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Resilience Report

Brief insights and the latest innovations in emergency management and health security.

In this week's Resilience Report, we take a deep dive into public health communications as monkeypox continues to spread. We also provide some news about COVID-19, including a new immunity test, the emergency response to the KY flooding, and terrorism updates in the U.S. and around the world.



Floods Devastate Kentucky

- The emergency response following [floods](#) that killed 38 people in Eastern KY has turned to [long-term recovery](#). In addition to federal and state assistance, residents are [relying on each other](#) through local networks and mutual aid groups. One factor hindering the recovery is that almost [no one in KY has flood insurance](#), which may force residents to rely on private charity.
- In addition to the recent flooding, the Eastern KY region has also been hit with ice storms and tornadoes this year. Here's why the area is unusually [prone to weather events](#) and is especially vulnerable to floods.
- In addition to helping residents recover, one organization is also supporting affected [animals](#). The United Pet Fund is providing dog and cat food and other pet supplies to the region to reduce the burden on pet owners.

COVID-19 Plateau and an Immunity Test

- COVID-19 may have hit a [plateau](#) in the U.S., as hospitalizations and deaths have remained consistent over the past month, but there are still uncertainties about the trajectory of the virus.
- As students prepare to head back to the classroom, the long-term impacts of the nation's response to COVID-19 are surfacing, including concerns that high school graduates may not be [ready for college](#). Meanwhile, officials across the country are issuing new guidance for schools, including in [VT](#) and [Philadelphia](#).

- Researchers have developed a [test](#) that measures an individual's level of immunity, which could help determine the most effective precautions.

Drone Strike Abroad and Domestic Terrorism in the U.S.

- Earlier this month, the President Biden announced that a U.S. military drone strike [killed](#) the top Al Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahri. Here's what that means for the [terrorist organization](#). The drone strike has the industry talking about whether the killing [make Americans safer](#) or if it will [incite attacks](#) from other terrorist groups.
- Although the threat from foreign terrorist organizations remains consistent, FBI director Christopher Wray testified last week that the [criminal and national security threats](#) to the nation continue to surge.
- Extremist groups are using [cryptocurrencies](#) to receive donations and payments and to support their organizations. The anonymity of cryptocurrencies makes them an [attractive financial alternative](#) for domestic extremists.



Every issue, we'll dedicate space for a topic that we think is especially important for emergency management professionals to read. Amid the ongoing COVID-19 response, an outbreak of monkeypox in multiple non-endemic countries, including the U.S., has public health and emergency management officials mobilizing to combat the spread of the virus. Developing and distributing factual information to inform constituents of what monkeypox is, how it spreads, and steps people can take to protect themselves is critical. With misinformation and stigmatization currently hindering some messaging efforts, officials continue to question and refine how best to talk about monkeypox.

- There is a [delicate balance between targeting messaging](#) and interventions to populations disproportionately impacted by monkeypox based on case clusters versus characterizing populations as particularly vulnerable to being infected by monkeypox when the virus can impact anyone. Public health agencies are still developing best practices for how to express the information.
- Currently available statistics show most individuals currently infected with monkeypox worldwide are gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM). However, crafting messaging solely based on current statistics is harmful for many reasons: a) it suggests that individuals who are not MSM are not at risk of infection, b) it suggests monkeypox is a sexually transmitted infection that can only be spread through sexual contact, c) it places the LGBTQ community at risk of anti-LGBTQ violence, hate crimes, and rhetoric, and d) it creates a [stigma](#) that could

prevent those infected with monkeypox from getting tested and seeking treatment.

- 82 countries that have historically not reported monkeypox infections have reported over 31,425 cases as of [8/9/22](#) amidst a [growing discontent over the name of the disease](#). The name may play into racial stereotypes and wrongly provide an impression that the infection is transmitted by monkeys. While the WHO said weeks ago it would look to rename the virus, the issue faces ongoing challenges.

Combatting Misinformation and Stigma

How can you make sense of all the conflicting guidance and adequately lead outreach and education efforts? Here are three recommendations for state and local health officials from CONSTANT's Public Health experts.

- **Use an activity-based framework to provide information about risk.** Risk for being impacted by monkeypox is not determined by affiliation to particular population groups. Rather, risk is dependent on the activities an individual engages in and the behavior of the people around them. Utilizing an [activities-based framework](#) to inform constituents of risk includes describing activities that can increase the risk of being infected with monkeypox and how it is transmitted.
- **Acknowledge unknowns and remain truthful.** As reinforced during COVID-19, public health messaging is challenging, particularly when there are still many unknowns. Public agencies have been [criticized for inconsistent and unclear messaging](#) about masking during COVID-19, which led to some being wary of masking guidance or not taking it seriously when it changed. Building off these lessons, entities should be prepared to provide honest and truthful guidance while also acknowledging that information is still forthcoming and may change. Some agencies may choose to admit what they do not know but are seeking to find out.
- **Leverage partnerships with community groups to support and/or strengthen public information campaigns.** Many jurisdictions collaborated with their community partners on an unprecedented level during the COVID-19 response. Working with community groups to both inform messaging and share information surrounding monkeypox can help to reach more constituents. Leveraging these relationships for monkeypox public messaging may include hosting co-led informational community meetings, jointly developing PSAs and toolkits, having representatives provide an in-person presence at gatherings, etc. Listening sessions can provide a two-way educational approach with public agencies listening to and learning from the public.



Pumpkin Spice

- Everyone remain calm. [Pumpkin Spice Oreos](#) are back for the first time in 5 years. The controversial flavor is back at [Dunkin'](#) and [Starbucks](#) too. We also have the latest on the [best, worse, and weirdest pumpkin spice products](#) to get you pump-ed for fall.

It's Not Retirement

- Serena Williams, one of tennis's all-time greats, announced this week in Vogue that she is ['evolving away' from tennis](#). The legend is starting her farewell tour on her own terms, [re-writing the book on retirement](#) for everyone.

Space or...Sausage?

- Space nerds are having a blast analyzing the [latest data](#) from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) with [groundbreaking images and discoveries](#) in its first weeks of activity. A French physicist took advantage of the fanfare to [pass off a picture of chorizo](#) as a JWST image as a joke. We are not amused.



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