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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

17 JUNE – 24 JUNE 2022

EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCHES €156 MILLION INITIATIVE ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN THE EU

On Wednesday (22 June), the European Commission launched a new initiative to support 27 EU countries in reducing the burden and health debt linked to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) by addressing the leading causes of avoidable premature death.

The new initiative, with a budget of €156 million, aims to identify effective actions and the available legal and financial supporting tools across five main areas: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, mental health and neurological disorders, as well as their factors. To do so, the Commission has published a guiding document on the “Healthier Together: EU Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Initiative.”

As stated by the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides, „NCDs represent 80% of the disease burden in the EU, placing considerable pressure on our healthcare systems. The initiative is an important step to continue tackling them in a systematic and comprehensive manner. By forging this path to better prevention, detection and treatment, together with the Member States and stakeholders, we continuing building the foundations of our strong European Health Union, whilst delivering on our key initiatives in the area of health, such as Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.”

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/health/latest-updates/healthier-together-commissions-launches-eu156-million-initiative-non-communicable-diseases-europe-2022-06-22_en

TWO EU INSTITUTIONS REACHED POLITICAL AGREEMENT ON THE SERIOUS CROSS-BORDER THREATS TO HEALTH REGULATION

On Thursday (23 June), the European Parliament and Council agreed on the Proposal for a Regulation on the Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health. The new rules are introducing a comprehensive legal framework to manage joint action on preparedness, early warning mechanisms, surveillance, as well as risk assessment and response.

The abovementioned Regulation is the final pillar of the foundations of the European Health Union, which sets out rules for a flexible, integrated and vastly improved health surveillance system. At the same time, it increases the current capacity of the Union and its states to perform more accurate risk assessments while taking targeted actions of response – including joint procurement of medical products.

It is also worth mentioning that the agreement on this Regulation follows the recent reinforcement of mandates for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Nevertheless, before entering into force, the new law will have to be formally adapted by both the Council and the European Parliament.

Source: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220620IPR33412/european-health-union-deal-on-stronger-cross-border-cooperation>

UK HEALTH SECURITY AGENCY: POLIOVIRUS DETECTED IN LONDON SEWAGE

The virus has been detected in samples of sewage collected in the UK's capital between February and May. According to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), no cases of paralysis have been reported so far, but investigations are being carried out to determine potential community transmission.

It is worth mentioning that the poliovirus detected in the sewage, called vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (VDPV2) is not identical to wild polio, which decimated the human population over 20 years ago. Moreover, such a virus is rather rare and the overall risk to the public remains low.

Simultaneously, the UKHSA is calling the public to check if they are up to date as regards their polio vaccines. This applies particularly to the caregivers of children, who possibly could have missed the injection, as the polio virus affects mostly children – according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Though the Global Polio Eradication Institute has pointed out that immunization coverage against polio in UK's capital is around 86%, it is committed to increase the vaccine coverage in the country.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/poliovirus-detected-in-sewage-from-north-and-east-london>

Thank you for your attention!

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