

Wise antibiotics use urged in KS

(MSC News)--Governor Laura Kelly proclaimed Nov. 18-24 as Use Antibiotics Wisely Week in Kansas. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is asking health care providers and Kansans to use antibiotics wisely to help protect them from the growing threat of antibiotic resistance (AR). This weeklong observance led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) promotes awareness of AR and the importance of appropriate antibiotic prescribing and use across the United States.

“Overuse and misuse of antibiotics has resulted in some bacteria developing resistance to these important medications. We all have a part to play in ensuring the proper use of antibiotics,” said Dr. Joan Duwve, State Health Officer at KDHE. “Using antibiotics only when appropriate and as they are prescribed will help prevent the development of new antibiotic-resistant bacteria, further protecting all Kansans.”

Antibiotic awareness does not mean stopping the use of antibiotics; it means improving the way antibiotics are prescribed and used — only when necessary and appropriate.

Since the 1940s, antibiotics have been used to treat patients with bacterial infections, significantly reducing the number of related illnesses and deaths. But now, more than 75 years later, antibiotics have been overused and misused to the point that the bacteria the antibiotics are designed to kill have adapted to them, making the drugs less effective, according to the CDC. In fact, some organisms have become so resistant that there are almost no medications that can successfully treat the infections.

The CDC finds that more than one-third of all antibiotics prescribed or otherwise used in the U. S. are either not needed or do not match the germ. Antibiotics are not effective for viruses, such as colds, most sore throats and many sinus infections.

Duwve adds, “Antibiotic resistance is a major threat to both individual and public health because it reduces our options for effective treatments for bacterial infections and limits the tools healthcare providers have to fight life-threatening infectious diseases.”

Each year, more than 2.8 million people in the United States contract AR infections and more than 35,000 of those people die. Kansas is the 10th highest antibiotic prescribing state with 882 antibiotic prescriptions per 1,000 population, and the 11th worst in the nation for implementing antibiotic stewardship programs in our hospitals. Antibiotic stewardship (AS) is the effort to improve

prescription and use of antibiotics. It is critical that health care providers include AS in their practice and that everyone becomes stewards of appropriate use.

Here are ways Kansans can help:

- **Wash your hands. This is one of the best ways to prevent or stop the spread of infections.**
- **Do not request that your doctor prescribe antibiotics.**
- **Antibiotics may have side effects. When your doctor says you do not need an antibiotic, taking one may do more harm than good.**
- **Only take antibiotics that are prescribed for you and take the whole course as described. Do not share or use leftover antibiotics. Antibiotics treat specific types of infections. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to multiply.**

To learn more about antibiotic resistance, visit UseAntibioticsWisely.com.

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