



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org March. 1, 2021

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

In the Month of February Health Watch USAsm has:

- Written 3 articles/opeds regarding COVID-19.
- 14 radio shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 2 Interviews & Public Presentation.

Our 2020 COVID-19 Conference Presentations and additional resources can be accessed from: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/COVID19.htm> & www.healthconference.org *The need for the public to embrace public health strategies*

courier journal
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Schools can be reopened safely amid COVID, but only if we take overdue steps

Political debate is one thing, but spinning science and placing our children at risk is unacceptable. Statements that research shows "schools are safer than the community" or that we should take the "default position of opening schools" are being grossly misinterpreted. "Safer" is not "Safe." It depends upon the rate of community transmission, and "default" means to do something if there is not a reason to otherwise not do it. .. Instead, we need to focus on transformation and making the needed investments in our society to effectively eliminate this virus and then to snuff out outbreaks. And this includes schools. Smaller class sizes and healthier buildings are something we should have done long ago, regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic. School-age children have always been known to have an increased risk of transmitting infections from school and all these transmissions are potentially preventable. Courier Journal. Feb. 19, 2021. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2021/02/19/louisville-school-reopenings-covid-19-orders-in-person-learning/6799161002/)
<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2021/02/19/louisville-school-reopenings-covid-19-orders-in-person-learning/6799161002/>

Montana health director nominee once faced criticism over Kentucky's hepatitis A outbreak

"Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, a retired Kentucky physician who runs the national watchdog group Health Watch USAsm, is among those who said Meier and his team needed to do more early on to curb the hepatitis outbreak as it made its way into Appalachia. Kavanagh said Meier's handling of the outbreak provides a window into how he might handle the COVID crisis in Montana.

"But it could be a learning opportunity if failed strategies are corrected," Kavanagh said. "The biggest question is: What did he learn in Kentucky?" " Courier Journal. Feb. 27, 2012.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/27/montana-health-director-nominee-adam-meier-led-during-kentucky-hepatitis-outbreak/6850713002/>

Legislators tell Beshear they'll talk with him after votes to override vetoes; he says 'See you in court,' warns of fourth surge in cases

""In an opinion piece for the Courier Journal, Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, a retired Somerset physician and the chairman of Health Watch USAsm, walks through the dangers of the coronavirus variant that originated in the United Kingdom, noting that it may be 70% more infectious, 30% more lethal and more likely to infect children. He adds that the Brazil and the South Africa variants "are even more concerning." That said, he said there is hope in President Biden's seven-point plan that aims to create a standardized pandemic approach. He also writes that "For many, the virus is becoming a litmus test for reliable news sources," noting that "unreliable sources rarely if ever correct reporting errors, which have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans.""" Kentucky Health News. Feb. 2, 2021. <http://ci.uky.edu/kentuckyhealthnews/2021/02/02/legislators-tell-beshear-theyll-talk-with-him-after-votes-to-override-vetoes-he-says-see-you-in-court-warns-of-fourth-surge-in-cases/>

Leaked video more comical than incendiary, but coach's conduct raises coronavirus concerns

""When you have two individuals indoors without cloth masks, that is a set up for transmission, which can be a disaster for the individuals in close contact," said Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, board chairman of Health Watch USAsm. "When they are public figures, it sets a bad example and may encourage other Kentuckians to do the same." Kavanagh said. "Testing is not a for-sure guarantee that you won't get transmission. Even vaccination is not for sure, especially with the new variants. "One needs to do both masking and social distancing and when you're indoors there's a possibility neither will be effective because this virus can aerosolize." Americans grow increasingly susceptible to COVID-19 fatigue, tempted to cut corners and resume life as we once knew it. As vaccines are distributed and immunity increases, Kavanagh says, "I'm very worried that as a society we're declaring victory and letting our guard down.""" Courier Journal. Feb. 21, 2021.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/sports/college/louisville/2021/02/21/sullivan-macks-conduct-after-louisville-win-raises-covid-19-concerns/4533748001/>



Viewpoint: CDC's School Reopening Plan Gets an 'F'

The argument that preventative strategies need to be tailored to the needs and resources of local communities, along with a one-size-does-not-fit-all

approach, may placate political pressures, but the virus does not care. You need to do what you need to do to control the disease. It needs to be clearly stated what needs to be done and if a community cannot comply and wants to open schools, then the parents need to be informed of the increased risks to students. Recommendations should not be changed to reassure families of a degree of safety which does not exist.....Frequent, (three times a week) screening of our athletes has been key to the opening of professional sports. Our students deserve the same safety precautions as professional athletes. Infection Control Today. Feb. 15, 2021. [References https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/viewpoint-cdc-s-school-reopening-plan-gets-an-f-](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/viewpoint-cdc-s-school-reopening-plan-gets-an-f-)

Beginning of the End? Some Hopeful COVID Developments

The good news? The fact that 3 different viruses with 3 different lineages came up with the same mutation to evade natural immunity and the vaccines. And initial reports are that it only partially evades the vaccines. And one needs to ask, why did these viruses not come up with different mutations? After all they do not plan the mutations, they evolve by random chance. Maybe the answer is that this random amino acid combination is possibly the last major mutation the virus can produce without changing its ability to enter the cells or its infectivity. Infection Control Today. Feb. 3, 2021.

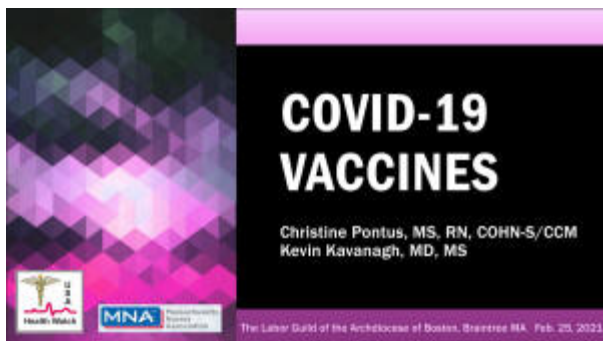
<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/beginning-of-the-end-some-hopeful-covid-developments>

Health Watch USA - Presentations



Julie Blake-Griffin, RN Discusses Barriers in Accountability and Patient Safety.

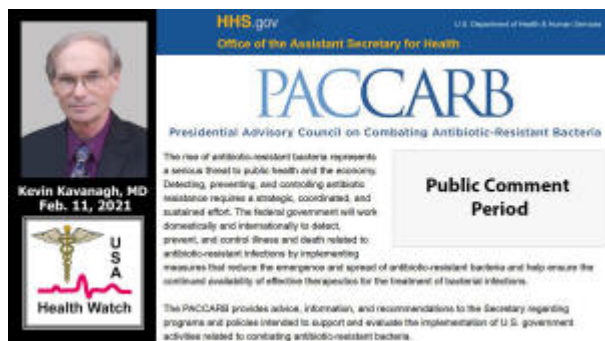
Julie Blake-Griffin, RN is a national patient advocate who tells her personal story and journey as a patient and nursing advocate. Topics discussed are institutional accountability and whistleblower retaliation. Health Watch USAsm meeting Feb. 17, 2021. <https://youtu.be/cy-BADgxfl4>



COVID-19: Benefits of Vaccinations and Risks of COVID-19

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the urgent need for all to be vaccinated. Risks of both COVID-19 and vaccinations are discussed in relation to the different vaccines becoming available and the different variants of the virus which are emerging. The recent conclusion of the National Academy of Science that the SARS-CoV-2 Virus is aerosolized is of utmost importance, since

most frontline workers do not have adequate PPE or work in healthy buildings. This makes being vaccinated of utmost importance. Health Watch USA & Massachusetts. Nurses Association. The Labor Guild of the Archdiocese of Boston, Braintree, MA. Feb. 22, 2021. (34:17) [Download Slides](#) View YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/GwJk5EcTg5Y>



PACCARB: Universal Reporting of Pathogens, Better COVID-19 HAI Metrics.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm gives a public comment during the Feb. 11, 2021 Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria which stresses the need for universal reporting of all dangerous pathogens, including antibiotic resistant organisms. In addition, the United States needs to increase support of public health to implement early surveillance and

case tracking. Health Care Worker Acquisitions of dangerous pathogens need to be reported along with revising our current COVID-19 HAI metric, which is not effectively capturing infections. PACCARB. Feb. 11, 2021. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/2O-yC0HC1dA>

Expanded Written Comments: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Presentations-Community/PACCARB-WrittenComments/20210211-PACCARB-PublicComment.pdf>

Radio / Podcast

COVID-19: White House Task Force Disbanded.

Dr. Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses a variety of topics including new data on vaccine efficacy, viral aerosolization and calls for more stricter CDC regulations. -- (Timeline 1:12) Vaccines found to be effective after the first dose. -- (Timeline 3:17) The National Academy of Sciences' findings of viral aerosolization and the need for better masks and ventilation. This has led to the CDC to recommend the wearing of two masks to make sure the first one fits well. -- (Timeline 5:45) President Biden has dissolved the coronavirus advisory panel. Two of the members have submitted a letter to the White House and CDC requesting more attention being giving to the dangers of aerosolization of COVID-19 and to providing N-95 masks to all frontline workers. -- (Timeline 9:05) Estimated Life Expectancy in the United States has fallen by 1 year and there are almost 600,000 excess deaths from COVID-19. -- (Timeline 11:34) Vit C, Zinc and Vit D, do they help? -- (Timeline 12:28) Disparities in Healthcare. Jack Pattie Show. WVLK AM 590. Feb. 19, 2021. (14:01) <https://youtu.be/dxeWxqhaPgE>

Download Letter Sent To White House: http://www.healthwatchusa.org/downloads/20210215-ImmediateActiontoAddressInhalationExposureToSARS-CoV-2_FINAL.pdf

National Academy of Sciences' Report on COVID-19 Aerosolization:
<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25958>

COVID-19: As Deaths Exceed 500,000, We are Opening Schools

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses what needs to be done when we open schools as the total COVID-19 deaths in the United States exceeds 500,000. Of importance is the National Academy of Science's findings that SARS-CoV-2 is aerosolized, making it imperative that all wear well-fitted masks and that proper attention is given to increase complete air exchanges and air sanitization. In addition, students should be in small class sizes with frequent testing and contact tracing needs to be available for positive cases and exposures. With the new variants emerging, we need to exercise caution. Indoor school contact sports is problematic. Our primary focus should be to have children return to school safely. Jack Pattie Show. Feb. 22, 2021. (5:06) <https://youtu.be/igfMef6G6Hw>

COVID-19: Anti-vaxxer and Anti-Maskers

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm stresses the seriousness of reports from the United Kingdom and how multiple countries are implementing public health measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic. Many callers expressed concerns that masks are not effective and that vaccines have caused serious dangers, even causing sterility. This misinformation was responded to, but is one of the root causes of why the United States has not been able to effectively respond to the pandemic. Even more problematic are the new variants which are spreading in the United States. Jack Pattie Show. WVLK AM 590. Feb. 5, 2021. (20:02) <https://youtu.be/PTW47al-AIE>

Q&A: COVID-19 Variant Tests? 'We're Kind of Flying Blind'

"Throughout the history of evolution, and even through the history of mankind, you've seen species get wiped out. You've seen civilizations of man fall because of infections. And the thing that differentiates us from a tadpole is our science and our knowledge. And if we don't take advantage of that...." But even more worrisome is a set of mutations which have occurred in Brazil, in South Africa. It also has been noticed in the United Kingdom, and also in a patient up in Boston, Massachusetts. All having similar mutations and escape mechanisms, which may make these vaccines less effective. So, if the virus mutates in such a way that that spike protein is changed, then that can affect the vaccine's ability to kill

that virus, along with affecting our ability to detect it. You may have false negatives now coming about from some of these variants. And we will not know that the patient actually has COVID-19 by a laboratory test. <https://youtu.be/IPjKTDZnP7U>

Transcript of Interview: <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/q-a-covid-variant-tests-we-re-kind-of-flying-blind->

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

Scientists Call on C.D.C. to Set Air Standards for Workplaces, Now

“The agency has not fully reckoned with airborne transmission of the coronavirus in settings like hospitals, schools and meatpacking plants, experts said. On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidelines for reopening schools, but quickly passed over improved ventilation as a precaution. It was only in July that the World Health Organization conceded that the virus can linger in the air in crowded indoor spaces, after 239 experts publicly called on the organization to do so. The letter urged the C.D.C. to recommend the use of high-quality masks, such as N95 respirators, to protect workers at high risk of infection. At present, health care workers mostly rely on surgical masks, which are not as effective against aerosol transmission of the virus.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/17/health/coronavirus-aerosols-workplaces.html>

Former OSHA head: We're getting it wrong on COVID workplace safety | Editorial

“Dr. David Michaels led the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which sets workplace standards, during the Obama administration. Now the epidemiologist is one of more than a dozen scientists calling on the Biden administration to set air standards for workplaces like grocery stores, meatpacking plants, buses and prisons, to save lives in a pandemic.

We've known for nearly a year that COVID is airborne – yet aside from hospitals, few workplaces acknowledge that the virus can hang in the air, he told Julie O'Connor of the Star-Ledger Editorial Board. Instead, they emphasize surface-scrubbing and physical distancing. Below is an edited transcript.”

<https://www.nj.com/opinion/2021/02/former-osh-head-were-getting-it-wrong-on-covid-workplace-safety.html>

Experts Express Concern Over Airborne Spread of More Contagious Coronavirus

““The virus spreads mainly by breathing in virus that is in aerosols,” signatory Linsey Marr, PhD, a scientist at Virginia Tech and an expert on the transmission of the coronavirus through the air, told the Coronavirus Blog in an email. “These are microscopic droplets that can easily travel farther than six feet and fill a room.””

<https://coronavirus.medium.com/experts-express-concern-over-airborne-spread-of-more-contagious-coronavirus-26bb720bd802>

CDC study shows teachers could play 'central role' in Covid spread at schools where masks aren't worn

Key Points

1. "Educators may play a "central role" in spreading Covid in schools where social distancing isn't followed and masks aren't worn."
2. "Vaccinating teachers and staff may help prevent outbreaks in schools, a new CDC study said."
3. "The findings come just over a week after the CDC unveiled new guidance on how schools can safely reopen for in-person learning."

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/22/cdc-study-shows-teachers-could-play-central-role-in-covid-spread-at-schools-.html>

More Than 2,900 Health Care Workers Died This Year — And the Government Barely Kept Track

<https://khn.org/news/article/more-than-2900-health-care-workers-died-this-year-and-the-government-barely-kept-track/>

Elimination could be the optimal response strategy for covid-19 and other emerging pandemic diseases

"The typical approach of high-income nations (such as those in North America and Europe) has been a "suppression strategy," sometimes after initial use of a "mitigation strategy". The goal of suppression is to flatten the epidemic curve further than with mitigation, but still without expecting to end community transmission.

By contrast, China's success in containing the pandemic has shown that SARS-CoV-2 can be eliminated even after widespread community transmission.² Several other Asian jurisdictions also achieved some success in containing the pandemic at an early stage, notably Taiwan,³ Hong Kong,⁴ and South Korea.⁵ The New Zealand government chose an explicit elimination approach.⁶ Australia also has elimination of community transmission as the stated goal, but has generally described its strategy as "aggressive suppression."⁸ A related strategy that also aims to achieve zero community transmission is the exclusion approach that has been successfully used by some Pacific Island countries and territories." <https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4907>



COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Global Perspective

Health Watch USAsm & Massachusetts Nurses Association COVID-19 Worker Safety Conference
Save the Date: Webinar June 15th, 2021.

Morning Presentations [Preliminary AM Agenda:](#)

- **Keynote Address:** Carolyn M. Clancy, MD, MACP Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (DEAN). She was the past director of AHRQ.
<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/manager.asp?pnun=30310>
- **Australia:** Professor Imogen Mitchell, Dean of Medicine at the ANU Medical School, located in Canberra, Australia. Since March of 2020 she has been seconded to become the Clinical Director of the ACT COVID-19 Response. vid-19 lessons learned in Australia.
<https://medicalschoool.anu.edu.au/people/academics/professor-imogen-mitchell>

- **United Kingdom:** Dr Stephanie Dancer is a Consultant Microbiologist in NHS Lanarkshire and Professor of Microbiology at Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland. She has been editing the Journal of Hospital Infection for 20 years, five of them as editor-in-chief. She also edits for International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents and Infection, Disease & Health. Covid-19 lessons learned in The United Kingdom. <https://www.napier.ac.uk/people/stephanie-dancer>
- **Singapore:** Dr. Matthias Maiwald a Senior Consultant and the Head of Service, Microbiology, at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Microbiology Service & Senior Consultant (Microbiology), National University of Singapore, and at Duke-National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School in Singapore. COVID-19 lessons learned in Singapore:
- **Spain:** Dr. Jesus Rodriguez-Baño is the immediate Past President of the ESCMID (European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases) and Associate Editor of Clinical Microbiology and Infection, Spain. COVID-19 lessons learned in Spain.
- **Germany:** Sebastian Hoehl. Virologists, University Hospital Frankfurt am Main, Goethe University. Dr. Hoehl has been a leader in the fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and as early as mid-February identified asymptomatic spread. <https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-02-18/report-shows-limits-of-coronavirus-screening> Dr. Hoehl will present on lessons learned in Germany.
- **Kenya:** Dr. Paul Yonga currently serves as a consultant in international health for EASO and EU Member States and is also an infectious disease consultant at the CA Medlynks Tropical/Travel Medicine & Infectious Diseases Clinic in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Fountain Health Care Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya. He is experienced with HIV, HIV preventive services, as well as infectious disease and tropical/travel medicine clinical and research activities in the East and Central African region.

Afternoon Speakers (full Schedule to be announced.)

- **USA:** Jeannie P. Cimiotti, PhD, RNUSA: Jeannie P. Cimiotti, PhD, RN, FAAN is associate professor in the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. She is an internationally recognized health services researcher with expertise in nurse workforce issues and the quality of patient care. Her research has been cited for its expertise on nurse outcomes such job dissatisfaction and burnout and patient outcomes, specifically healthcare-associated infections and the sequela of infection such as extended lengths of stay, hospital readmissions, and mortality. <https://www.nursing.emory.edu/faculty-staff/jeannie-p-cimiotti>

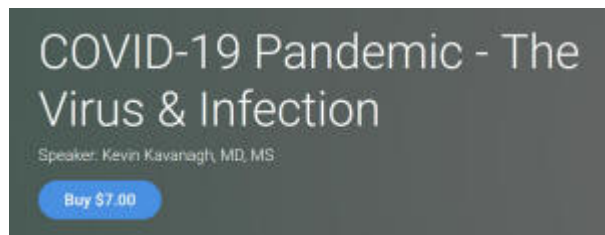
Continuing Education

The conference has two accreditation agencies.

- Massachusetts Nurses Association: Nursing Credits for the morning and afternoon session will be provided by the MNA.
- Southern Kentucky AHEC: Four hours of Physician (AMA Category I) will be provided. In addition, respiratory therapy (AARC and KBRC), Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Social Work, Psychology and Occupational Therapy credits will be applied for through the appropriate Kentucky Oversight board.

More information at: www.healthconference.org

COVID-19 Education Courses



COVID-19 Pandemic - The Virus & Infection:

Available for this course are 1 Hour CE/CME for Category 1 AMA Credits & Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN), also Physical Therapy Credits. **Southern Kentucky AHEC.** To take the course go to:

<https://sokyahec.thinkific.com/courses/covid-virus>



COVID-19 The Need for the Public To Embrace Public Health Strategies - Past Course

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses reasons why the public has not embraced public health guidance. They include, overstatement of treatment efficacy, mixed messaging regarding the use of masks, testing for asymptomatic carriers and aerosolization of COVID-19. In addition, false narratives (that herd immunity can be achieved with few deaths, COVID-19 is no deadlier than the flu and children do not become sick) are discussed. Finally, ways of retorting misinformation with examples

given regarding the effectiveness of the Zelenko Protocol and use of facial masks. Nov. 12, 2020.

Kentucky Rural Health Association. <https://youtu.be/G7OUYGWaatA>



COVID 19: History of Ineffective Infectious Disease Policy - Past Course

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm updates his previous lecture which traces the history of the United States' response to the COVID-19 epidemic. A historical perspective is given, covering President George Bush's 2005 proposal of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act to the disastrous second peak of the first wave with

continued shortages of medical supplies and the changing federal advisements on asymptomatic spread, viral aerosolization and use of masks. Treatments are reviewed along with overstatements of efficacy. Finally, vaccines are discussed along with the review process and distribution barriers. Sept. 29, 2020.

[Download Presentation Slides](#) YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/xA7pR2bDAes>

The COVID-19 Pandemic, The Virus & Infection: Health Watch USAsm - Past Course

1) COVID-19: Survivability And The Prevention of Spread. The course discusses the survivability of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19 Virus) in the environment (surfaces, sunlight, humidity, heat) and with different types of hand sanitizers. The course also describes research behind the use of masks, eye protection and social distancing along with data indicating the virus may be airborne or aerosolized more commonly than thought. Finally, risks and mitigating strategies are described in various retail and community venues.

2) COVID-19 Characteristics of the Virus, Symptoms & Long-Term Disability: The course discusses the characteristics of the SARS-CoV-2 virus along with the body's immune response and dwindling prospects for herd immunity. Characteristics of COVID-19 along with protracted recovery and disability is also discussed.

3) COVID-19: Presentation In Children and When To Open Schools: The course discusses the various presentations of COVID-19 in children, and the risk of childhood transmission to and infections of adults. Current guidance on opening of schools along with international experience on school openings is also discussed.

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Y4p6C0mORiM>

=====

To subscribe to Health Watch USAsm
newsletter go to:

<https://healthwatchusa2016.hosted.phplist.com/lists/?p=subscribe&id=1>



Visit and "Like" HW USA's Facebook Page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HealthWatchUsa>

