Ban Gain-of-Function Biolabs!
People are worried about the biolabs in their backyards. From Boston, Massachusetts, to Manhattan, Kansas, to Berkeley, California, communities are educating themselves about risky gain-of-function research to weaponize potential pandemic pathogens.
Now, one city has taken action.
The San Carlos City Council is banning higher-risk biolabs following public concern about environmental and public safety issues.
On June 26, 2023, the San Carlos City Council voted to pass an ordinance prohibiting biosafety level 3 and 4 labs. It’s in these labs that so-called “gain-of-function” bioweapons research on high-risk potential pandemic pathogens like flu, SARS and Ebola typically takes place. The bill was supported by the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter whose members were concerned about the significant public health and environmental safety issues with the labs.
TAKE ACTION: https://orgcns.org/3Q2GLvJ

Horticultural Therapy Uses Nature to Help Heal
By Lisa Jo Rudy, Tree Hugger:
“‘Healing gardens’ are now featured in the design of most new hospitals. Aside from the pleasure of getting out in the fresh air and sunlight, just glimpsing the green space from a hospital window does wonders. As Deborah Franklin writes for Scientific American about one particular study on the topic, “Patients with bedside windows looking out on leafy trees healed, on average, a day faster, needed significantly less pain medication and had fewer postsurgical complications than patients who instead saw a brick wall.” It speaks to the healing power of plants, which is where horticultural therapy comes into play.
Horticultural therapy is the practice of using gardens, plants, and horticultural activity to relieve physical and mental symptoms. Research suggests that it is helpful for managing mood disorders and mental illness, and can also be designed to help improve balance, strength, and work skills.”
Read more: https://orgcns.org/43H968x

Mapped: Maximum Containment Labs Around the World
How close do you live to a High-Containment Biological Laboratory, where the world’s deadliest diseases are studied?
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reports: “In 2022, the Bulletin partnered with GlobalBiolabs, an initiative to provide details of high containment labs around the world and their policies and practices to ensure safe, secure and responsible pathogen research.
The Bulletin collaborated with researchers from King’s College London and George Mason University to re-launch their map of biosafety level 4 (BSL-4) and BSL-3+ labs around the world. For countries with BSL-4 labs, the map now includes scores that assess a country’s approach to biorisk management and the country’s national governance and stability.”
Look for your area in the Bulletin’s map of maximum containment labs around the world: https://orgcns.org/44YZwzf

Can a 50-Year-Old Treaty Still Keep the World Safe From the Changing Threat of Bioweapons?
Geopolitics and technological advances are making this a riskier world for bioweapons.
Jen Kirby, of Vox, writes: “The scientists trained the software with some 2 million molecules from a public database, and then modeled for specific, toxic traits. In just six hours, the AI generated some 40,000 molecules that met the scientists’ criteria, meaning that, based on their molecular structure, they all looked quite a lot like toxic chemical agents. The AI designed VX. It designed other known toxic agents. It even designed entirely new molecules that the scientists hadn’t programmed for, creating a sketch for potentially lethal and novel chemical compounds.
...Ekins was horrified. What he and his colleague had thought was a banal experiment ended up creating a cookbook for chemical agents. ‘If we could do this,’ Ekins said, ‘what’s to stop anyone else doing it?’”
Read more: https://orgcns.org/3Q7vcQK

This Common Artificial Sweetener Can Break Down DNA
David Nield, ScienceAlert, reports: “The artificial sweetener sucralose (marketed as Splenda) is widely used and found in products like diet soda and chewing gum. According to a new study, it’s also capable of damaging the DNA material inside our cells.
As DNA holds the genetic code controlling how our bodies grow and are maintained, that’s a serious problem that could lead to multiple health issues.
So significant are the researchers’ concerns, they are now calling for food standard agencies to review the safety and regulatory status of the sugar substitute.
Read more: https://orgcns.org/3pWCpGs

Helping Plants and Bacteria Work Together Reduces Fertilizer Need, Finds New Study
The University of Warwick reports: “Helping to promote the natural relationship between plants and bacteria could reduce reliance on environmentally damaging fertilizers, a study has found.
Researchers including those at the Universities of Warwick and Justus Liebig (Germany) have now shown a new way to boost plant nutrient uptake and growth. This could reduce the need for fertilizers, an input to agriculture which can be harmful for the environment. Fertilizers can run into waterways, or get broken down by microbes in the soil, releasing the potent greenhouse gas nitrous oxide into the atmosphere.
Read more: https://orgcns.org/4729eCw