



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> July 1, 2022

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 June Health Watch USAsm had:

- 3 articles/opeds regarding COVID-19.
- 5 Radio Shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 1 Presentation.

Information & Registration for Health Watch USAsm Sept. 14th, 2022 COVID-19 Conference - Frontline Worker Safety: <https://healthconference.org>

Health Watch USA's 2021 Activities Report: <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20211231-HWUSA-Report-2021.pdf>

Health Watch USA's 2020 Activities Report: <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20201231-HWUSA-Report-2020.pdf>

Health Watch USA - News Articles & OpEds



Kentuckians are convinced that COVID is over, but they are wrong.

"Herd immunity" may help end a surge, but the virus quickly adapts and strikes again. As new variants continue to rapidly emerge, the guidance actually becomes simpler: All immunity is waning, and one needs to keep your immunity as strong as possible. This means to stay up to date with your vaccinations and boosters, even if you have had a previous infection. We all need to wear high-quality N95 masks during times of high viral spread. I am not sure how to motivate Kentucky's population to do so. At the very least we need to use our vote to express political feelings, and our love for our neighbors to dictate how we act in public. [References](#) Lexington Herald Leader. June 29, 2022.

<https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article262978263.html>



Long COVID-19 and New Variants: Sounding a Continuing Alarm.

It is easy to become complacent, but the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is not over, and long COVID-19 and the new variants are causing rising concern. published in the New England Journal of Medicine which found that '...data show that the BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5 subvariants substantially escape neutralizing antibodies induced by both vaccination and infection.' In addition, the BA.4 and BA.5 variants may be the most infectious variants to date. Long COVID-19 has been found to occur in 30% of patients treated for COVID-19, and up to 70% have symptoms of brain fog, memory, or other cognitive problems. It also can have a profound impact on the heart and other organs. [References](#) Infection Control Today. June 27, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/long-covid-19-new-variants-sounding-continuing-alarm>

Viewpoint: Battling COVID-19 Disinformation

Much of the denial comes from a lack of understanding of the importance of infectivity and how it increases your chances of getting a severe infection. The best example of this is the high infectivity of the Omicron variant, which resulted in a large number of deaths and hospitalizations. Attending an event in the United States, your chances of dying of Omicron was greater than Delta, but once infected, the opposite is true. Advocating for herd immunity, downplaying the usefulness of masks; along with denying the severe impact of long-COVID and acute infections from SARS-CoV-2 makes little sense. One may choose to ignore disinformation, writing it off to a few uninformed individuals, but unfortunately, there are many. To make matters worse, disinformation can be highly organized, fanning flames that not only have the potential of placing health care workers in jeopardy but also weakening our nation. Hence, I would encourage all to engage in respectful conversations with those who spread disinformation to at least provide an opposing point of view. [References](#) Infection Control Today. June 17, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/viewpoint-battling-covid-19-disinformation>

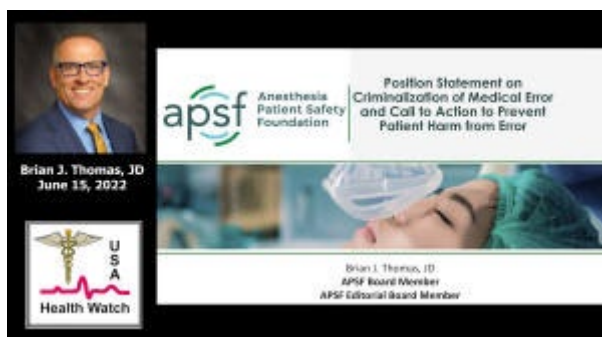


Monkeypox: CDC Raises Travel Alert, But How Much Threat Is it Really?

Many are wondering should we be concerned about Monkeypox or is it just a disease of the week, soon to pass and be forgotten. Current data indicates the former. Cases in the United States have quickly risen, now at 25 confirmed cases and many more are expected to have occurred but not been detected. Worldwide, the number of confirmed and suspected cases has risen to nearly

1000, and spread is continuing. The virus is currently in 29 countries. Where this disease came from will probably be a mystery. Already, there are theories of biolabs and germ warfare circulating on social media. However, the history of this disease shows an increasing incidence in Africa, presumably from waning immunity. At this point, we must be vigilant but so far human-to-human spread of this virus appears to be related to risky behavior and very close physical contact. There are both vaccines and antiviral medications which are effective against Orthopoxviruses. In addition, epidemiological case tracking and public education are expected to bring this outbreak under control. [References](#) Infection Control Today. June 6 2022. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/monkeypox-cdc-raises-travel-alert-but-how-much-threat-is-it-really->

Health Watch USA - Presentations



Just Culture, Normalization of Deviance - The RaDonda Vaught Case

Brian Thomas, JD, Board Member of the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) presents the APSF's position statement on criminalization of medical errors. He reviews the RaDonda Vaught case and the published factors which led up to fatal medical drug error, including system institutional errors. Emphasis was placed on the Normalization of Deviance and the need for a Just Culture.

There is a concerning potential that institutional conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic have deteriorated with increased utilization of floater and agency nurses. The former was a factor in the RaDonda Vaught Case. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. <https://youtu.be/tar6RfQTioo> .

Radio / Podcasts

COVID-19: Mask Up, COVID-19 & Monkeypox on the Rise; Vaccine & Natural Immunity Effectiveness Falls

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm. Hospitalizations and cases are up in Kentucky and Nationally. I suspect this is primarily driven by the BA.4/5 variant which by now comprises about 50% of cases. A recent serological study has found immunity produced by vaccines or prior infection is not nearly as effective, having only about 5% of the neutralizing activity as to the original wild type virus. Fayette County is in the CDC's RED Zone. Important to mask up and use N95 masks. Unfortunately, people reacted the opposite way to mandates and are not wearing masks. But employers should offer curbside pickup with delivering employees wearing N95 masks along with offering hours in the morning where masking is required so high-risk individuals can go shopping. In addition, businesses need to upgrade their ventilation. If at high risk, you need to wear a N95 mask. This affords good protection, but not as good as if others are also wearing them. They are most effective if the asymptomatic carrier is wearing the mask. We wear masks for others. Churches could also implement similar measures. For those not at high risk for hospitalizations, there is still the risk of Long COVID. New research on Long COVID has found SARS-CoV-2 antigens in serum in the majority of patients. Another study out of Australia also found a biomarker for individuals with brain fog and cognitive problems. Most disturbing is research out of the St. Louis VA by Dr. Al-Aly which shows that repeated infections producing Long COVID has accumulative added effect or disease burden. Thus, this is a dangerous virus and we all need to take precautions.

Monkeypox has arrived in Kentucky with one case in Louisville. Cases in the USA are increasing. On June 24th the United States had 201 cases, on June 6th there were only 45 cases. Monkeypox is not as infectious as SARS-CoV-2. There is some evidence it can become airborne but this is not felt to be a major mechanism of spread. It most commonly spreads by surfaces or close contact, especially male-with-male intimate contact. This Monkeypox virus has over 50 mutations and is felt to have undergone "expedited evolution" so it is NOT the same virus which was in Africa some 40 years ago. Monkeypox is just another reason to increase public health practices and improve building ventilation. Jack Pattie Show.

<https://youtu.be/g8fmD6Nwfao>

References

1. Hachmann NP, Miller J, Collier AY. Neutralization Escape by SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Subvariants BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5. NEJM. June 22, 2022. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2206576>
2. Swank Z, Senussi Y, Alter G, Walt D. Persistent circulating SARS-CoV-2 spike is associated with post-acute COVID-19 sequelae. medRxiv. June 16, 2022. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.06.14.22276401v1>
3. Cysique LA, Jakabek D, Bracken SG, et al. Post-acute COVID-19 cognitive impairment and decline uniquely associate with kynurenine pathway activation: a longitudinal observational study. medRxiv. June 7, 2022. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.06.07.22276020v1>

4. Al-Aly Z, Bowe, B, Zie Y. Outcomes of SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection. Research Square. June 17, 2022. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1749502/v1>

5. Isidro J, Borges V, Pinto M, et al. Phylogenomic characterization and signs of microevolution in the 2022 multi-country outbreak of monkeypox virus. Nature Medicine. June 24, 2022. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-022-01907-y>

COVID-19: Kentucky 49th in the Nation, Risks of Long COVID, Vaccines for Young Children.

Only 18% of parents going to get their young children vaccinated right away. Vaccinations in young children were overwhelmingly approved by the FDA and CDC Committees. The Pfizer Vaccine is given in 3 doses and the Moderna Vaccine is a higher dose and given in 2 doses. It is very important that all three doses are given with the Pfizer Vaccine since there is very little protection after 2 doses. Thus, one is vaccinated quicker with Moderna, but Pfizer may have milder symptoms. Severe symptoms are exceedingly rare with both vaccines.

Kentucky is 49th in the nation in their COVID-19 response (Commonwealth Fund). This is not good. There have been a lot of deaths, and long COVID which could have been avoided. One of the things you hear is that this virus is milder and not causing deaths as often. But really the truth is, people are getting more immune. This immunity will blunt surges but then the virus adapts becoming more infectious and developing a greater ability to escape immunity. But if you are not up to date on your vaccination, it places everyone at risk for disease. With the new variants, BA.4 and BA.5, keeping your immunity as high as possible is imperative. A two-dose mRNA vaccination will probably not provide any protection, you need to be boosted and keep up to date on the boosters.

Long COVID was also discussed along with a new study from Brigham and Woman's Hospital which found viral antigens in the majority of Long COVID patients' serum for up to a year after acute infection. This finding supports the true nature of Long COVID and underscores that SARS-CoV-2 is a dangerous virus. Symptoms of Long COVID include cognitive dysfunction (brain fog, memory difficulties, etc.) in up to 70% of patients along with cardiac abnormalities. Jack Pattie Show. June 20, 2022. <https://youtu.be/xUDVZ-2qVvE>

COVID-19: Hospitalizations Up in Kentucky, Monkeypox Up in USA

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the rising cases in COVID-19 along with an uptick in hospitalizations. Nationwide, infections from the BA.4 and BA.5 variant is increasing, comprising over 13% of the sequenced isolates. It is very important that all individuals who are immunocompromised or over the age of 50 be up-to-date on their boosters. In the United States only 67% of the population have a single-dose and 31% have an additional dose. Data has shown that those who are boosted have a higher rate of infection than those who have had a two-dose vaccine. This is to be expected, since they are older, higher risk and may undertake riskier behavior once they receive the booster. Those boosted have a lower rate of infections than the unvaccinated. This week the FDA will evaluate Pfizer's application for vaccination of children less than 5 years of age. Let's wait for the data before deciding. However, if you have a young child going to daycare and have high-risk individuals as caretakers, I would definitely talk to your physician regarding vaccinating your child. Cases of monkeypox is also slowly rising. Monkeypox appears to be primarily spread by MSM along with close contact. Aerosolization is also thought by some

to be a possibility but is not felt to be a major route of spread. Jack Pattie Show. June 13, 2022.
https://youtu.be/8ZaSES1W_40

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

America is Sliding into the Long Pandemic Defeat

The Atlantic: "The White House and the CDC have framed COVID as a problem for individuals to act upon—but action is hard when cases and hospitalizations are underestimated, many testing sites have closed, and rose-tinted CDC guidelines downplay the coronavirus's unchecked spread. In the face of government inaction, the country's best chance at keeping the crisis from spiraling relies on everyone to keep caring. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/06/pandemic-protections/661378/>

North Carolina Hospital Systems Enjoyed Record Profits During Pandemic

After taking taxpayer-funded COVID relief dollars, North Carolina's seven large hospital systems reaped \$7.1 billion growth in cash and financial investments from 2019 to 2021. Seven systems took \$1.5 billion in taxpayer-funded coronavirus relief meant for struggling hospitals, as well as another \$1.6 billion in Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payments from 2020-2021. The dominant hospital systems did not share their profits with disadvantaged patients. Charity care spending fell across a third of 104 hospitals in 2020. <https://www.shpnc.org/what-the-health/nc-hospitals-profit-during-covid> [Click here to download the report \(shpnc.org\)](#)

Outcomes of SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection

First infection with SARS-CoV-2 is associated with increased risk of acute and post-acute death and sequelae in the pulmonary and extrapulmonary organ systems. Compared to non-infected controls, assessment of the cumulative risks of repeated infection showed that the risk and burden increased in a graded fashion according to the number of infections. We show that compared to people with first infection, reinfection contributes additional risks of all-cause mortality, hospitalization, and adverse health outcomes in the pulmonary and several extrapulmonary organ systems (cardiovascular disorders, coagulation and hematologic disorders, diabetes, fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, kidney disorders, mental health disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, and neurologic disorders). The constellation of findings show that reinfection adds non-trivial risks of all-cause mortality, hospitalization, and adverse health outcomes in the acute and post-acute phase of the reinfection.

<https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1749502/v1>

Neutralization Escape by SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Subvariants BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5

Concerning Article: Neutralization Escape by SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Subvariants BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5 "These data show that the BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5 subvariants substantially escape neutralizing antibodies induced by both vaccination and infection." [Neutralization Escape by SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Subvariants BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5 | NEJM](#)

New report: Gains in patient safety have stalled over the past decade

Hospital care helps patients recover from serious illness and injury but, all too often, patients can also be harmed by it. Based on hospital stays exactly 10 years later and using the same methodology as the 2010 report, our new study found that 25% of Medicare beneficiaries experienced harm during inpatient hospital stays, again almost half of which could have been prevented by better care.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/06/16/patient-safety-gains-stalled-over-past-decade/>

Deadly assaults on US medical workers on the rise; recent spate of attacks across nation is 'frightening trend'

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/deadly-assaults-on-us-medical-workers-on-the-rise-recent-spate-of-attacks-across-nation-is-frightening-trend/ar-AAY24I4>

America Is Sliding Into The Long Pandemic Defeat

The White House and the CDC have framed COVID as a problem for individuals to act upon—but action is hard when cases and hospitalizations are underestimated, many testing sites have closed, and rose-tinted CDC guidelines downplay the coronavirus's unchecked spread. In the face of government inaction, the country's best chance at keeping the crisis from spiraling relies on everyone to keep caring.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/06/pandemic-protections/661378/>

Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USA Webinar



Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19 Health Watch USAsm

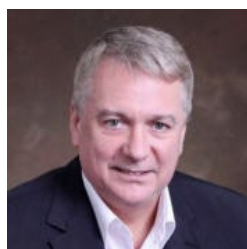
Speakers Will Include:



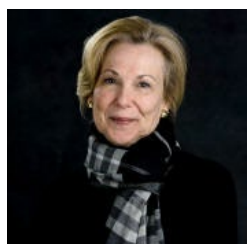
Past Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, MD
– Introduction



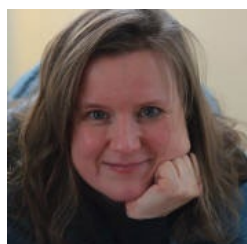
Professor Lidia Morawska, PhD, MSc. "Airborne infection transmission & Impact on Frontline Workers" Time Mag. Top 100 Most influential persons in the World for 2021. (Australia)



Professor Dale Fisher "COVID-19: Protecting Staff, Protecting Patients and Staying Practical", National University Health Systems, Singapore & WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network Steering Committee. (Singapore)



Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD "COVID-19 USA - Lessons and new tools to improve workplace safety" Past White House Coordinator Coronavirus Response (USA)



Professor Nele Brusselaers, MD, PhD "Evaluation of science advice during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden" (Sweden)



Professor Laith Jamal Abu-Raddad, PhD "Immune protection of COVID-19 vaccination and natural infection" (Qatar)



Ziyad Al-Aly, MD "An Overview of Long COVID" (USA)

Register Today . (The event will be all day from 8:45 am to 4:30 pm.

CEUs, CME for a variety of specialties are planned, including Physicians, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Radiologists, Physical Therapists and Social Workers are planned.)

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BqU3RDzseOHEFEpSBKsJW07tYjiupK-Qe9tEINECZFE>

Agenda: https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2022Conference_downloads/20220914-AGENDA-Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-11.pdf

[Download Brochure](#)

For more information go to: <https://healthconference.org> .

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