



# Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Sept. 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 July Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> had:*

- 4 articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 4 Radio Shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 1 Meeting Presentation.

**Information & Registration for Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 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



### **We're facing a triple threat of COVID, monkeypox and polio. Let's take them seriously.**

At the same time as COVID-19 the United States is experiencing a surge in monkeypox, whose main mechanism of spread is from close contact. Needless to say, having intimate contact with strangers will readily spread disease. Having multiple contacts, exponentially fuels a pandemic. With monkeypox, there is no "safe sex." Many feel that because rates of COVID-19 have dropped the virus has become endemic, but we are still having 500 deaths per day in the nation. And cases of Long COVID continue to mount, even in those who are reinfected or develop infections after vaccination. Current rates of cases are too high to be sustained for eternity.

<https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article264598546.html>



### **Viewpoint: We Cannot Afford to Surrender to COVID-19 Now**

Last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) relaxed recommendations which neither control or prevent a rapidly evolving and disabling disease, COVID-19.

However, we must maintain effective efforts to control the spread of the virus. Many of the relaxations appeared to be timed with the opening of schools, ignoring the high rate of COVID-19 related hospitalizations, national deaths hovering just under 500 per day, and the urgent need for a reformulated vaccine, whose delivery is expected in the fall of this year. References Infection Control Today. Aug. 17, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/viewpoint-we-cannot-afford-surrender-covid-19-now>

## **A Call for Action: The Triple Threat of Polio, Monkeypox, and SARS-CoV-2**

The US is at substantial risk of having a reemergence of polio, the largest outbreak of monkeypox in the world and is enduring repeated surges of SARS-CoV-2 variants. Rapid and aggressive public health interventions are needed. If the resistance we have seen in attempting to stop SARS-CoV-2 becomes commonplace with other pathogens, we will be no better off dealing with disease than in the Middle Ages. It is apparent we cannot simply vaccinate our way back to normal. We must also encourage the public to adopt public health strategies, including the wearing of N95 masks, avoiding close contact with strangers, and improved indoor ventilation. Now, more than ever, infection preventionists are needed to turn this tide around. References Infection Control Today. Aug. 8, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/a-call-action-triple-threat-polio-monkeypox-sars-cov-2>

## **The 16th annual conference will highlight speakers from around the globe, offer continuing education credits, and will be held as a webinar on September 14, 2022.**

"We are very pleased to have a number of world renown speakers ranging from Professor Lidia Morawska, one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the world, regarding her work on the aerosolization of SARS-CoV-2; and Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly who had published a string of groundbreaking articles in Nature regarding the long-term effects of long COVID," Kevin Kavanagh, MD, MS, and the Board Chairman for Health Watch USA told Infection Control Today®. "The conference also will not be without examining the impact of lessons learned and a critical look at the United States' response by Dr. Deborah Birx and Sweden's response by Dr. Nele Brusselaers. Other topics will include an examination of personnel protective equipment, including masks, surface disinfection, vaccines, and natural immunity. The event will conclude with presentations regarding the increasing incidence of workplace violence and a panel discussion on the inertia and barriers encountered in our health care system to correct many of the problems." Infection Control Today. Aug. 4, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/the-2022-health-watch-usa-conference-will-examine-frontline-work-safety-during-covid-19>



### **J.D. Power: Mail-order pharmacies a growing threat to brick-and-mortar retailers**

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., founder of the patient advocacy group Health Watch USA, sees the benefit of more care being provided at pharmacies, noting that the COVID-fighting oral antiviral pill Paxlovid "can produce life-

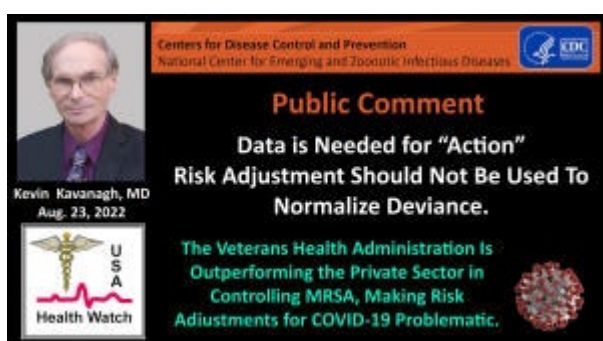
threatening drug interactions with a number of commonly prescribed medications, including cholesterol medications and anticoagulants. A pharmacist is the key healthcare professional to advise on the needed medication adjustments." Kavanagh notes that not too many years ago, the only health service that a pharmacy might provide would be blood pressure readings. He predicts that "in the future, we will see treatments and testing for other common diseases spill over to the pharmacy and allied healthcare providers. A1C monitoring for diabetes and home testing for MRSA carriers are examples." And while Amazon's home delivery network represents a threat to any industry, even pharmacy, Kavanagh believes that many patients "will not want to wait for up to a day for their COVID-19 test and medication, and having a local healthcare provider who can readily consult with your physician when needed is a distinct advantage." Fierce Healthcare. Aug. 2, 2022. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/retail/jd-power-mail-order-pharmacies-growing-threat-brick-and-mortar-retailers>

## Health plans will soon be footing the bill for COVID-19 shots, tests

“The loss of [governmental] financial support for vaccinations and testing can only be expected to fuel the pandemic,” Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., founder and president of the patient advocacy group Health Watch USA, said in an interview. “At this point, it is unclear to what extent this shortfall will be picked up by employers or private health insurance coverage. The final cost of the vaccine is also unknown, especially in view of the recent suit filed by Moderna over alleged patent infringement by Pfizer and BioNTech. However, for insurance companies, it is in their best interest to have patients vaccinated and avoid the costs associated with hospitalizations and long COVID. The same is true for private businesses whose workforce is placed at risk by this disease.”

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/health-plans-prepare-cover-covid-19-vaccine-tests>

## Video Presentations



### CDC HICPAC: Need for Data and Risk Adjustment Normalization of Deviance

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> discusses the need for "Data for Action". Too often data is highly adjusted and delayed in its release. Risk adjustment should be done to adjust circumstances which cannot be mitigated not to normalize deviance. Risk adjusting for COVID-19, community levels of MRSA are problematic. The Veterans Health Administration has not experienced

the pandemic MRSA surge that was seen in the private sector. The metric for COVID-19 hospital acquired infections is also severely flawed. Relaxation of school COVID-19 guidance is problematic with the high rate of deaths and hospitalizations in the United States along with the teacher and bus driver shortage. It would be much more pragmatic to wait until the BA.5 booster is available in the next few weeks. Public comment given before the CDC's HICPAC meeting on Aug. 23, 2022.

<https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-Presentations/20220823-CDC-HICPAC-PublicComment.htm>

Written Comment Can Be Viewed At: [https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Presentations-Community/PDF-Downloads/20220823-CDC\\_HICPAC-Meeting-Comment.pdf](https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Presentations-Community/PDF-Downloads/20220823-CDC_HICPAC-Meeting-Comment.pdf)

## Birx: Every New Infection, Loss Should be Considered a Failure of US Medical Infrastructure

Ambassador Deborah Birx said in an exclusive interview with ICT® that there are “extraordinary structural barriers in the US to access” medical care. Individuals may have insurance, but they cannot access care. Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD, will be presenting about this topic, titled, “COVID-19 USA - Lessons and new tools to improve workplace safety “at the Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19: A Global Perspective” a Health Watch USAs Webinar on September 14, 2022. Birx is a world-renowned medical expert and leader whose long career has focused on clinical and basic immunology, infectious disease, pandemic preparedness, vaccine research, and global health. Birx also served as a US Army Colonel and later, running some of the most high-profile and influential programs at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US Department of State.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/birx-every-new-infection-loss-should-be-considered-failure-us-medical-infrastructure>

### **Monkeypox: Birx Says We Are Not Ready for a New Pandemic**

Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD, told Infection Control Today® exclusively, “Every mistake that we made with COVID-19 in January and February of 2020, repeated in real time with monkeypox.” Aug. 18, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/monkeypox-birx-says-we-are-not-ready-new-pandemic>

## **Radio / Podcasts**

### **The Triple Threat of Polio, Monkeypox and SARS-CoV-2**

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> discusses the triple threat of Polio, Monkeypox and SARS-CoV-2. Polio has reemerged in the United States with a single case in New York. For every single case of paralytic polio there are 200 to 300 other cases which are undetected. Polio spreads silently mostly causing mild illness with approximately 72% of cases being asymptomatic. Seven wastewater samples were found to be positive and community spread is suspected. In rural New York only 60% of individuals are vaccinated. Vaccination rates would have to be between 80% to 85% before spread would stop.

Monkeypox is also undergoing exponential spread in the United States. It is spread by skin-to-skin close contact. The virus is related to smallpox and although its mutation rate is low, it can evolve to a more dangerous form. It can also enter the rodent population, if it does this in the United States, we will not be able to eliminate the disease.

Finally, a new SARS-CoV-2 variant, BA.4.6 is spreading which is outcompeting the BA.5 variant. It is not known if it can escape immunity or causes more severe disease. A new report from Yale Univ. estimates that testing all participants on the day of an event will lower spread by 50%. Jack Pattie Show. Aug. 8, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20220808-JackPattie.htm>

### **CDC Relaxes Guidelines for COVID-19, Monkeypox and Polio Continue to Spread**

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> discusses the relaxation of CDC recommendations for controlling COVID-19. It may not be prudent to relax guidelines at a time of high viral levels and before the reformulated vaccine is available to the public. Nationally, SARS-CoV-2 is still causing almost 500 deaths per day and there is a new formulated vaccine in production. I would at least wait until the new vaccine has been formulated and distributed. There are significant risks of Long COVID, even in the young. As the CDC has relaxed guidelines the FDA recommends that those who are infected rapid test negative three times over 5 days before they have close contact with others. And there is a study out of Harvard and the Boston Public Health Commission which again shows that schools which successfully implement masking have a lower rate of COVID-19 infections. In this study 30% of all infections were attributed to unmasking policies. Polio also appears to be spreading as is monkeypox. Polio has been detected in the wastewater of New York City and cases of monkeypox are still exponentially rising. Retail establishments need to offer:

- Curbside pickup with masked personnel delivering purchased items.
  - A few hours each week for mandatory masking so at-risk individuals can shop in a safer environment.
  - Improvements in indoor ventilation.
-

-- Encourage and purchase N95 masks.

Schools need to improve indoor ventilation and institute masking during times of high viral spread. Children can still become severely sick, although relatively infrequent. Of greater concern is children spreading the virus to caregivers and the risks of Long COVID.

Vaccinations for polio are key to stopping spread since it has an asymptomatic rate of spread of approximately 75%. Only 1 in 200 develop paralytic polio and only 1 in 2,000 to 1 in 10,000 will die. But polio has a propensity to affect children and can cause lifelong paralysis. One needs between 80 to 90% of individuals vaccinated before spread will stop. Unfortunately, unvaccinated individuals tend to congregate together at political and social events which allows the virus to spread. There is a risk that our relaxed attitude with COVID-19 will spill over into our preventative efforts with polio. With monkeypox, there is not enough vaccines and people need to avoid close intimate contact with strangers. Jack Pattie Show with Kruser. Aug. 15, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20220815-JackPattie.htm>

### References

1. Beneficial Effects of Schools and Masking.  
<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.08.09.22278385v1>
2. FDA guidance on when to come out of isolation.  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2022/08/11/covid-fda-pass-three-home-tests/10279150002/>
3. Yale study regarding rapid-testing participants on the day of the event to reduce SARS-CoV-2 spread.  
<https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article>

View Presentation: <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20220815-JackPattie.htm>

## COVID-19 Articles of Interest

### Walensky, Citing Botched Pandemic Response, Calls for C.D.C. Reorganization

"Among other flaws, the public guidance during the coronavirus pandemic was "confusing and overwhelming," the agency said." "For 75 years, C.D.C. and public health have been preparing for Covid-19, and in our big moment, our performance did not reliably meet expectations," Dr. Walensky said in a startling acknowledgment of the agency's failings. "My goal is a new, public health, action-oriented culture at C.D.C. that emphasizes accountability, collaboration, communication and timeliness."  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/17/us/politics/cdc-rochelle-walensky-covid.html>

### Confusing Guidance

#1. CDC states no need to quarantine. If infected you need to isolate for 5 days, and if no symptoms for 1 day you can return without testing, but still wear a mask.

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/100181>

#2. New recommendation issued Thursday by the Food and Drug Administration. FDA just stated you need three negative home tests over 5 days before being cleared for close contact with others.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2022/08/11/covid-fda-pass-three-home-tests/10279150002/>

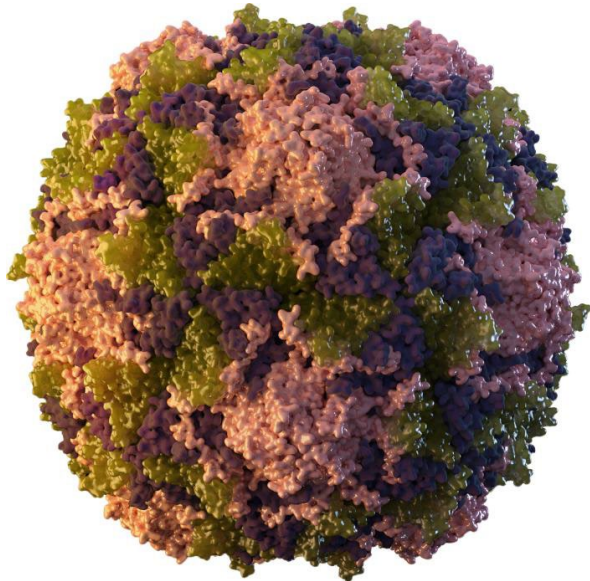
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## Your first brush with coronavirus could affect how a fall booster works

People's immune memories are dominated by their first experience with the virus...depending on when they were infected or vaccinated, and with what variants or vaccines .. It's a phenomenon known by the forbidding name of original antigenic sin.... Even though a revamped vaccine is unlikely to be a game changer, an omicron-based booster is urgently needed...

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/08/22/coronavirus-immune-response-boosters/>

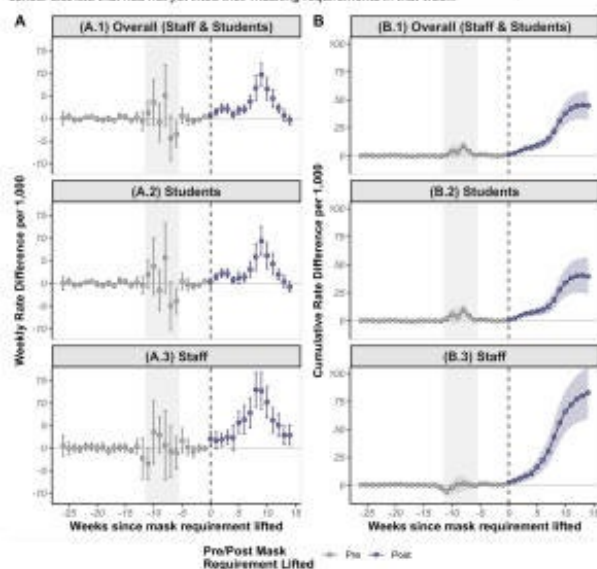


**Possible Community Spread of Polio.** One case of polio has been reported in Rockland County, United States, but the virus has been found in 7 wastewater samples in two adjacent counties. To make matters worse, the rural areas of New York have low vaccination rates to polio. Rockland County's rate is 60.3% and adjacent Orange County is 58.7%. Since 72% of cases of polio are asymptomatic and asymptomatic spread can occur days to weeks after an infection, there is concern of community spread in the United States. Whether it is Polio, Monkeypox or SARS-CoV-2 we need to slow down the spread of the virus. Vaccinations are one of the major tools to help us accomplish this.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/polio-virus-found-ny-wastewater-recent-case-87943328>

## Recent study (not peer reviewed yet) regarding the effect of removing masking in the State of Mass. Schools. There was a significant increase in COVID cases. (From Harvard and Boston University)

**Figure 3.** Weekly (A) and cumulative (B) differences in rate of COVID-19 overall (top), among students (middle) and among staff (bottom) in school districts that lifted masking requirements compared to school districts that had not yet lifted their masking requirements in that week.<sup>7</sup>



Impact of Lifting School Masking Requirements on Incidence of COVID-19 among Staff and Students in Greater-Boston Area School Districts: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis (From Boston Public Health Commission, Boston University and Harvard).

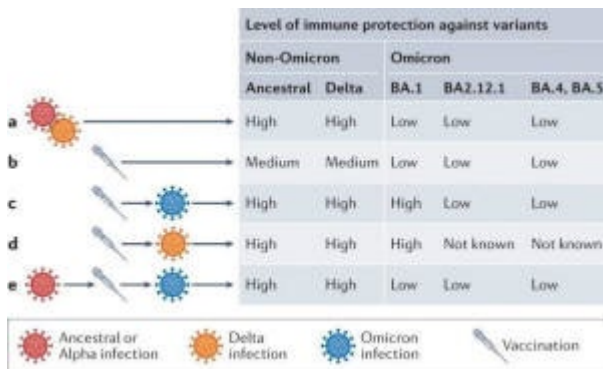
Before the statewide school masking policy was lifted, there was no statistically significant difference in case rate trajectories between school districts. However, weekly and cumulative case rates were significantly higher in students and staff in school districts that removed masking requirements, compared to districts that had not yet lifted requirements. We estimate that lifting of school masking requirements was associated with an additional 44.9 (95% CI: 32.6, 57.1) COVID-19 cases per 1,000 students and staff over the 15 weeks since the lifting of the statewide school masking requirement, representing nearly 30% of all cases

observed in schools during that time.

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.08.09.22278385v1>

### Other studies which found a positive effect in schools include:

1. Association Between K–12 School Mask Policies and School-Associated COVID-19 Outbreaks — Maricopa and Pima Counties, Arizona, July–August 2021  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e1.htm>
2. Pediatric COVID-19 Cases in Counties With and Without School Mask Requirements — United States, July 1–September 4, 2021 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e3.htm>
3. Studies Show More COVID-19 Cases in Areas Without School Masking Policies  
<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0924-school-masking.html>



### SARS-CoV-2 hybrid immunity: silver bullet or silver lining?

Hybrid immunity emerged as a form of ‘super immunity’ in 2021, when convalescent people receiving vaccine doses were found to have neutralizing antibody titres on average 50-fold higher than unvaccinated convalescent individuals. As breakthrough infections emerged in vaccinated people, hybrid immunity became an established arm of the anti-SARS-CoV-2 immune landscape.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41577-022-00771-8>

### Association of Receiving a Fourth Dose of the BNT162b Vaccine With SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Health Care Workers in Israel

In this multicenter cohort study of 29 611 health care workers in Israel, the breakthrough infection rate among those who received 4 doses was 6.9% compared with 19.8% in those who received 3 doses. These findings suggest that a fourth vaccine dose was effective in preventing breakthrough COVID-19 infections in health care workers, helping to maintain the function of the health care system during the pandemic.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2794864>

### Yale scientists say testing for COVID-19 at door of events reduces spreading risk by almost half

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/yale-scientists-say-testing-for-covid-19-at-door-of-events-reduces-spreading-risk-by-almost-half/ar-AA104K16>

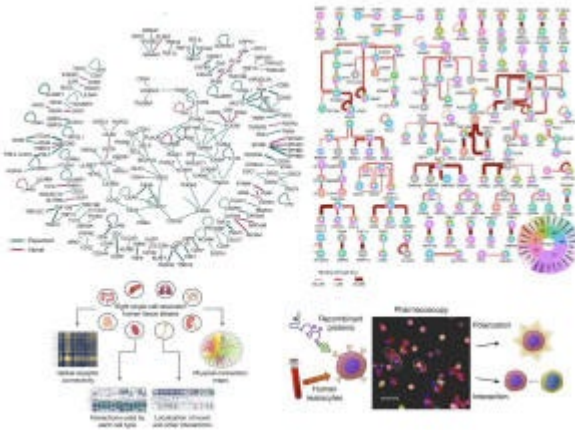
### Yale School of Public Health

Traveling or considering a night on the town? Best time to test for COVID is right before you leave, The team’s research, published in the International Journal of Public Health, is the first to use statistical analysis to gauge how effective test-timing strategies are at limiting the spread of COVID-19. Ideally, the researchers said, people should be tested on the day of an event to best protect others in their immediate social or work group. Policies that require people to have a negative COVID test within 72 hours or more of their arrival at a location — which many countries enforce for travelers — hardly help, the researchers said. <https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article/traveling-or-considering-a-night-on-the-town-best-time-to-test-for-covid-is-right-before-you-leave/>

## Vaccine Effectiveness of BNT162b2 Against Omicron in Children Aged 5-11 Years: A Test-Negative Design

"In children aged 5-11 years, two doses of BNT162b2 provide moderate protection against symptomatic Omicron infection and high protection against severe outcomes. Protection wanes more rapidly for infection than severe outcomes. Longer dosing intervals may confer higher protection against symptomatic infection in the short-term, but further evaluation of the duration of the observed protection is needed."

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4176388](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4176388)



### A physical wiring diagram for the human immune system

Adapted from Tweet Dr Eric Topol:

<https://twitter.com/EricTopol/status/1554868139665473536?s=20&t=Y2sp5T592S3FI3rzo6xtKg>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-022-05028-x>

## Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USA Webinar

### Frontline Workers: A Global Perspective



### Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19

Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>

[Download Brochure](#)

For more information go to:

<https://healthconference.org>

### 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>

**Continuing Education.** The webinar is approved for 6 credit hours of Category I AMA Continuing Education and ANCC nursing credits for 6 hours. In addition, 6 hours of continuing education is provided for Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, Denistry and Social Work. 7.2 hours of continuing education is provided through the Kentucky Board of Nursing. Credits are pending for Radiology and Occupational Therapy. More information at <https://healthconference.org> There is no charge for continuing education credit hours.

**Agenda:** [https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2022Conference\\_downloads/20220914-AGENDA-Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-12.pdf](https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2022Conference_downloads/20220914-AGENDA-Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-12.pdf)

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