



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

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

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

In the Month of Sept. Health Watch USAsm had:

- 1 Article/op-ed regarding COVID-19.
- 6 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



Oct. 14, 2022 Have you recovered from COVID-19, or Just Survived?

A recent controlled study from the Institute of Health and Wellbeing and the Public Health of Scotland found that almost half of COVID-19 patients have persistent

symptoms at 6 months; and that the percentage of patients with symptoms did not change over an 18 month period. The additive effects of Long COVID with repeat infections, combined with the long-term persistence of Long COVID systems, does not bode well for the United States' workforce. N95 masks, vaccines, boosters and improvements in ventilation are keys to prevention. Currently, the Brookings Institute estimates that 2 to 4 million workers, or approximately 2% of the United States Workforce is not working because of Long COVID. Vaccines and boosters offer a degree of protection. The young have been observed to have a greater incidence of Long COVID than the elderly. This is not necessarily because they have a propensity to develop the disease, but because they are less likely to be vaccinated and boosted. Infection preventionists need to educate our population regarding the dangers of long COVID and repeated infections, encourage the wearing of N95 masks in indoor venues, monitor facility ventilation with CO2 levels as a surrogate for adequate ventilation, and have MERV-13 filters installed in central HVAC systems. Finally, to prevent the spread of highly infectious airborne pathogens, upper room germicidal UV-C lighting should be installed. [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/have-you-recovered-covid-19-just-survived-) Infection Control Today. Oct. 14, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/have-you-recovered-covid-19-just-survived->



Health insurers can run, but they can't hide: Tough long COVID coverage decisions on the horizon

Meanwhile, 14.9% of people 18 to 29 years old have experienced long COVID, and 16% of those 30 to 39

years old have had it, a point that's too often overlooked, said Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., the president and founder of the patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA. "This underscores the reason why using deaths and hospitalizations to judge risks to the young is inappropriate because a major risk is long COVID," Kavanagh tells Fierce Healthcare. "This also may well be true of younger children in school." Long COVID puts health insurers in a tough spot because while there isn't a test for individual patients "there are several biomarkers along with changes on MRI scans on patient populations which show that this is a true disease," Kavanagh said. "One of the main effects of COVID-19 are the biological and anatomical changes it produces. They are associated with changes in memory and concentration, as well as somebody's personality and their psychological well-being." Fierce Healthcare. Oct. 10, 2022.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/health-insurers-can-run-they-cant-hide-tough-long-covid-coverage-decisions-way>

Highly evasive BQ.1.1 appears on CDC's COVID-19 variants charts for first time

Kavanagh said BQ.1.1 "appears to be doubling every week. Data from CDC appears delayed in being posted on this variant. Once it became apparent in the last few weeks that the variant is having a significant impact, the data were separated."

As far as his patient advocacy concerns, Kavanagh added that "this underscores the importance of obtaining the bivalent BA.5 booster. For most individuals, the benefits of the booster far outweigh risks." The take-up of the latest bivalent vaccine has been lackluster, with fewer than 5% of eligible Americans getting inoculated, according to the CDC. Kavanagh suggested that it might be time to reconfigure variant grouping methods. "With different lineages developing similar mutations and the myriad of concerning mutations which are having an impact on viral infectivity and severity, one may need to consider a different method of classification, such as using levels of variant mutations," he said. "A Level 4 Variant would have 4 mutations of concern and a Level 6, six mutations. This may produce a more rapid flagging of variants of concern rather than waiting for data regarding the impact of specific lineages." Fierce Healthcare Oct. 17, 2022.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/highly-evasive-bq11-appears-cdcs-covid-19-variants-charts-first-time>

CDC advisory panel recommends adding COVID vaccine to kids' routine immunization schedule

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., founder and president of the patient advocacy group Health Watch USA, told Fierce Healthcare that "this is a step in the right direction. Children can still get sick from this disease, and they commonly serve as a vector of transmission to both teachers and parents. In addition, this virus poses significant risks to children for long COVID, which we are just now starting to learn about."

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/cdc-advisory-panel-recommends-covid-vaccine-become-part-childs-vaccination-schedule>

Video Presentations & Written Comments



Mitigating the Effect of COVID in Children: The Struggle Continues

Allen Geller, RN, MPH, from the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health discusses COVID-19 in children. COVID-19 is still a serious pandemic in the United States with 350 to 400 total deaths per day. Children can get COVID-19 and develop serious disease. A common misconception is that children do

not spread the disease, but they can spread it to both teachers and caregivers. Schools are one of the great reservoirs for transmission of COVID. For school safety, during high levels of community spread, masking, rapid testing and cohorting are strategies which should be implemented. Students should be vaccinated before the start of the school year. One of the goals for adequate ventilation is at least 6 air exchanges per hour which has led to better health outcome and is important for cognition and reducing school absences. During the pandemic there was approximately a doubling of absenteeism.

- Push for districts to promote vaccinating a large number of 5 to 11 year olds that are still not vaccinated.
- Work with districts to rebuild their COVID dashboards.
- Regular testing of children is supported by two-thirds of parents. Make provisions of rapid antigen tests opt-out rather than opt-in. There is strong support for providing take home rapid tests.
- Strongly reconsider remasking in periods of surges reviewing week by week attendance data.
- Wastewater testing has the potential of being used to monitor for the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 in schools.
- School based attendance records are also important triggers for medical and public health review.
- Portable CO2 monitors should be used to monitor air quality in school rooms.

Health Watch USAsm meeting, Oct. 19, 2022. <https://youtu.be/GAN07fpn5qo>

Radio / Podcasts

COVID-19: Scrabble Variants, CDC Director Tests Positive

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the myriad of immune escape variants which are spreading in the United States. If you have had an infection before the BA.5 surge or a previous booster, it is unlikely that you have adequate protection. The new bivalent booster is designed to boost immunity to the BA.5 variant and its offspring. However, only 10% of the population 65 years of age and older have received this booster. Overall, only 5% of the United States' population has received the new booster. The CDC has expanded eligibility of the bivalent booster down to the age of 5. This is a recommendation not a mandate. And the bivalent booster for this age group is just authorized not approved. However, children can develop Long COVID and they can spread the disease

to others, including their caregivers. The CDC Director has contracted symptomatic COVID, she has had the bivalent booster. Thus, even if boosted you can still become infected and spread the disease, but you should be less likely to be hospitalized or die. Because of the BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 variants, monoclonal antibodies may not be effective, but Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are still good options. Jack Pattie Show. Oct. 24, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221031-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19: BQ.1.1 Variant, Hiding in Plain Sight in the United States

The BQ.1.1 is the great grandson (or daughter) of BA.5. Thus, once it became apparent in the last few weeks that the variant is having a significant impact the data was separated. The BQ.1.1 is doubling every week and is on track to become the dominant variant in our variant soup. Europe is undergoing a surge in infections. The BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 are dominant strains. The hospital association in Germany has asked their government to mandate masks in indoor settings. Despite the looming dangers, only 4.5% of the United States' population have obtained the Bivalent BA.5 booster. Misinformation is key. The most recent came from the Florida Dept. of Health which assumed "a high level of global immunity to COVID-19" and recommended against vaccination of 18- to 39-year-old males. However, myocarditis, as found in their study still pales in comparison to that from an infection. Studies have found infections having a 7 to 11 times higher chance of myocarditis compared to that which can occur from vaccinations, plus with vaccinations and boosters, the myriad of damage from Long COVID can be avoided. Recent studies have found Long COVID to affect between 28% and 48% of individuals with symptomatic COVID-19 and that boosters can cut the chances of developing Long COVID by almost half. This underscores the importance of obtaining the bivalent BA.5 booster. For most individuals, the benefits of the booster far outweigh risks. Jack Pattie Show. Oct. 17, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221017-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19: Level 6 Variants. If 80% of USA's Population is Boosted, 90,000 Lives Will Be Saved.

Kevin Kavanagh, MD, from Health Watch USAsm discusses worrisome variants which are occurring. These include the B.1.1 variant which has been detected in Canada and the United Kingdom, along with a group of variants, Level 6 variants, which share a group of immune evading mutations, that are emerging in Southeast Asia. Level 6 variants can also have different lineages and are an example of convergent evolution, where different lineages take on the same mutations. The need for everyone to obtain the bivalent booster is imperative. The Commonwealth Fund projects that If 80% of the United States' eligible population becomes boosted, 90,000 lives would be saved compared to the current rate of obtaining boosters. The flu season this year may also be more severe, since Australia has had a severe flu season. One can obtain the COVID booster and flu vaccine at the same time. Jack Pattie Show. Oct. 10, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221010-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19: Dr. Nele Brusselaers Discusses the Unfortunate Case of Sweden

Dr. Nele Brusselaers joins Dr. Kevin Kavanagh on the Jack Pattie Show. Dr. Brusselaers discusses her observations regarding the COVID-19 response in Sweden. Dr. Brusselaers felt that early on Sweden did not prepare for the pandemic and was spreading disinformation. Only later did Swedish officials admit the virus was airborne. The main message was to wash your hands but for an airborne infection this strategy will not be protective against infection. Sweden was one of the last to recommend face masks. Sweden is a huge country with a population of 10 million. Thus, the population is not

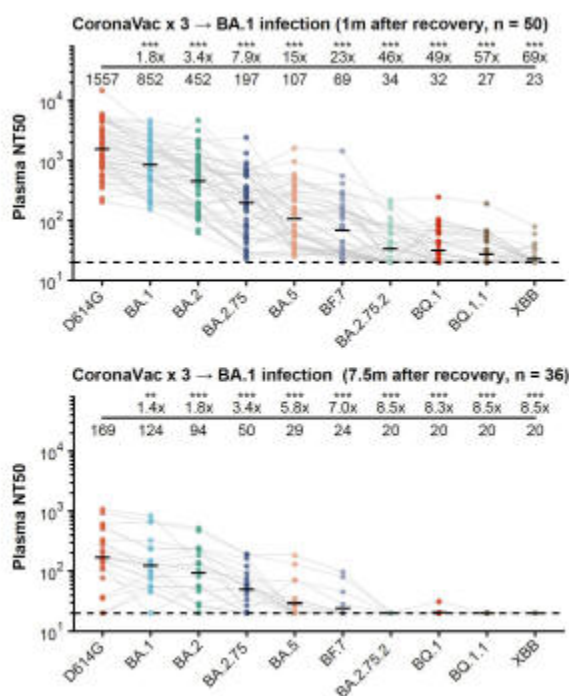
concentrated which should aid in control of infectious disease.

Sweden gained worldwide attention since they were promoting their strategy from the start, but they were not transparent on what was actually happening. There were emails from officials stating children could be used to reach herd immunity. And at the same time publicly stating kids do not get infected.

It was known that young children could spread SARS-CoV-2 and can also become ill. Children can become very sick and be hospitalized. Children do end up in the ICU. Mortality is very low, but children can develop Long COVID. The upper high schools with children older than 16 yrs and colleges were closed and distance learning was utilized. Young children were in school, but parents or teachers were not notified if there were cases of COVID-19 in their schools.

Opening of schools is a priority. Simple measures can reduce the risk. Vaccinations are key, as is placing children in bubbles or cohorting so they are just in contact with a limited number of children. Ventilation and holding classes outside can also make the school safer. Jack Pattie Show. Oct. 7, 2022
<https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221006-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest



New Covid boosters aren't better than old shots at neutralizing omicron BA.5, early studies find

-- Scientists at Columbia and Harvard, in two independent studies, found that the new Covid boosters don't trigger a better response against omicron BA.5 than the old shots.

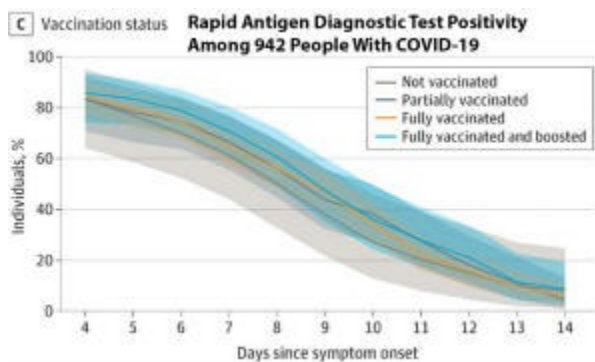
-- The studies are small and preliminary, but they suggest boosters might not be much better at preventing infection and mild illness.

-- But the new boosters appear to produce at least as good an immune response as the old shots, which means they'll still increase protection this fall and winter."

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/10/27/new-covid-booster-shots-dont-protect-better-against-omicron-bapoint5-studies-find.html>

Eric Topol: It's not a good sign when 3 shots and a breakthrough (BA.1) infection (lower panel) doesn't elicit neutralizing antibodies to some of the new variants (BQ.1.1, XBB, BA.2.75.2)

<https://twitter.com/EricTopol/status/1584244397759078402>



COVID-19 Symptoms and Duration of Rapid Antigen Test Positivity During Pre-Delta, Delta, and Omicron BA.1 Periods

"During the Omicron BA.1 period, 5 days after symptom onset, 80% of participants remained positive via a rapid antigen test." After 12 days there is approximately a 20% positivity rate.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2797070>

COVID-19 Origins: Investigating a “Complex and Grave Situation” Inside a Wuhan Lab

"We analyzed WIV documents, consulted with experts in CCP communications, asked biocontainment experts to help analyze documents, and reviewed with independent scientists the possible evidence that certain vaccine research may have begun far earlier than acknowledged. We also traced the hazards that arose as the WIV built a lab to research the world's most dangerous pathogens. Taken together, our reporting provides critical context that is not included in the pared-down 35-page interim report. It offers the most detailed picture to date of the months leading up to the COVID-19 outbreak, including new details on the intense pressure the lab faced to produce breakthrough research, its struggles to grapple with mounting safety issues, and a previously unreported series of references to a mysterious incident shortly before the virus began infecting its first victims."

<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2022/10/covid-origins-investigation-wuhan-lab>

Covid death rates are higher among Republicans than Democrats, mounting evidence shows

Lower vaccination rates among Republicans could explain the partisan gap, but some researchers say mask use and social distancing were bigger factors.

"Average excess death rates in Florida and Ohio were 76% higher among Republicans than Democrats from March 2020 to December 2021, according to a working paper released last month by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Excess deaths refers to deaths above what would be anticipated based on historical trends.

A study in June published in Health Affairs similarly found that counties with a Republican majority had a greater share of Covid deaths through October 2021, relative to majority-Democratic counties."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/covid-death-rates-higher-republicans-democrats-why-rcna50883>

How much for that CT scan? It could be \$4,065 or \$134 — at the same hospital — depending on your health plan.

"In a quarter of hospitals studied, the maximum price negotiated with a commercial health plan for a brain CT scan was at least 10 times higher than the minimum price. Employers' average healthcare costs are expected to increase 6.5% next year, to more than \$13,800 per employee, according to Aon AON, 0.45%. For Affordable Care Act marketplace plans, insurers proposed a median premium

increase of 10% for 2023, according to a July analysis of preliminary rate filings by the Kaiser Family Foundation." Market Watch

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/how-much-for-that-ct-scan-it-could-be-4-000-or-134-at-the-same-hospitaldepending-on-your-health-plan-11666101767>

Study reveals main target of SARS-CoV-2 in brain and describes effects of virus on nervous system

One of the discoveries revealed by the PNAS article is that the virus does not use the protein ACE-2 to invade central nervous system cells, as it does in the lungs. "Astrocytes don't have the protein in their membranes. Research by Flávio Veras [FMRP-USP] and his group shows that SARS-CoV-2 binds to the protein neuropilin in this case, illustrating its versatility in infecting different tissues," Martins-de-Souza said.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-09-reveals-main-sars-cov-brain-effects.html>

Doctor Suggests Bad Yankee Candle Reviews Could Mean COVID is Coming Back

"Reviews complaining about seemingly scentless Yankee Candles could signify an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases according to an anesthesiologist." Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/doctor-jorge-caballero-bad-yankee-candle-reviews-covid-returning-1751579>

Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USA Webinar



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

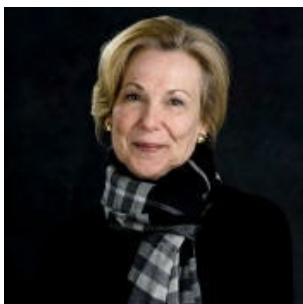


Speakers Included:

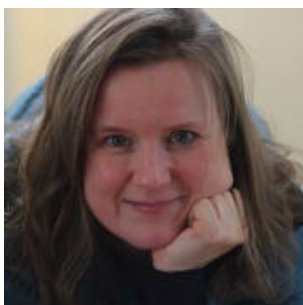
Past Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, MD
– Introduction [View Video](#)



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) [View Video](#)



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



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



Ziyad Al-Aly, MD "An Overview of Long COVID" (USA) [View Video](#)

Continuing Education Currently Available Online

Enduring materials are online and have been 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, Dentistry and Social Work. 7.2 hours

of continuing education is provided through the Kentucky Board of Nursing. Radiology has been approved for 5.5 hrs. Credits are pending for Occupational Therapy.

More information at <https://healthconference.org> There is no charge for continuing education credit hours.

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