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Preparedness to Combat Infectious Disease and Drug-Resistant Bacterial Threats



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Webinar Background

Pull incentives, reliable drug supply chains, diagnostics, and surveillance are needed

Tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) today and in the future requires a multifaceted effort that involves health, economic, and national security policies; industry investments and incentives; and a rededication to antimicrobial stewardship and surveillance of AMR across medicine and industry.

AMR is not an emerging danger, the panelists said. AMR already impacts patients, healthcare systems, and economies. While there is consensus that AMR poses dangers, policymakers are not treating AMR with the urgency, innovation, or commitment that the consequences of AMR necessitate.

The ecosystem that currently exists to develop new treatments, diagnostics, and surveillance tools is inadequate. Patients are already suffering, and many viral illnesses lead to secondary bacterial infections. The panelists discussed policy advances that have bolstered early-stage antimicrobial development while warning that the market does not adequately value the societal benefits of effective antimicrobials, causing small biotech firms—which account for the vast majority of innovation—to founder.

Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- The U.S. must sustain the ecosystem for antimicrobials over the long-term. Right now, healthcare providers cope with limited antimicrobials and diagnostic tools. Problems accessing appropriate antimicrobials for threatening infections, as well as the acceleration of drug resistance, are projected to worsen. Long-term sustainable policy changes are needed, but near-term strategies for stewardship—particularly in outpatient settings where the majority of antibiotics are prescribed—will help preserve the armamentarium of antibiotics.
- Across the world, governments' actions to combat AMR have been instrumental. Actions should leverage public and private resources at the research and operational levels in order to engage and support the biotechnology ecosystem. Governments must commit to enacting both push and pull incentives; in the U.S., Congress can pass the PASTEUR Act.
- AMR is a public health and a national security threat. Anticipating disease outbreaks and diversifying today's fragile supply chain by establishing domestic manufacturing and distribution will mitigate the threat. Policymakers must adopt a One Health approach to protect new antimicrobial investments by regulating antimicrobial use in the agricultural and environmental sectors.

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innovation**

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