



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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THERE IS A SILVER LINING TO TRUMP'S DISASTROUS DECISION TO PULL OUT OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Recently, Donald Trump announced that the United States would be pulling out of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Today's announcement kicks off a multiyear process that will not see the US fully withdrawn from the agreement until November 2020, the same month as the next US presidential election. During that time, the president said he would try to cut a new deal on climate change with world leaders.

[Read More on UN Dispatch](#)



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HUMANS ACCIDENTALLY CREATED A PROTECTIVE BUBBLE AROUND EARTH

A pair of NASA space probes have detected an artificial bubble around Earth that forms when radio communications from the ground interact with high-energy radiation particles in space, the agency announced this week. The bubble forms a protective barrier around Earth, shielding the planet from potentially dangerous space weather, like solar flares and other ejections from the sun. Earth already has its own protective bubble, a magnetosphere stretched by powerful solar winds. The artificial bubble that NASA found is an accident, an unintended result of the interplay between human technology and nature. [Read More on The Atlantic](#)





Mosquitos That Spread Zika Virus Could Simultaneously Transmit Other Diseases

A new study led by Colorado State University researchers found that *Aedes aegypti*, the primary mosquito that carries Zika virus, might also transmit chikungunya and dengue viruses with one bite. The findings shed new light on what's known as a coinfection, which scientists said is not yet fully understood and may be fairly common in areas experiencing outbreaks. "There's no strong evidence that coinfection of humans results in infections that are clinically more severe," said Claudia Ruckert, postdoctoral researcher. But findings are contradictory.

[Read More on Science Daily](#)

Deaths From Chagas Disease Underreported

Chagas disease, affecting millions of people in Central and South America, is classified as one of the 17 most important neglected diseases by the World Health Organization. Now, researchers have found that even the non-symptomatic stage of Chagas infection, which can last for many years, more than doubles a person's risk of death. In the new work, Ligia Capuani, of the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and colleagues retrospectively studied 2,842 Chagas-positive and 5,684 Chagas-negative blood donors in Sao Paulo from 1996 to 2000. Since blood donors are routinely screened for symptoms of active Chagas disease, it was assumed that blood samples testing positive for the parasite were from individuals in the indeterminate phase of the disease. Of those who tested positive for Chagas, 159 (5.6%) died during the course of the study, whereas only 103 (1.8%) who tested negative for the disease died, representing a more than doubling of the overall death risk.

[Read More on Science Daily](#)



G. Ham



8 Takeaways from the 70th World Health Assembly

This year's World Health Assembly (WHA) was a whirlwind of activity, marked by fast-paced discussions. Issues were not just confined to the plenary and committee meetings held by the World Health Organization. Attendees, including the most high-level ones such as WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, juggled their schedule, going between the official sessions and the side events taking place within and outside the Palais des Nations. The main takeaways of the assembly are the WHO director-general election outcome, a 3 percent increase in member states contributions, a focus on implementation of Anti-Microbial Resistance action plans and more. [Read More on Devex](#)



Climate Change Has Created A New Generation of Sex-trafficking Victims In the Philippines

When Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013 it was, at the time, the strongest storm in history ever to make landfall. Haiyan displaced more than 4 million people and nearly wiped out the coastal city of Tacloban. An underground economy took root as women and girls were sold for food and scarce aid supplies, or trafficked into forced labor and sex work by recruiters offering jobs and scholarships. Kristine says she was sold to men every night; some of the men were foreign-aid workers, she believes. The men raped her, and took graphic pictures and videos. [Read More on QZ](#)

Tracking Climate Change Through A Mushroom's Diet

The mushroom *Amanita thiersii* dots American lawns from Texas to Illinois, a small white button on the grass's emerald expanse. Unlike similar mushrooms, *A. thiersii* does not live in a symbiotic relationship with nearby trees; instead, it gets its energy by feasting on the corpses of its neighbors—that is, dead grasses. That predilection means that the mushroom is uniquely suited to report on what those grasses were like before they perished, according to a new paper in *Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences*. The reason it might be possible to trace climate change in grass at all is because plants can be distinguished by the different ways they handle photosynthesis. The new paper looks at two methods of photosynthesis in particular: C3 and C4, named after the structure of the molecules the methods produce. [Read More on The Atlantic](#)



Another Deadly Effect of Climate Change: The Spread of Deadly Diseases

One of the most potentially deadly effects of climate change is the increase in the spread of dangerous epidemics and the risk of a global pandemic. As the Earth's climate alters, we are seeing changes in where and how humans live; these changes increase the risk that deadly diseases will emerge and spread more rapidly. The link between climate and disease is most often identified through the spread of disease vectors such as mosquitoes. As areas warm, habitats for insects — mosquitoes and deer ticks, for example — expand, exposing new populations to new disease threats. As Maryn McKenna recently explained in the *New York Times Magazine*, the approximately one degree Celsius increase in average temperatures the planet has experienced is “changing the numbers and distribution of the insect intermediaries that carry diseases to people.”

[Read More on Washington Post](#)



Alternative Climate Facts

Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the most comprehensive climate deal in the history of the planet. In a speech in the White House Rose Garden, President Trump announced the United States would walk away from the landmark agreement, signed in late 2015 by 195 nations, calling it a bad deal that prioritized foreign countries' success at the expense of American workers. Trump spent the majority of his 28-minute speech talking about economics, but when he did talk about the Paris agreement, he was almost entirely wrong. VICE News fact-checked some of his claims. One of his claims were, "As the Wall Street Journal wrote this morning... the reality is that withdrawing is in America's economic interest and won't matter much to the climate." However, if the U.S. doesn't drastically reduce its current carbon output, it'll be responsible for an additional 0.3 degrees Celsius of global warming by 2100.

[Read More on Vice](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

Japan Violating Anti-Smoking Treaty By Bowing to Tobacco Industry

The government's move to ban smoking in indoor public places ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics has hit a snag due to staunch resistance from lawmakers in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party trumpeting smokers' rights and the need to protect the tobacco industry. But if Japan stalls in its attempts to push anti-smoking legislation through the Diet, it could be "singled out" for violating an international treaty on tobacco control, to which it is a signatory, warns a health governance expert at a United Nations University-linked research institute.

[Read More on Japan Times](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH:

First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The Role of Racism In The Health and Well-Being of Indigenous People in Canada

While stories about Indigenous health are frequently marked by an absence of context, they can also be characterized by the presence of racist stereotypes and inaccuracies pervasive in mainstream Canadian narratives. These include the idea that genetic predeterminations — as opposed to factors like access to the social determinants of health — are responsible for the health inequities experienced by Indigenous peoples and other racialized groups.

[Read More on Wellesley Institute](#)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Food-related mortality rates will far exceed all other climate-related human health effects.”

Sherilee Harper, University of Guelph professor of Population Medicine, and now managing a major federal grant to work with First Nations Communities.

[Read More on The Medium](#)

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
June– Sept	Aboriginal Conferences	Canada	http://aboriginalconferences.ca/
June 12-23	McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Disease and Global Health	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/
June 12-16	Global Health Diagnostics	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/global-health-diagnostics/
July 25-27	Pedagogy For The Anthropocene: Re-rooting Academic Knowledge in Nature	Toronto Canada	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfofqDbn3qR-F5XpU09k_mhfkPp6SOj3w4-vQsouYH1oVuYnQ/viewform?c=0&w=1
Oct 29-31	Canadian Conference for Global Health	Montreal Canada	https://www.ccgh-csih.ca/ccgh2015/index



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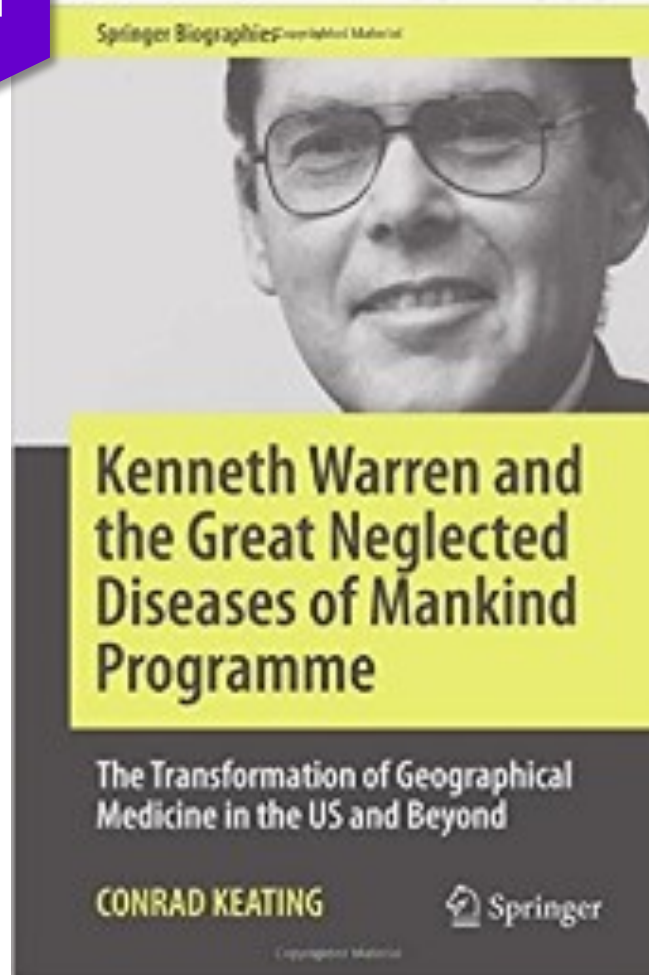


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NEW BOOK: WHEN BIG MEN RULED GLOBAL HEALTH - A CAUTIONARY TALE

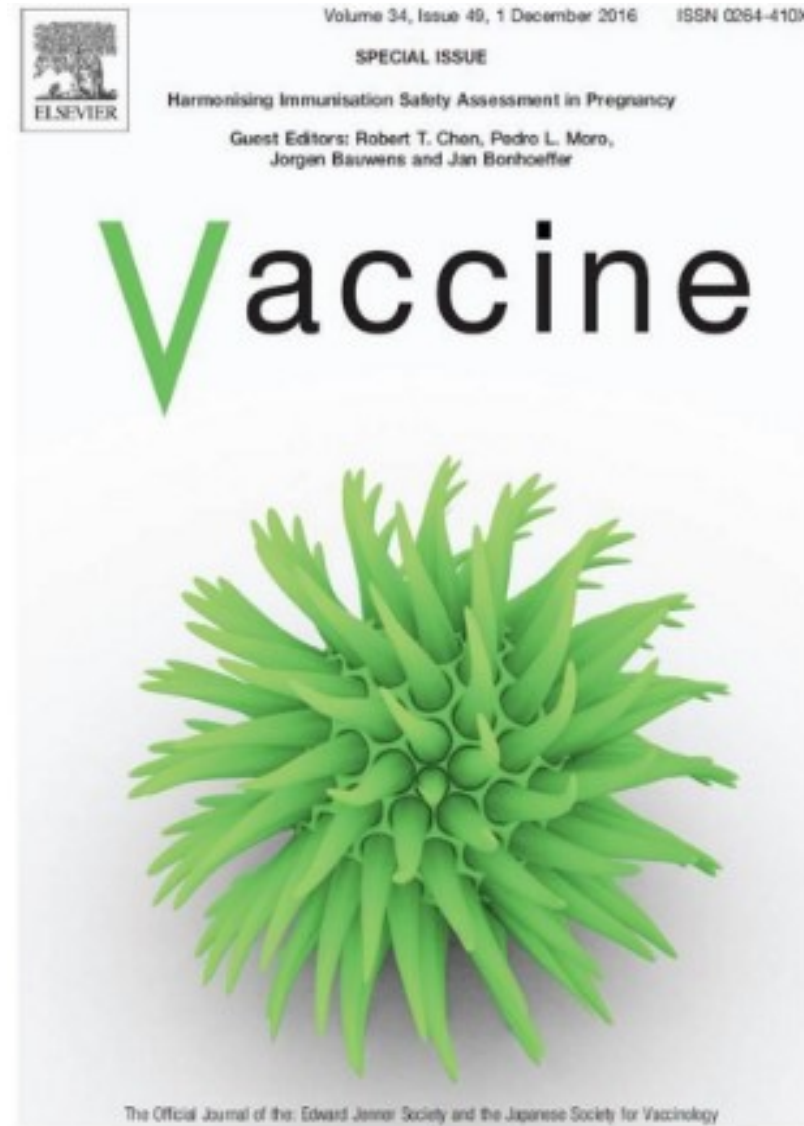


There was a time in world health efforts when Big Men (yes, all men, European and North American) had Big Ideas, backed by money and power. They had offices in places like the World Bank, UNICEF, and the Rockefeller Foundation. And they made scientific and programmatic decisions, financing and executing schemes that affected the survival and lives of hundreds of millions of people. When their decisions were sagacious and well executed the results could be breathtaking. Millions of children might in a single year be spared death from measles, for example, thanks to a targeted immunization campaign. But when any of these Big Men refused to back off from bad ideas, or confused their own aggrandizement and egos with the missions they were trying to accomplish, tragedies often unfolded. A WHO leader might, for example, be so rigidly bound to a set of programmes that he could not see or respond to the threat of a new disease like AIDS.

[Read More on The Lancet](#)



BUILDING NEXT GENERATION IMMUNIZATION CHARTS



Three international experts on vaccine delivery served as guest editors for the special issue featuring 31 publications authored by an all-star lineup of vaccine and vaccine supply chain experts.

This special issue of the journal *Vaccine* entitled [Building Next-Generation Immunization Supply Chains](#) gives vaccine supply chains the time in the limelight they deserve.

[Read More on Science Daily](#)



TRUMP'S NEW ABORTION RESTRICTION WILL AFFECT \$9 BILLION IN U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH MONEY



The Trump administration recently released new anti-abortion rules — including a policy name change — that will apply to almost \$9 billion in global health funding, including a massive HIV/AIDS prevention program.

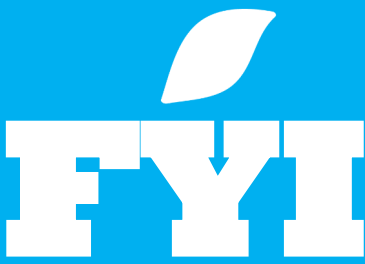
The rules — dubbed the "Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance" plan, and approved by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson — restrict any foreign nongovernmental organization receiving US global health aid from using any of their *other* funding to "perform or actively promote abortions as a method of family planning," according to a senior administration official who briefed the press on the plan.

"Referrals for the termination of a pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, or endangerment of the life of the woman are not prohibited under this policy," the official added.

The Tillerson plan is a dramatic expansion of the Mexico City Policy, a Reagan-era restriction that's since been suspended by every Democrat in the White House and revived by every Republican. President Donald Trump [signed a memo](#) bringing back the restrictions on Jan. 23.

This expanded policy newly affects several agencies, including the Department of Defense, and programs like the President's Malaria Initiative and PEPFAR, short for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Both programs were started by George W. Bush.

PEPFAR accounts for \$6 billion of the \$8.8 billion in funds affected by the new policy, according to the administration official. [Read More on BuzzFeed](#)



INSIDE THE SYALBARD GLOBAL SEED VAULT



The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a safeguard of the world's most important crops, flooded after permafrost surrounding the entrance thawed in Norway. Look inside in a *New York Times* 360 degree video.

[Watch on NY Times](#)



WHEN NESTLÉ GUZZLES WATER, MICHIGAN NEIGHBORS TAKE EXCEPTION



The creek behind Maryann Borden's house was once "a lovely little stream that just babbled along and never changed for decades," she says. Now it is perhaps 12 feet across — half what it was, she reckons — with grassy islands impeding what used to be an uninterrupted flow.

"What happened?" Ms. Borden asked. "Nestlé happened. That's what I think." A lot of her neighbors think so, too.

Nestlé can pump more than 130 million gallons of water a year from a well near this northwestern Michigan town to bottle and sell. It's a big business: Last year, for the first time, bottled water outsold carbonated soft drinks in the United States.

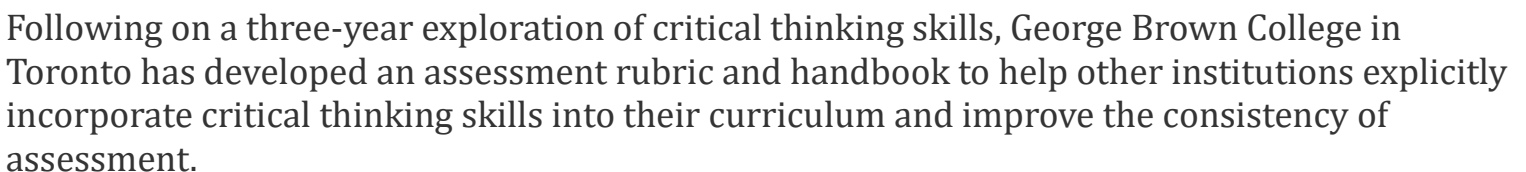
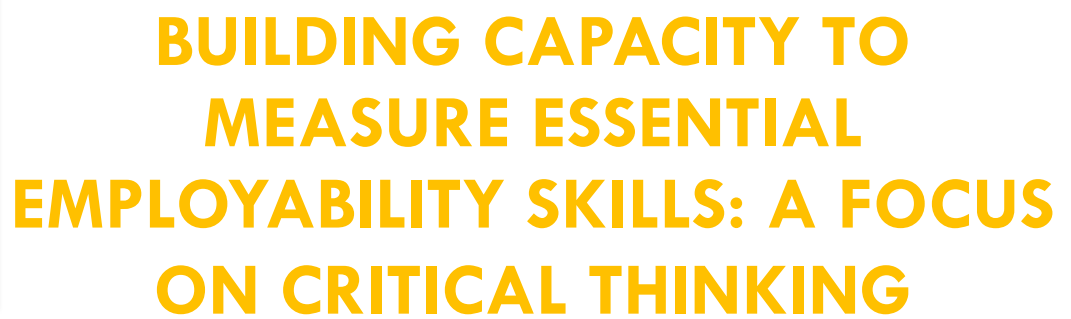
And now Nestlé wants more. It has applied to increase its pumping allowance at the well by 60 percent. The application, which the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is expected to rule on within months, has catalyzed opposition in part because of what Nestlé pays for most of the water it bottles: nothing. That is, it pays only a \$200 annual permit fee to pump from wells it owns (like this one) or leases.

Other major industries use far more water for the same \$200 permit fee — Pfizer, for instance, used 6.9 billion gallons in 2015 for its medicine factory near Kalamazoo, according to state data — but most of that water is returned to the same watershed after use, Nestlé critics note.

The scale of Nestlé's operation in this sparsely populated region about 180 miles northwest of Detroit is immense. The company packages an average of 4.8 million bottles of water a day — more than 3,000 a minute — with all lines running at a plant about 40 miles south of Evart, said David Sommer, the factory manager.

That plant draws water from nine wells, including two owned by the City of Evart, for which it pays the local municipal water rate of \$3.50 per thousand gallons.

[Read More on NY Times](#)



The three-phase methodology directly involved faculty and students from a broad cross section of the college, beginning with a literature review of common measurable elements of critical thinking, assessment methods and developing rubrics specifically for critical thinking. Following on focus group consultations, the project team developed a provisional critical-thinking assessment rubric designed specifically for marking assignments within a college English course. Writing samples were evaluated through blind marking. A second version of the critical thinking rubric was developed and similarly evaluated, featuring six critical thinking constructs and four levels of mastery or rating scale. [Read More on Hegco](#)



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