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September 28, 2020

Good afternoon -

Today is National Penicillin Allergy Day! It was on this date in 1928 that Alexander Fleming, a young bacteriologist, discovered penicillin, forever changing healthcare by identifying an effective way to treat a wide range of infections.

In 2020, millions of patients in the United States believe they are allergic to penicillin. However, 90% of the patients who have a [self-reported penicillin allergy](#) in their electronic medical record can safely take penicillin [after verification testing](#). The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology has made an advocacy and [public health priority](#) of getting the word out about the importance of penicillin allergy testing, which can improve patient outcomes and significantly reduce healthcare expenditures. This is more important this year than ever. Since the onset of the [COVID19 pandemic](#), use of antibiotics has been significant in some places and varied significantly overall, [creating difficulty in knowing the full impact](#) the pandemic may have on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the long run.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cited the importance of correctly identifying if patients are penicillin-allergic in decreasing the unnecessary use of broad-spectrum antibiotics in its 2018 update of [Antibiotic Use in the United States: Progress and Opportunities](#). The AAAAI was recently joined by the Infectious Disease Society of America in [calling upon the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) to include penicillin allergy testing in the required Antibiotic Stewardship provisions of the Conditions of Participation for hospitals treating Medicare patients. The AAAAI has presented on the importance of this issue to the Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria and is an active member of the Stakeholder Forum on Antimicrobial Resistance, a coalition of more than 100 groups working to connect governmental and non-governmental activities in the fight against AMR.

(more)

The AAAAI is reaching out to you today because verification of patient-reported penicillin allergy testing is an important means of antibiotic stewardship, improving patient outcomes, and reducing healthcare expenditures. We look forward to working with you to advance access to penicillin allergy testing.

For more information, please contact us at Advocacy@aaaai.org.