MEDICAL SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone and thank you all for attending today’s conference. Welcome to the ever changing, ever-evolving new world. We live in a modern age where we are all witness to the use of language that was originally reserved for medical professionals and has now been adapted for social purposes. We hear young people and trendsetters discuss information, news, concepts, and pet videos and how they spread ***virally***…. But keep this in mind: while the social ***culture*** is appropriating our lingo, unfortunately newer and nastier players lurk in the shadows to inspire even ***newer*** terminology. And although bacteria and microbes have been around since the beginning of time, the threat of them morphing into ***Superbugs*** has become a terrifying reality. Make no mistake… They don’t have fancy capes or funky masks. They don’t have voices like Antonio Banderas or some thug from a tough neighborhood gang…. they aren’t dreamed up on a Hollywood animation back lot. They are real. They are the bi-product of practices we as a global community have adapted and they have the power to inflict some serious damage and in some cases even death…. and it is our mandate to find the ways to stop them…. after all, we have our selves and our own knowledge and practice to blame. Antibiotics have been over-prescribed for quite some time now and that overuse has not only weakened our collective resistance, it has created the environment that encourages the proliferation of increasingly new arrogant, disrespectful, ***tough bugs (*is it too harsh to say “tough mother buggers?*)***. We can anthropomorphize all we want. We can call them superbugs and joke about their evolution…. I understand that it’s been said, actually in the TV show “House,” that, “We breed these super bugs and now they’re all grown up and they got tattoos and body piercings and a lot of anger.” (**Wait for the laugh**). We can laugh a little bit, but if we don’t get really vigilant and find the way to effectively combat this scourge, this planet is in for big, ***BIG*** trouble.

As with every major issue and condition in life, it is urgent to find the balance between cause and effect, observation and action, trial and treatment. We as medical professionals must ***urgently*** pay attention in order to discover what works between the practice of competent, thoughtful, effective prescribing of antibiotics as opposed to overprescribing and providing a Band-Aid or placebo for patients-especially when we ***KNOW*** certain courses of medical treatment don’t work on common ailments and actually exacerbate the situation… in turn providing the breeding ground for superbugs to proliferate. It is also critical that we educate our staff, colleagues, pharmacists, and most of all ***patients***. The time has come to spread the word that antibiotics are ***NOT*** a panacea and if prescribed and administered too frequently or incorrectly, they can cause far more harm than benefit.

While it’s been said that sometimes bacteria just might be the only culture some people have (**Wait for the laugh**), it is still our responsibility as a community to tackle and conquer these challenges as they arise. We cannot afford NOT to. Just as a small example of the potential devastation we face, let’s take a quick look at the havoc wreaked by the most recent Ebola virus scare. According to a recent article in “The Economist” entitled, The Toll of Tragedy,” In less than eighteen months, from the first known attack in Africa, the outbreak affected over 27,000 people. There were over 11,200 deaths. According to Worldbank.org, the financial ramifications are in the ***tens of billions***. Oh. One other thing… **Superbugs** have even ***greater*** potential to destroy. Just ask the folks at Scientific American. In September of 2014, in a blog entry called, “Superbugs Should Scare You More Than Ebola in the US,” the author tells us, “…Not Ebola, but an increasingly common, often fatal bacteria most commonly acquired in hospitals, and associated with a 40-50% death rate. I wish more people would get excited about CRE or other highly resistant bacteria (superbugs). Nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections are far more likely to kill you in the US than Ebola is…”

It’s ironic. Neither time nor technological advances will ever allow us to rest on our laurels. Just as we come to the precipice of discovering newer, better, faster, more effective drug therapies, science… and ***Superbugs***…. have an insidious, treacherous way of keeping us alert, on guard, and often baffled as to the ways to wage antimicrobial combat. It is our mandate to find newer and more efficacious methods to prevail when pitted against these microscopic monsters. I thank you again for your participation… we as a community need all the help we can get!