



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Jan. 1, 2023

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 Nov. Health Watch USAsm had:

- 6 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 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



A Holiday Card from Health Watch USA. Please share and distribute.

<http://bmacards.com/CV7dR2>



Future Directions for Vaccine Development with considerations of immune imprinting and prevention of spread

"The commentary discusses the continued concerns about COVID-19 vaccine efficacy reduction and what he believes should be done to protect against the further spread." We need a warp

speed on new vaccine development. Why this is not being done is one of the most significant failings of our pandemic response. Until we have a vaccine that stops spread, we need to use N95 masks, avoid crowded indoor venues, and markedly increase indoor ventilation and air sanitization (with upper room UV-C units). Because of immune imprinting, we need to consider the administration of a bivalent or monovalent BA.5 (or current variant) vaccine to COVID-19-naïve individuals, especially young children, as opposed to the monovalent vaccine with the spike protein from the wild-type virus. Finally, we have a new Warp Speed initiative designed to develop mucosal vaccines. Infection Control Today. [References](#) Dec. 27, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/immune-imprinting-prevention-spread>

COVID-19 and Traffic Accidents: Is a COVID-19 Personality

Disorder Caused by Viral Damage to the Prefrontal Cortex?

A study from Canada suggests that not being vaccinated for COVID-19 could mean an individual is at higher risk for an automobile accident. What if it is from brain damage from contracting COVID-19? Right-wing media have ridiculed the American Journal of Medicine article. But this observation may be based in reality with a sound explanation. Suppose COVID-19 produces a lasting COVID-19 personality disorder due to anatomical damage of the orbitofrontal cortex created by SARS-CoV-2 infection. In that case, those segments of the population that shun public health interventions and aggressively seek to stop general health measures may be entering into a vicious cycle of decline. As repeated infections occur, damage to the brain increases, resulting in decreased emotional control and increased aggression. All of this makes it imperative that we slow the spread of this disease and have clear and consistent messaging regarding the risks of COVID-19 and what mitigation procedures can be implemented. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Dec. 20, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-traffic-accidents-covid-19-personality-disorder-caused-viral-damage-prefrontal-cortex->

COVID-19: How to Reduce Spread Without Vaccines and Monoclonal Treatments

With many of the new COVID-19 vaccines not as effective against the new variants, reducing their spread without pharmaceuticals is even more critical. Vaccines are losing their effectiveness. Although their ability to substantially prevent hospitalizations and death has remained intact, the degree of prevention with current variants cannot be determined until we are well into the COVID-19 wave. Now, more than ever, we need to take a layered approach and add non-pharmaceutical strategies to mitigate disease from and spread of SARS-CoV-2. Combined with the risks of long COVID-19, all of this means we need to reemphasize non-pharmaceutical strategies to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Three recent articles have placed renewed emphasis on ventilation, spread by fomites, and outdoor precautions. Dec. 13, 2022. [References](#) Infection Control Today. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-how-to-reduce-spread-without-vaccines-monoclonal-treatments>

Sweden's Pandemic Experiment: A Book Review

Currently, the United States' rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations are increasing, and its response is muted, even paralyzed, with a lack of public consensus. Much of the public's confusion can be

traced back to Sweden's "experience," one which is shrouded in misinformation and the "massaging of data." Of particular interest was the chapter dealing with "Children at the front line of the Covid-19 pandemic" by Johanna Hoog. This chapter delved into the push to keep schools open. The policy appeared to be based upon a misinterpretation of a World Health Organization study where a lack of analysis ("not possible to determine") was reported by the lay press as strong evidence that children do not spread disease. In addition, there was inadequate testing and reporting of cases which masked the outbreaks that did occur. And finally, questions arose regarding how data was presented, data which appeared to mitigate the impact of SARS-CoV-2 on children. Infection Control Today. Dec. 12, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/sweden-s-pandemic-experiment-book-review>



XBB COVID variant presents a unique threat: study

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., is the president and founder of the patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA and has kept a close eye on COVID-19 throughout the pandemic. Kavanagh told Fierce Healthcare that "the most disturbing finding in the study is that this virus is a recombinant virus where two different genomes or genetic materials from viruses were recombined, as opposed to a chance mutation." Kavanagh pointed out that the U.S. healthcare system currently deals with the tripledemic of influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19. Kavanagh said how, in the summer, Texas Children's Hospital had to deal with about 25 cases where children had been infected by RSV and COVID-19 at the same time. "If viruses can start swapping genetic material, then the sky is the limit on the number of variants and the various characteristics which may be produced," says Kavanagh. Kavanagh stressed that a virus created through recombination "can make huge leaps and bounds in changes in its characteristics in a very short period of time. The fact that this has been observed is even more concerning than this virus itself." Fierce Healthcare. Dec. 28, 2022. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/xbb-covid-variant-presents-unique-threat-study>

Recombination between viral species is rare but can occur as outlined in a Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences article entitled "Evidence that a plant virus switched hosts to infect a vertebrate and then recombined with a vertebrate-infecting virus."

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.96.14.8022>

The rampant spread of three different viruses at the same time with co-infections is very problematic. With viruses, rare events only have to happen once to have a profound impact on society.

CDC tallies deaths from long COVID with new code

"The implementation of ICD-10 code U09.9 for cause-of-death coding and standardized guidance for certification of these deaths would facilitate more rapid ongoing surveillance of long COVID deaths".... "Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., founder and president of the patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA, told Fierce Healthcare that "death certificates vastly underestimate the incidence of deaths. Unless there's a checkbox or something on the certificate

for the disease, it is unlikely that it's going to pick up the underlying cause." Kavanagh cites a study published in Nature in April 2021 in which deaths from long COVID among patients in Veterans Health Administration hospitals came to 0.839%, more than twice as many as what NCHS researchers found. Kavanagh adds that other studies have shown COVID affects almost every organ of the body. Some common diseases that individuals die from include heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, lower respiratory disease, stroke and diabetes. "All of which are known effects of the virus," says Kavanagh. "This virus affects the central nervous system, it causes brain fog, cognitive problems. It causes hypercoagulation of the blood, which can cause heart attacks. It's well documented to increase the chances of having diabetes." Fierce HealthCare. De. 14, 2022. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/cdc-touts-code-long-covid-death-certificates>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

The Fast-Spreading New COVID-19 Subvariant XBB Is Part of a 'New Class' of Omicron

"XBB is getting a lot of buzz because it spreads fast—and seems to be able to evade immunity that people have built up from having a previous COVID-19 infection or getting the vaccine, says William Schaffner, M.D., an infectious disease specialist and professor at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. Still, Dr. Schaffner says, "it's early days and we have a lot to learn." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/the-fast-spreading-new-covid-19-subvariant-xbb-is-part-of-a-new-class-of-omicron/ar-AA133Y9C>

Boston health officials issue grim COVID warning ahead of New Year's Eve

"Boston public health officials issued a stark COVID-19 warning Friday ahead of New Year's Eve celebrations this weekend, saying a rise in coronavirus and influenza levels is expected to continue into the New Year. The warning from the Boston Public Health Commission comes as local school administrators asked students and staff to wear masks when they return from winter break next week. And just as hospitals are experiencing "significant strain," the commission said, hundreds of thousands are expected to flock to the city this weekend for First Night events." <https://www.masslive.com/coronavirus/2022/12/boston-health-officials-issue-grim-covid-warning-ahead-of-new-years-eve.html>

See You Safer this New Years!

2 hr ago

Use this checklist to make your New Years gatherings safer, and visit our full Safer In-Person Gatherings guidelines at <http://SeeYouSafer.org>



Advice on how to stay safe from the Peoples' CDC. <http://SeeYouSafer.org>

Half of the passengers on 2 flights from China had COVID: report

"The two flights of sick passengers arrived at Malpensa Airport from China on Monday, Bloomberg reported. On the first flight, 35 out of 92 passengers tested positive for the virus, while on the second, 62 passengers out of 120 were infected, according to Lombardy region's health chief Guido Bertolaso."

<https://nypost.com/2022/12/28/half-of-the-passengers-on-2-flights-from-china-had-covid/>

On the role of different age groups in propagating Omicron epidemics in France

Interesting Preprint (not yet peer reviewed) which found "Children aged 10 to 19 yrs. played the greatest relative role in propagating Omicron epidemics, particularly when schools were open, followed by children aged 0-9y and adults aged 20-29y, as well as adults aged 30-49y."

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.12.22.22283867v1>

"Conclusions Children aged 10-19y played the greatest relative role in propagating Omicron epidemics, particularly when schools were open, followed by children aged 0-9y and adults aged 20-29y, as well as adults aged 30-49y. Persons aged over 50y played a more limited role in propagating Omicron infection in the community. Additional efforts are needed to increase vaccination coverage in children aged 10-19y, as well as younger children and young adults to mitigate Omicron epidemics in the community." <https://lnkd.in/gX5MneEa>

Contact tracing study in South Korea, where 10 to 19 year olds most likely to spread COVID-19 to household contacts. The least likely was the age group 0 to 9. However, as early as 2020 it was observed that children can spread the disease.

<https://lnkd.in/gK9QaXbX>

Masks Are a Proved Way to Defend Yourself from Respiratory Infections

"Respiratory viruses have rebounded hard after COVID seclusion, and masks are one of the best ways to avoid getting them. "...masks can reduce transmission for all respiratory viruses, with no need to tailor the intervention to the specific virus that is circulating. Masks remain a low-cost, low-tech way to keep people healthier throughout the holiday season so that more of us can be free of illness for the time that we value with our family and friends." Scientific American, The Conversation. Dec. 23, 2022 <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/masks-are-a-proven-way-to-defend-yourself-from-respiratory-infections/?amp;text=Masks>

Disruption in seasonality, patient characteristics and disparities of respiratory syncytial virus infection among young children in the US during and before the COVID-19 pandemic: 2010-2022

"There were significant racial and ethnic disparities in the peak RSV infection rate during 2010-2021 and the disparities further exacerbated in 2022 with peak incidence rate in black and Hispanic children 2-3 times that in white children. Among RSV-infected children in 2022, 19.2% had prior documented COVID-19 infection, significantly higher than the 9.7% among uninfected children, suggesting that prior COVID-19 could be a risk factor for RSV infection or that there are common risk factors for both viral infections. " medRxiv. Nov. 29, 2022.

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.11.29.22282887v1>

Staffing data - reporting the 24 hour period of 30 November 2022

Region	Total number of staff absent from work through sickness or self isolation?	Of which, the number of COVID-19 related absences of staff, either through sickness or self-isolation?
England	72,698	7,390
East of England	5,790	525
London	8,836	828
Midlands	15,654	1,889
North East and Yorkshire	14,251	1,299
North West	12,897	1,271
South East	8,543	791
South West	6,727	787

COVID-19 Infections in Healthcare Staff

Healthcare Worker Safety during COVID-19 is of utmost importance. Below is data from the UK's NHS for England. In a 24-hour period, just over of 10% of their healthcare staff is absent due to sickness or isolation from COVID-19.

<https://lnkd.in/gCnDGhZ7>

We need to do better protecting our staff with testing all hospital patients upon admission, periodically testing staff along with providing staff and outpatients with N95 masks.

How Many Republicans Died Because the GOP Turned Against Vaccines?

"About a third of Americans—more than a hundred million people—have yet to get their initial shots. You can find anti-vaxxers in every corner of the country. But by far the single group of adults most likely to be unvaccinated is Republicans: 37 percent of Republicans are still unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated, compared with 9 percent of Democrats. Fourteen of the 15 states with the lowest vaccination rates voted for Donald Trump in 2020. (The other is Georgia.)" The Atlantic. Dec. 23, 2023.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/12/covid-deaths-anti-vaccine-republican-voters/672575/?>

I measured CO2 levels on a plane: It showed me when I was most likely exposed to COVID.

"DENVER – On seat 10D, my eyes flicker between my fellow passengers crammed in the aisle and the carbon dioxide detector balanced on my knee. Here's why travelers may not want to ditch their face masks yet I can't help but shudder a little every time someone coughs or sneezes as they board, and the numbers on the detector climb steadily, from about 800 parts per million to more than 1,600 ppm." USA Today. Dec. 25, 2022 <https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/i-measured-co2-levels-on-a-plane-it-showed-me-when-i-was-most-likely-exposed-to-covid/ar-AAyn0Wj>

Understanding Long Covid - Tom Frieden

We know more now than before, and it's still alarming.

No age group is completely protected from long Covid, some people are more at risk than others, and long Covid can be debilitating even for young people who were otherwise fit or healthy. Each of us must assess the risk we face from Covid and take steps to avoid infection based on what activities we're comfortable with and how hard Covid is raining where we are. And whether it's Covid or not, if you're sick stay home. The only thing we should spread is holiday cheer. <https://drtomfrieden.medium.com/understanding-long-covid-9c24f9150172>

Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USA Webinar

Frontline Workers: A Global Perspective



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

Health Watch USAsm



Speakers Included:

Past Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, MD

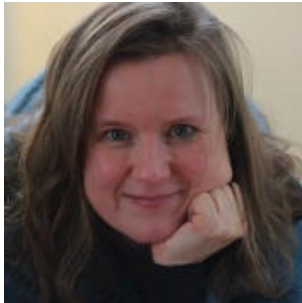
– Introduction [View Video](#)



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.

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

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