

Friday Night [under the] Lights...

2018



Happy Friday...

Wish we had better news tonight but it looks like we get another six glorious weeks of winter thanks to a skittish rodent in Pennsylvania.

In front of tens of thousands of people (the town itself has only 6000 residents) Punxsutawney Phil (spell check had to work on that one) came out of hiding and saw his shadow, predicting another 6 weeks of winter. Science at its finest. Thank goodness there's nothing we do in medicine that's based on tradition and superstition...

Oh.

That aside, I bet you didn't know that there are actually several Punxsutawney Phil competitors out there...

Phil's Canadian counterpart, an albino groundhog named Wiarton Willie, also spotted his shadow this morning.

Phil's groundhog rival, Staten Island Chuck, did not see his shadow, predicting an early spring.



Finally, Pierre C. Shadeaux, perhaps Phil's far distant rodent cousin, also did not see his shadow in New Iberia, Louisiana, forecasting an early and longer spring for locals. Shadeux is actually a nutria, a large rodent from South America that's now an invasive species in Louisiana's bayous.

And finally, as a total trivial aside, the 1993 Bill Murray movie Groundhog Day was actually filmed in Woodstock, Illinois – not Punxsutawney...

- **What was it really like...**

On rare occasions, we get a very candid glimpse into people's honest thoughts, beliefs and impressions about things that are important to us.

It happened to me this past weekend.

I met a man named Mike who was my airport shuttle driver. It was early in the morning and it was just the two of us in the van. He was chatty and started talking about the weather. Really amiable guy. He said he was waiting for his wife to retire in the next 7 months and they were packing up and moving to Jacksonville, Florida.

Then he said he was a retired Milwaukee Firefighter – EMT.

I didn't tell him what I did and he just started going on about how much things had changed during his career. He started out with a heavy load of fire suppression (*"I loved the days of a good burner"*) and said over the years everything started to change to medical calls. He continued on to talk about the kind of calls he enjoyed (*"Hope I'm not grossing you out"*) and the things he and his crew hated.

Then he says, *"honestly – one of the most fun things we did was try to put people back together"*. He talked about the guy that put his hand in a meat grinder (and here you thought that was just a figure of speech) and how they decided to unbolt the machine and take everything in together so the hospital could extract it (*"sorry – didn't mean to gross you out – but that's real life sometimes"*).

Then, out of nowhere, he says *"we always had the docs watchin' our back, or up our ass – In a good way, though"*.

Now we're getting somewhere (insert evil laugh and wringing of the hands).

I would have gladly had him take a much longer route so I could just listen to what he said about "the docs" (I have a vested interest)...

As he talked more about "the docs", he said *"yea, every time they'd call us back at the station, we'd wonder what we did wrong and who we could blame it on"*, he laughed.

And then he went on to say how the majority of the time they called, they'd let them know what happened and tell them about how what they did, made a difference in the patient's outcome – *"you know, like bandaging and finding out where all the holes were"*, he laughed again.

So, he says, *"every once in a while, they'd let you know, in a nice way, that you screwed up – or you coulda done something better. But that was the exception, not the rule."*

"At the end of the day, you knew they had your back, so the jump up the ass talk didn't really hurt".

[Probably important for me to remind you that FNuL is Rated R, so discretion is advised.]

So, the jump up the ass talk didn't really hurt. Hmmm.

Here's the message I got from Mike in that Shuttle Van early on a Sunday morning.

When you take the time every day to communicate with your colleagues both up & down the chain, you, by default, recognize a lot of strong work that's very well done. The communication of that observation is rewarding to the person you share it with.

Now, when something goes wrong, and it will, we can communicate in a way that helps everyone see the error and understand what needs to be done to prevent it from happening again. Although it's tough (see "jumping up the ass" reference above) it's only a portion of the communication from that person. The majority of communication is positive and rewarding. The occasional tough stuff is easier to face without feeling like your only interactions with others is negative...

We earn our reputation every day, with every person and every interaction. Mike's Sunday morning discussion reminded me about how important it is to communicate the good as often as you can so that others will honestly hear the occasional bad and be more open to fixing it...

[If you have kids or are in a relationship, you can use this last discussion as "Counseling Points" ...]

▪ Needle sticks – exposure 2017

Every year, our colleagues in Safety and Risk analyze all of our needlestick injuries to identify trends, issues and opportunities for prevention. They just released our 2017 data. Here's a summary of the findings.

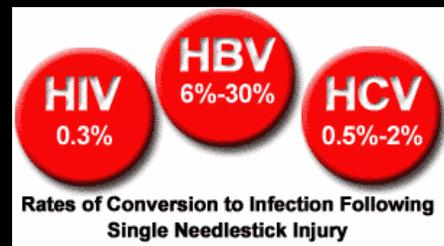
- Most needle sticks resulted while using IV catheters, IO needles, and lancets.
 - Intravenous (IV) catheters. Most IV needle sticks occurred in the ambulance, while starting an IV, where the protective features were not activated or partially activated, during primary use and after use, but before disposal.
 - Intraosseous (IO) needles. Most IO needle sticks occurred on the scene or at the patient's home, while injecting through skin. IO needles with protective features are not available.
 - Lancets. Most lancet needle sticks occurred on the scene or at the patient's home, during the unsafe practice of using the patient's unprotected lancet.

needlestick



Although the infection rate is low from needle sticks, it's not zero. It's really, really important to appropriately evaluate any exposure and, if indicated, start prophylaxis as soon as possible.

If you have a needle stick, you should immediately wash the area with soap and water. Immediate consultation with a knowledgeable clinician is important – don't wait until tomorrow or end of shift – it's time sensitive.



And here's a number I want you to put in your Smart Phone now.

If you have questions about appropriate medical treatment for occupational exposures, assistance is available from the Clinicians' Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Line:

1-888-448-4911

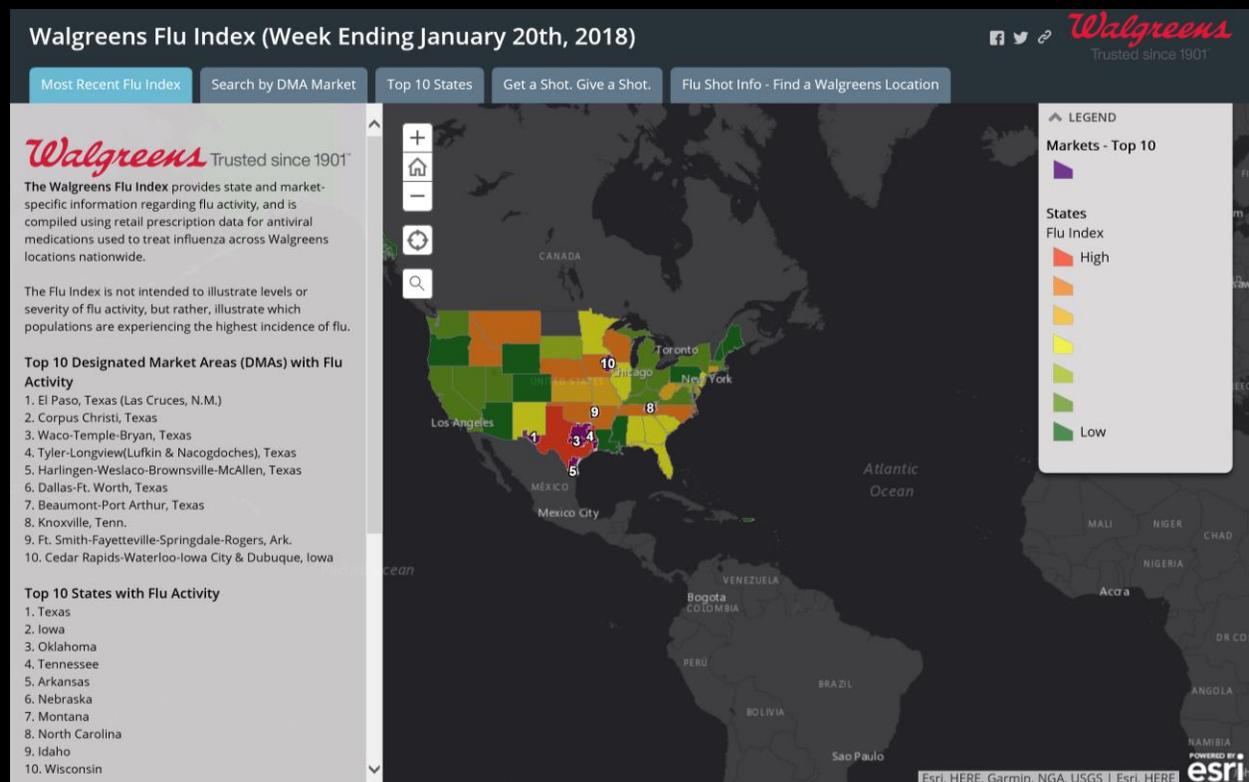
The staff are a tremendous resource for post-exposure questions. The line is answered from 6AM-5PM Pacific Time 7 days a week. If it's after hours, their website is also excellent - <http://www.nccc.ucsf.edu/> (put that in your phone too).

Bottom line, awareness and prevention are always the best approach. The lessons learned from 2017 exposures aren't a surprise – But they hopefully serve as a good reminder of how important it is to be diligent around needles.

▪ *How many packs of gum did you buy?*

Thanks to Sam Brown for passing along this cool gem from Walgreens. The mega pharmacy tracks the volume and location of antiviral medications used to treat the flu as yet another indicator of flu activity. This kind of data collection and analysis is a fascinating way to track activity based on changes in the purchase of medications used to treat specific problems. In many ways, this data is a more practical and timely measure of Flu activity than some of the more traditional metrics used by CDC.

And (at least as of January 20, 2018) everything (unfortunately) is still bigger in Texas...



- AMR Life...

I love the message of Strength.



- What the...?

Tonight's WTH is perhaps one of the best I've ever seen. Brought to you courtesy of Alan Craig...

Apparently there is a third option to burial and cremation...





▪ Epilogue...

An Eagles fan liked to amuse himself by scaring every Patriots fan he saw strutting down the street in an obnoxious New England shirt. He would swerve his van as if to hit them, then swerve back just missing them.

One day while driving along, he saw a priest. He thought he would do a good deed, so he pulled over and asked the priest, "Where are you going, Father?"

"I'm going to give Mass at St. Francis church, about two miles down the road," replied the priest.

"Climb in, Father. I'll give you a lift!" The priest climbed into the passenger seat, and they continued down the road.

Suddenly, the driver saw a Patriots fan walking down the road, and he instinctively swerved as if to hit him. But, as usual, he swerved back onto the road just in time.

Even though he was certain that he had missed the guy, he still heard a loud THUD. Not knowing where the noise came from, he glanced in his mirrors but still didn't see anything.

He then remembered the priest, and he turned to the priest and said, sorry Father, I almost hit that Patriots fan."

"That's OK," replied the priest "I got him with the door."



So, that's it from my world. *Happy Friday.*

I'm gonna be fair and balanced here. May the best team win in Sunday's game – I imagine the streets in Philly will need significant cleaning on Monday...

AND - 1-888-448-4911 (is it in your phone?)

Ed

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