Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation
Emergency Preparedness Update
for December 19, 2021

OSHA vaccine mandate penalties to start Jan. 10

(AP) The Occupational Health and Safety Administration said Saturday that it would not issue citations tied to its coronavirus vaccination mandate before Jan. 10, so that companies have time to adjust to and implement the requirements.

The federal agency separately said there would be no citations of companies regarding its testing requirements before Feb. 9.

The announcement came after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth District in Cincinnati decided on Friday that the mandate for large employers could go forward, reversing a previous court decision made after 27 Republican-led states, conservative groups, business associations and some individual companies challenged the mandate. Read more: https://news360.com/article/570857038

Retiring NIH director Francis Collins warns of enormous omicron wave

U.S. could see 1 million cases per day

(NPR) After spending more than 12 years as director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins is retiring this weekend. But he's no less worried about the public health agency's latest pandemic curveball.

As the omicron variant threatens record-breaking rates of infections in the U.S., Collins departs with a warning. If Americans don't take COVID-19 seriously, the country could see 1 million daily infections, he said.

"We cannot afford to let down our guard," Collins told NPR's Scott Detrow in an interview with *Weekend Edition*.

Podcast & full story: https://www.npr.org/2021/12/19/1065575540/nih-director-francis-collins-omicron

Related story **- Omicron 'is going to take over' this winter, and Fauci says Americans should brace for a 'tough few weeks to months'**

Learn more: https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/19/health/us-coronavirus-sunday/index.html

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Omicron evades Moderna vaccine too, study suggests, but boosters help

(NPR) There's more mixed news about the power of vaccines to protect people against the omicron variant — this time about the Moderna vaccine.

A preliminary study made public Wednesday studied blood samples in the lab from 30 people who had gotten two Moderna shots, and it found that the antibodies in their blood are at least about 50 times less effective at neutralizing the omicron variant of the coronavirus.

Previous research had indicated the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is also less protective against omicron.

"The antibodies that people make after they get the standard two inoculations of the Moderna mRNA vaccine are 50 times less effective against omicron than they are against the original form of the virus," says David Montefiori, a virologist at Duke University who helped conduct the study.

But there was good news too. An additional 17 people in the study had received a Moderna booster. And the antibodies in their blood were highly effective at blocking the omicron variant — essentially about as effective as they are at blocking the delta variant, Montefiori says.

Full story: https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/12/15/1064202754/omicron-evades-moderna-vaccine-too-study-suggests-but-boosters-help

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First case of omicron variant confirmed in Indiana

Learn more: https://www.wdrb.com/news/first-case-of-omicron-variant-confirmed-in-indiana/article_40a6711e-60ef-11ec-897f-5f8ae3143572.html

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Generators Keep the Lights On—but the Cost Can Be Deadly

Yearlong investigation looks at difficulty getting industry to make them safer

Learn more: http://newser.com/s314617

Extreme Weather Makes Old Storm Drains Lethal

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Anti-5G Pendants Turn Out to Be Radioactive
Dutch nuclear officials warn against wearing pendants, bracelets

(Newser) People who wear “negative ion” pendants to protect themselves from 5G waves have gone out of the nonexistent fire and into the very real frying pan. There’s zero scientific evidence that 5G cellular service, which isn’t especially different from 3G and 4G, is at all harmful. But a batch of “quantum pendants” were flagged by the Dutch Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ANVS) as radioactive, the *Guardian* reports. Walking around in a world with 5G towers won’t hurt you. But wearing a radioactive pendant could, and the ANVS is recommending wearers take them off.

The agency wasn’t seeking to stoke fears and noted that the products are not exactly made out of plutonium. The warning said prolonged use could cause tissue damage and skin redness. “Someone who wears a product of this kind for a prolonged period (a year, 24 hours a day) could expose themselves to a level of radiation that exceeds” stringent Dutch standards, the ANVS warning reads. Other products included in the warning are an “Energy Armor” sleep mask and a Magnetix Wellness bracelet for children, the BBC reports. Dutch authorities have been exasperated with 5G conspiracy theorists for a while now. In 2020, at least 16 cell towers were damaged or destroyed in the Netherlands by people who had bought into claims that the waves are harmful. (Read more radioactive stories.) Story link: http://newser.com/s314656

Link Between Ambulance Calls and Air Pollution Explored

On days when the levels of air pollution are high, ambulance call-outs for heart attacks were found to be more common, revealed new research presented at Euroanaesthesia, the annual meeting of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC). A better understanding of these links could help hospitals better plan for climate-change related changes in weather conditions.

n the first study of its kind in Europe, Sabine Weingast and colleagues at the Department of Anaesthesiology, School of Medicine, Technical University of Munich, Germany, looked at the links between call outs of EMS (ambulances assisted by a doctor) for acute coronary syndrome (ACS) and weather conditions and air pollution levels.

ACS is umbrella term for heart attacks and unstable angina, which can lead to a heart attack. It is one of the most common causes of death in Germany and of EMS call outs, making it a good marker of pressure on the health service.

Story link: https://news360.com/article/570874718

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 added or deleted, 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.