



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org Dec. 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 Nov. Health Watch USAsm has:

- 5 articles/opeds regarding COVID-19.
- 8 Radio Shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 2 Presentations.

Our 2021 COVID-19 Conference Presentations and additional resources can be accessed from: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/COVID19.htm> & www.healthconference.org

Health Watch USA's June 15, 2021 Annual Conference: COVID-19: A Global Perspective

<http://www.healthconference.org>

Health Watch USA's 2020 Activities Report:

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20201231-HWUSA-Report-2020.pdf>



Why we must listen to science and get vaccinated to beat COVID-19 | Opinion

I am not sure why our citizens continue to listen to those who have stated the pandemic was a hoax and medical personnel were diagnosing cases for money. Some of these same leaders also predicted the attainment of herd immunity after each COVID-19 surge. Many around the world are envious of the COVID-19 resources available in the United States and perplexed why we do not fully utilize them. For the safety of our loved ones, let's become vaccinated, wear masks and utilize home testing. All of these modalities are inexpensive and readily available. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2021/12/01/facts-covid-19-and-why-vaccinations-work/8717665002/) Courier Journal. Dec. 1, 2021. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2021/12/01/facts-covid-19-and-why-vaccinations-work/8717665002/>

Gov. Andy Beshear authorizes COVID-19 booster shots for all Kentucky adults

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, a retired Somerset physician who monitors and writes about COVID-19, said expanding access to booster shots is important with studies showing waning immunity and increasing breakthrough infections among vaccinated individuals. "I think that's a very wise idea," said Kavanagh, chairman of the patient advocacy group Health Watch USA. "Right now, immunity is waning. Everyone who's vaccinated needs to get a booster." Also, Kavanagh said everyone not vaccinated should get vaccinated immediately, even if they've already had COVID-19. Simply having had COVID-19 doesn't ensure immunity and having the infection carries the risks of what's known as "long COVID" — debilitating, lasting effects from the virus including fatigue, headaches, memory loss and other health problems. "Even those mildly affected can develop lasting symptoms of COVID," Kavanagh said.

Without broader vaccination against COVID-19, including booster shots, Kentucky and other states are at risk of yet another outbreak of infection similar to the one that struck in July, as the delta variant continues to circulate, he said. "Unless the rate of people who get boosters increases, I think we'll be in for another surge in cases," Kavanagh said. Courier Journal. Nov. 17, 2021. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2021/11/17/beshear-authorizes-covid-vaccine-booster-shots-all-kentucky-adults/8653861002/>



COVID-19 Omicron May Be More Infectious, Deadlier Than Delta

If the infectivity, lethality, and immune avoidance of the Omicron variant is confirmed, it will be of utmost importance that all who can, become vaccinated. In addition, antiviral medications will become of prime importance. Omicron appears to be much more transmissible than the Delta variant. It is already spreading around the globe and is reported to be increasing exponentially in regions where it has taken hold. The epicenter of the Omicron variant is in Gauteng Province, South Africa. As can be seen from the graph below, hospitalizations tripled in just 2 weeks. [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-omicron-may-be-more-infectious-deadlier-than-delta). Infection Control Today. Nov. 29, 2021. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-omicron-may-be-more-infectious-deadlier-than-delta>

Smallpox Scare Offers Lessons About COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake

The recent story of finding previously unknown smallpox vials at the bottom of a deep freezer in Pennsylvania should serve as a reminder of the need for the strictest research precautions when handling dangerous pathogens and the dangers of any virus research program, especially gain of function research. Unfortunately, the vaccine hesitancy movement has placed us all at high risk for infectious disease. Those who are against mandatory vaccinations of frontline workers need to take a page from history and follow the lead of the Continental Army where an estimated 90% of the deaths were from infectious disease. After smallpox mandates were enacted in 1777, "the isolated infections that sprung up among Continental regulars during the southern campaign failed to incapacitate a single regiment." With SARS-CoV-2 we are significantly weakening our nation by not abiding by public health advice and widely embracing vaccinations. [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/smallpox-scare-offers-lessons-about-covid-19-vaccine-uptake). Infection Control Today. Nov. 17, 2021. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/smallpox-scare-offers-lessons-about-covid-19-vaccine-uptake>

Confused Messaging About Boosters Might Cause 5th Wave of COVID

There is growing evidence that the fully vaccinated should be defined as having 3 doses of an mRNA vaccine. The evidence is clear, and the path evident, we must expand our efforts to stop viral spread, including the upgrading of indoor ventilation along with the use of masks by all in public settings and expansion of home testing. But above all we need to offer boosters to all adults who are more than 5 to 6 months post receiving an mRNA vaccine. [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/confused-messaging-about-boosters-might-cause-5th-wave-of-covid). Infection Control Today. Nov. 15, 2021. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/confused-messaging-about-boosters-might-cause-5th-wave-of-covid>

Natural Immunity vs. Super Immunity: Only a COVID-19 Vaccination Away

Many believe that super immunity can develop in those who have had SARS-CoV-2 infections and have become vaccinated. Meanwhile, fully vaccinated may mean getting 3 doses, not 2. The bottom line is that all need to be vaccinated, even those who have had previous infections. The definition of fully vaccinated for mRNA vaccines needs to be changed to 3 doses, making previous comparisons of infection versus 2 doses of a vaccine mute. In addition, those previously infected should also become vaccinated. How many doses and the exact vaccination schedule is still under investigation. But for now, those receiving 2 doses of an mRNA vaccine should obtain a booster and those with a previous infection should become “super-immune” with a vaccination. [References](#). Infection Control Today. Nov. 2, 2021. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-booster-policy-in-flux-from-super-immunity-to-3-dose-discussions>

Health Watch USA - Presentations



COVID-19: Cardiac Manifestations in the Young and Occupational Health For Front Line Workers.

Carol A. Clancy, NP-C, MSN, presents a severe case of COVID-19 in a young family member who developed severe myocarditis requiring ECMO but had few pulmonary symptoms. This case underscores the occupational health risks encountered by even young frontline workers. The pharmaceutical industry

implemented a robust system to protect their workers, including weekly COVID-19 testing, access to onsite and home testing as needed, availability of abundant PPE, upgrading building ventilation systems, the ability for workers to work from home (if able), and paid sick leave with presumptive short-term disability. Many other sectors of the healthcare industry did not provide this degree of support for frontline workers. Health Watch USASM Meeting. Nov. 17, 2021.

https://youtu.be/sHfalhc_Owg

Who Gets the Lung? Vaccinated or Unvaccinated?

Kevin Kavanagh, MD: “One person with COVID-19 can spend months in the ICU, which would prevent 10 or 20, non-COVID-19 cases from going to the ICU, whether it’s for a coronary bypass, or just angioplasty, or getting a cancer procedure. You have 10 or 20 times the number of patients that can’t get care for other serious illnesses.” There are some people who really don’t think that this is serious enough to act. And, again, that’s some of the disinformation and the idea of compound interest that “well, you know, we’re not seeing a whole lot of change this year so it’s not something we have to worry about.” I think that there will definitely be a lot of carrots out there and examples to try to encourage people to get vaccinated. On the other hand, I’m seeing some sticks starting to emerge. Singapore is starting to implement no longer paying for COVID-19 related illnesses that occur in people who voluntarily are unvaccinated. Infection Control Today. Nov. 26, 2021.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/who-gets-the-lung-vaccinated-or-unvaccinated->

Animal Kingdom: COVID-19 Has So Many Hosts to Choose From.

Kevin Kavanagh, MD: "The deer apparently live with COVID-19 quite well, but, yet rapidly spread it amongst the herds. And that's actually very problematic, because if it finds a host that it doesn't make sick, but yet it can mutate and change and then reinfect other animals and plus mankind, that is one of the worrisome scenarios that could take place." Infection Control Today. Nov. 22, 2021.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/animal-kingdom-covid-19-has-so-many-hosts-to-choose-from> YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/RMjHcFxi1U>

Radio / Podcasts



COVID-19: The Omicron Variant, Gauteng Province, SA, Hospitalizations Increase 3-Fold in 2-Weeks

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA(sm) reviews the known information about the Omicron Variant. The variant was detected in Gauteng Province, South Africa where hospitalizations have increased 3-fold over a 2-week period. The case fatality rate is not known nor is it known how

effective the vaccines are against this variant. The Omicron Variant has over 30 mutations on its spike protein which may help it evade immunity. Most experts feel the mRNA vaccines will offer a degree of protection and boosters are of utmost importance. Those who have had a natural infection should also boost their immunity by becoming vaccinated. Travel bans are important short-term measures to buy time for reformulation of the vaccine and the production and distribution of antiviral medications. Pfizer is reporting distribution problems of its vaccine in South Africa with only 19 million of the 30 million delivered doses being administered. Jack Pattie Show. Nov. 29, 2021.

<https://youtu.be/7z6ubfjibfg>

COVID-19: Virus Spreading in Deer, Mandates, Children & COVID-19 Infections.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA(sm) discusses the new report of the COVID-19 virus spreading in the deer in Iowa. 80% of the deer have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in Iowa. This follows a report earlier this year where 40% of the deer tested positive in the States of Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York. In addition, the topic of vaccine mandates, vaccinations in children and that vaccines prevent the spread of the virus were discussed. To reopen our economy, workers must feel safe and be protected. Vaccines, proper PPE and following public health advice are crucial to allow this to happen. Jack Pattie Show. Nov. 5, 2021. <https://youtu.be/wvUzpL3JZXk>

COVID-19: Natural (Infections) Versus Vaccine Immunity

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA(sm) discusses the new CDC study which found immunity from vaccines gave over five times the immunity as from natural infection. In addition, the importance of vaccinating children to COVID-19 was stressed. Children make up about 24% of cases and there is approximately a 2% rate of hospitalization and in hospitalized children up to a 14% chance of

developing Long COVID-19. Finally, vaccine mandates in frontline workers is also discussed. Jack Pattie Show. Nov. 1, 2021. (6:32) <https://youtu.be/Zf5s2HGes0Q>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

COVID-19 can enter placenta, cause stillbirth - new Israeli study

"Mothers infected with COVID-19 can transfer the disease to the placenta and baby resulting in stillbirth, a new study by researchers from Samson Assuta Ashdod University Hospital found. In some cases of stillbirth, a higher level of the virus was found in the fetus than even in the sick mother. And, in all cases, substantial damage to the placental tissue was found."

<https://www.ipost.com/health-and-wellness/coronavirus/covid-19-can-enter-placenta-cause-stillbirth-new-israeli-study-687386>

Patients Went Into the Hospital for Care. After Testing Positive There for Covid, Some Never Came Out.

"More than 10,000 patients were diagnosed with covid in a U.S. hospital last year after they were admitted for something else, according to federal and state records analyzed exclusively for KHN. The number is certainly an undercount, since it includes mostly patients 65 and older, plus California and Florida patients of all ages.

Yet in the scheme of things that can go wrong in a hospital, it is catastrophic: About 21% of the patients who contracted covid in the hospital from April to September last year died, the data shows. In contrast, nearly 8% of other Medicare patients died in the hospital at the time."

<https://khn.org/news/article/hospital-acquired-covid-nosocomial-cases-data-analysis/>

Mandates. A well-organized campaign. No politics. How Puerto Rico's vaccine drive turned into a success

"That mission has been so successful it's the envy of the mainland U.S. Puerto Rico has fully vaccinated a higher percentage of its population than any state. As of last week, 2.3 million people in Puerto Rico are fully vaccinated, or 89.7% of adults and 71.5% percent of the entire population. The 3,500-square-mile island may seem an unlikely place to surpass all U.S. states and territories (other than tiny Palau), being poorer than all other states and more populous than similarly successful places like Vermont — and while still reeling from natural disasters, fiscal crises, and political upheaval."

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/03/mandates-a-well-organized-campaign-no-politics-how-puerto-ricos-vaccine-drive-turned-into-a-success/>



COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Global Perspective

Health Watch USAsm &
Massachusetts Nurses Association

White Paper: COVID-19 lessons learned: a global perspective

On June 15, 2021, infectious disease authorities from around the world participated in a joint webinar to share experiences and lessons learned in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the overriding goals of the conference “COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Global Perspective” was to provide documentation of worldwide COVID-19 response strategies, in order to combat the plethora of misinformation and conspiracy theories that are being actively disseminated. This misinformation is having a profound negative impact on controlling the pandemic in many countries. Misinformation which was addressed in the conference included challenging the seriousness of COVID-19 infections, a refusal to recognize aerosolization as the major mechanism of spread, a belief that schools can be opened safely without implementation of extensive control strategies, and that masks and vaccines are not effective. A second goal was the identification of common strategies between nations. Common strategies included the implementation of a range of closures, mask mandates, face shields and the need for expanded testing. But of utmost importance there was recognition of the need to implement a coordinated national strategy, which is depoliticized and led by scientists.



ARIC. Aug. 26, 2021.

<https://aricjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13756-021-00992-x>

Conference Videos are Now Available. Continuing Educational Credits through Southern Kentucky AHEC. For more information on continuing education go to www.healthconference.org

COVID-19: Introduction To Suppression Strategies

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses strategies used by many countries including exclusion, elimination, suppression, and mitigation; along with the disruptive influences of misinformation and false hopes for herd immunity. YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/Ej98j5WiGUw>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Australia

Professor Imogen Mitchell, Clinical Director of the Australian Capital Territory COVID-19 Response, discusses lessons learned in Australia. To date there are 910 deaths from COVID-19. If the United States did as well, adjusted for population, we would have lost less than 13,000 individuals. Australia is a federated nation, early on the State and Territories formed a national governing committee, guided by scientists, to formulate and direct the nation's COVID-19 response. Strategies included a zero tolerance for cases with cities imposing lockdowns, masking, physical distancing, along with strong testing and contact tracing for as few as 1 or 2 cases. Travel restrictions and 14-day quarantine were imposed on those entering the country and travel between State and territories was restricted during outbreaks. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/UpFrw3Wdbmw>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Singapore

Dr. Matthias Maiwald, Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Microbiology & Senior Consultant in Microbiology, National University of Singapore, discusses the COVID-19 response in Singapore. Strategies used were social distancing, mask wearing, and the closing of schools and non-essential businesses during a full lock-down. In addition, contact tracing was facilitated by phone app reporting of contacts in Singapore's population. Outbreaks occurred in migrant workers' dorms, and other outbreaks were associated with the airport, a hospital and a shopping mall. At hospitals, all patients were tested for SARS-CoV-2 upon admission and staff were tested every two weeks, if vaccinated; and once a week, if not vaccinated. An important observation was that during the full lock-down, infectious diseases caused by many other respiratory viruses all but disappeared. Rhinoviruses and enteroviruses reappeared 13 weeks after the end of lock-down, later adenoviruses reappeared. However, influenza stayed at a very low level well into 2021. This is a testament as to how effective the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is in comparison to other respiratory viruses, and how difficult it will be to eradicate it around the world. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/-WPQv9ghTy0>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Kenya

Dr. Paul Yonga discusses lessons learned in Kenya. Kenya adopted a suppression strategy guided by a newly formed National Emergency Response Committee. The country utilized regional and localized lockdowns, mandatory masking, curfews and social distancing. Barriers included stigmatization of the disease, large political rallies and a lack of vaccines, the latter of which inhibited the long-term effectiveness of a suppression strategy. There were also poor working conditions for frontline workers and healthcare staff, including a lack of PPE and pay shortages. Currently, Kenya is expecting another wave, possibly driven by the Delta Variant which comprises 90% of sequenced cases in some regions. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/oTOFJiLYa2Q>

COVID-19: India In Crisis -- Vineeta Gupta, MD, JD

Dr. Vineeta Gupta describes the conditions in India and the socioeconomic challenges which inhibit the pandemic's control. The impact of the Delta (B1617.2) Variant on India and the United States is also discussed. <https://youtu.be/vsOj76yBH9g>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Spain

Dr. Jesús Rodríguez-Baño, MD, PhD from University Hospital Virgen Macarena, University of

Sevilla discusses Spain's COVID-19 response. Spain is a federated nation. The country underwent three waves. During the first wave a national emergency was declared, and a hard lockdown was enacted. In the second and third waves regional governments guided the response. During these waves there were limits on gatherings and universal masking was mandated. Spain did not have a well-developed anti-vaccination movement as was seen in other European countries. However, the COVID-19 response became politicized during the second and third waves, a phenomenon seen in several other countries, including the United States. There was also intense discussion over the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Politics and economics took the lead in some of the decisions instead of healthcare, but everyone agreed there needs to be a balance in every decision taken. YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/pWuu10Gg7ro>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Germany

Dr. Sebastian Hoehl presents on COVID-19 lessons learned in Germany. Dr. Hoehl was one of the first to recognize that asymptomatic spread is a major contributor to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In his presentation he discusses strategies used by Germany to quell COVID-19 surges and the importance of frequent testing in the opening of schools. He also discusses the social disparities of COVID-19 and how it targets and disproportionately affects the socially disadvantaged. YouTube Video: https://youtu.be/_9is03QomGI

COVID-19: Lessons Learned In The United Kingdom

Dr. Stephanie Dancer provides an extensive description of how SARS-CoV-2 spreads and the importance of aerosolization. COVID-19 clusters at NHS Lanarkshire, Scotland, was caused by spread from the community, and was transmitted in hospitals by both patients and staff. Corrective measures included the use of masks, opening of windows and minimizing the risks in bathrooms and of toilet plumes. Air exchanges in most hospitals were deficient. They were improved to six complete air exchanges per hour for general wards and ten for bathrooms. Proper building ventilation is of utmost importance in controlling respiratory pathogens.

YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/sMW3wUWUboA>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in the United States

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses how the United States has viewed and dealt with COVID-19. Barriers to true acceptance are exemplified by Kubler-Ross stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Final Acceptance. The role of foreign adversaries and misinformation is discussed and how this is preventing true acceptance of COVID-19 and an effective pandemic response. YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/eV8lBv7ADU4>

COVID-19: Comments Regarding Variants

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh Discusses COVID-19 Variants

1. The Delta Variant detected in The United States & the need for more genomic sequencing to detect community spread.

2. Mutations and Variants can be tracked on the websites.

<https://nextstrain.org/> and <https://outbreak.info/>

3. How Variants are named and How The Spanish Flu Got its Name.

4. Almost all nations in almost all pandemics mitigate the severity and extent of disease and



deaths.

YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/U9Xs6JizJSE>

COVID-19: Veteran Administration's Fourth Mission

Acting Deputy Secretary Carolyn Clancy and Under Secretary Dr. Beth Taylor discusses the Veteran Administration's fourth mission to aid and support state and local health care systems in times of pandemics and other health emergencies. The presentation details the Veterans Administration activities to support health care systems during the COVID-19 pandemic along with lessons learned during the reassignment of resources and staff to support the United States' pandemic response. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/oBtNJeoNW2k>

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