

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Message on Antibiotic Awareness Week

November 18, 2019

Antibiotics are a medical marvel that has saved millions of lives around the world, but they must be properly and safely prescribed for humans and animals to ensure that they remain effective in treating diseases and illnesses. During Antibiotic Awareness Week and every week, I urge families and medical professionals to familiarize themselves with the consequences of antibiotic resistance and the steps we can all take to address this challenge.

Antibiotics are remarkable drugs that are instrumental in fighting certain infections caused by bacteria and fungi. Far too often, however, they are prescribed for common viral illnesses that they are not meant to treat, including the common cold, influenza, most cases of bronchitis, and stomach viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that about 30 percent of outpatient antibiotics, or 47 million prescriptions, are unnecessarily prescribed in human medicine each year. Overprescribing antibiotics can have harmful side effects and cause life-threatening allergic reactions. In the United States, an adverse reaction to antibiotics leads to approximately one out of every six medication-related visits for emergency medical care.

One of the most troubling consequences of overprescribing antibiotics is antibiotic resistance. Last week, the CDC released new numbers on the burden of antibiotic resistance threats in the United States showing that at least 2.8 million people become infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria or fungi every year and that more than 35,000 people die because of those infections.

As the world's leader in medical ingenuity and advancements, we must do everything we can to combat the rapidly developing medical threat of antibiotic resistance. The CDC's "Be Antibiotics Aware" initiative provides valuable and potentially lifesaving resources to help educate both the public and health care professionals on when antibiotics are needed, how to optimize their prescription, and how to best combat antibiotic resistance. This program, combined with my administration's continued implementation of the National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria, is essential to addressing the rising concerns about the overprescription of antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

This week, we resolve to improve antibiotic stewardship at home and in medical settings so that all Americans can understand the threat of antibiotic resistance and live fuller, healthier lives.

Categories: Letters and Messages : Antibiotic Awareness Week, message.

Subjects: Diseases : Antibiotic-resistant bacteria; Health and Human Services, Department of: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health and medical care : Research and development; Holidays and special observances : Antibiotic Awareness Week.

DCPD Number: DCPD201900806.