in a sign that the summer surge is getting the attention of vaccine-hesitant Americans as hospitals in the South are being overrun with patients.

Coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients told reporters that several states with the highest proportions of new infections have seen residents get vaccinated at higher rates than the nation as a whole. Officials cited Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri and Nevada as examples.

Full AP story: <https://apnews.com/article/covid-vaccinations-states-infection-rates-d877547c26b0b3982c0d802339cd5219>

Hospital lobbies for COVID-19 vaccine requirements for healthcare workers

An increasing number of health systems are mandating COVID-19 vaccines for employees as the nation sees cases and hospitalizations continue to rise.

Just this week, Arizona's largest private employer, Banner Health, announced that it, too, would require employees to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine by the fall. Banner Health [joins a growing number](#) of hospitals and providers taking this step, including Houston Methodist, Henry Ford Health System and Mass General Brigham. Some of the facilities making the requirement have moved ahead with firing employees that don't comply.

Due to the risks of the disease, AHA "strongly urges the vaccination of all health care personnel," but its most recent statement does not ask its members to require the vaccine. AHA said if providers mandate vaccines they should also make sure to provide exemptions for medical reasons, including those backed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

On Wednesday, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, who also advises the White House on pandemic response, said in light of the delta variant vaccinated people [may want to consider](#) wearing a mask indoors, particularly in regions of the country with high levels of disease. He does anticipate local authorities may require masks again due to the uptick in cases but doesn't expect lockdowns or a national mask mandate.

Story: <https://www.healthcarediver.com/news/hospital-lobbies-back-covid-19-vaccine-requirements-for-healthcare-workers/603782/>

CDC: Number of flu, other virus cases reach 'historic' lows in 2020-21

https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2021/07/22/flu-respiratory-viruses-cases-cdc/9151626969092/

As extreme heat becomes more common, ERs turn to body bags to save lives

(NBC) As a deadly [heat wave scorched the Pacific Northwest](#) last month, overwhelming hospital emergency rooms in a region unaccustomed to triple-digit temperatures, doctors resorted to a grim but practical tool to save lives: human body bags filled with ice and water.

Officials at hospitals in Seattle and Renton, Washington, said that as more people arrived experiencing potentially fatal heatstroke, and with cooling catheters and even ice packs in short supply, they used the novel treatment to quickly immerse and cool several elderly people.

Zippering heatstroke patients into ice-filled body bags worked so well that it could become a go-to treatment in a [world increasingly altered by climate change](#), said Dr. Alex St. John, an emergency physician at UW Medicine's Harborview Medical Center.

Full story: <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/extreme-heat-becomes-more-common-ers-turn-body-bags-save-n1274675>

California's largest utility aims to bury 10K miles of power lines to prevent fires

(UPI) The largest utility in California is planning to bury 10,000 miles of power lines in an effort to prevent fires in the drought-stricken state. Pacific Gas & Electric said the move is intended to "further harden its system" to prevent accidental outbreaks of wildfires. Several fires in California have been attributed to PG&E equipment over the years. Story: https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2021/07/22/pg-e-bury-power-lines-california-wildfires/4971626967934/

CIA Director Renews Efforts To Solve 'Havana Syndrome' Mystery

(NPR) CIA Director William Burns says he has redoubled the agency's efforts to uncover the cause of [Havana syndrome](#) — the mysterious set of ailments that has afflicted more than 200 U.S. officials and family members around the world.

That includes the assignment of a senior officer who once led the hunt for Osama bin Laden to lead the investigation and tripling the size of a medical team involved in the probe, Burns told NPR on Thursday in his first sit-down interview since being confirmed as the agency's chief in March.

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/22/1013402176/cia-director-says-he-is-escalating-efforts-to-solve-havana-syndrome-mystery>

How hackers can control your phone through a missed call & expose your info – even if you never click on encrypted link

(NewsBreak) EXPERTS are warning against a new severe threat to privacy and data security on smartphones as hackers use tricks such as a missed call to control devices.

Victims may be completely unaware that they were [exposed to the hack](#) and never even notice there is suspicious behavior on their phones.

[The cyberattack uses](#) a technique known as a zero-click hack which does not require the victim to click on an encrypted link to be caught.

The hack can be carried out without any voluntary action from the victim, unlike the typical cyber-attack where traps are laid out to trick people into clicking on a vulnerable URL or downloading an attachment with embedded malware.

[The zero-click hack](#) instead takes advantage of flaws in your device. It uses these flaws to sidestep the data verification generally needed to get into a phone.

Learn more: <https://www.newsbreak.com/news/2316954016888/how-hackers-can-control-your-phone-through-a-missed-call-expose-your-info-even-if-you-never-click-on-encrypted-link>

NSA Cybersecurity Workforce Certificate Program Recruiting Health Care Professionals

The University of Louisville is launching a new NSA Cybersecurity Pathway Program. UofL is leading a coalition with five different schools to implement a national cybersecurity in health care curriculum.

This pilot program, sponsored by the National Security Agency, intends to recruit about 200 participants within its first year. The program is working to recruit transitioning military, veterans (including current U.S. Armed Reserves and National Guard members) and first responders (i.e., law enforcement, health care workers and IT specialists within health care) looking to enhance their skill set or possibly make a career change. UofL is offering \$1,500 scholarships for these specified participants. There are 40 new scholarships for the cohort starting on November 22, 2021, that will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

Participants will have the opportunity to earn industry badges from big tech companies such as Google, Microsoft and IBM.

Seats are filling up fast, so apply today for free!

- [Brochure](#)
- [More Information & Apply Today](#)

The Khref Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of [Emergency Preparedness Updates available here](#). If you would like to add or delete, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact Preparedness@kyha.com (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and Khref are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.