



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Sept. 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

Activity for the Month of Aug. Health Watch USAsm:

- 2 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 2 Presentations.

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

Health Watch USAsm 2022 Activities Report:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20221231-HWUSA-Report-2022-2.pdf>

Health Watch USAsm 2021 Activities Report:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20211231-HWUSA-Report-2021.pdf>

Health Watch USAsm 2020 Activities Report:

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

Health Watch USAsm - Peer Reviewed-Publications, News Articles & OpEds

	Australia	Germany	Qatar	Singapore	Sweden
Total cases per 1 million population	395,074	416,732	166,018	346,547	254,607
Rate of death per 1 million population	595	1,807	244	279	2,004
Population fully vaccinated	86%	76%	>99%	90%	74%
Additional vaccine dose	56%	74%	67%	78%	71%
Population older than 65 y	15.88%	22.99%	1.19%	10.89%	20.59%
Obesity in adult population*	30.4%	25.7%	33.9%	6.6%	22.1%

Data Sources: Worldometer; Coronavirus; Wikipedia, List of Countries by Age Structure; New York Times, T1 Vaccinations Around the World; Our World in Data, Obesity. Data as of October 24, 2022.
*Obesity in adult population 18 years and older: defined as body mass index greater than or equal to 30.

Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19: A Global Perspective:

The third Health Watch USAsm COVID-19 webinar/conference assembled 16 speakers from 4 continents who shared information regarding frontline worker safety in the age of COVID-19.

Download summary white paper (Journal of Patient Safety):

https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline_Worker_Safety_in_the_Age_of_COVID_19_A.126.aspx

Presentation Videos and online continuing education are available at:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2022/index.html>



Flying Blind as COVID-19 Rates Increase: The Eris Variant

Few people doubt COVID-19 will stay around, and it is starting to increase again in August 2023. Daily hospital admissions are on the rise, up over 70%

from mid-June. Currently, there are 1500 COVID-19 admissions daily in the United States and projected to increase to over 1800 admissions by the end of August. The Walgreens COVID-19 test positivity rate is at 44.7%, the highest it has ever been. COVID-19 infections will not go away and will have a lasting impact on our resources. We must be able to accurately calculate and project the societal and workforce impact of COVID-19. We should have the data to calculate the percentage of the population disabled by COVID-19 and project this into the future. But at this point, we appear to still have our heads in the sand, hoping that if we do not measure and report the virus one day, like a miracle, will disappear. [References](#) Infection Control Today.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/flying-blind-as-covid-19-rates-increase>



As COVID-19 Hospitalizations Increase Alarming, Workers and Patients Call for Better Standards

After almost 4 years of COVID with over 10,000 patients currently hospitalized, a 22% increase over last week, one must ask, what has the CDC been doing? According to many people, the CDC has been trying to roll back our protections and ability to fight the spread of disease when experts are strongly advising those at high-risk to mask up in indoor settings...During an ongoing pandemic, credibility is of utmost importance. As one commentator stated, "We need consistent messaging to educate the public about the true dangers of COVID and being disabled by long COVID."

If the public cannot rely on the agency to communicate safe and effective recommendations on masking and ventilation, how then can they be expected to rely on the CDC's advice on vaccine uptake? And if we minimize the dangers of SARS-CoV-2, how then can we expect the public to see the urgency in obtaining the updated booster?" [References](#) Infection Control Today. Aug. 28, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/as-covid-19-hospitalizations-increase-alarming-ly-workers-patients-call-better-standards>

Health Watch USAsm - Meeting Presentations & Comments

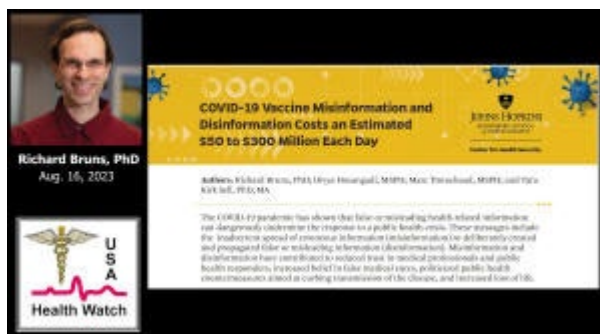


Aug. 22, 2023 - Public Comment: CDC HICPAC Meeting - Infection Control Standards.

Public Comment: CDC HICPAC Meeting - Infection Control Standards.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, MD, MS, from Health Watch USA(sm) makes the case for better CDC infection control recommendations. Respirators or PAPRs should be used when treating all airborne respiratory

pathogens. Knowledge of a patient's microbiome is of paramount importance. Asymptomatic carriers in hospitals and nursing homes should be identified with screening and undergo isolation and decolonization protocols. If this fails, cohorting nursing home residents with compatible microbiomes should be considered. Enhanced Barrier Precautions are inadequate to stop the spread of disease. They may even enhance spread by providing a false sense of security. Finally, we must protect the most vulnerable in our society and implement protective strategies in compliance with the ADA. Universal masking in healthcare facilities should be implemented to accomplish this goal. CDC HICPAC Meeting, Aug. 22, 2023. View YouTube Video Comment. <https://youtu.be/E2-ERukRovc> [View Written Comment.](#)



The Economic and Societal Cost of Disinformation and Not Implementing Optimal Strategies.

Dr. Richard Bruns, PhD discusses cost-benefit analysis of public health initiatives. This analysis can be applied to the cost of implementing, discouraging, and not implementing preventative strategies. The calculation relies on the determination of the number

of lives saved along with the cost of saving each life, and if the amount of resources allocated would cost more lives than lives saved. In the United States, the breakeven point for strategies is spending 10 million dollars per life saved, or \$500,000 per life year saved. The effects of misinformation and disinformation have discouraged many from becoming vaccinated. When assigning dollar values to the lives lost and health harms of not getting vaccinated, misinformation has a monetized cost of between 50 to 300 million dollars every day, almost all of which is due to the health harms. There is a clear and large benefit to implementing preventative public health strategies. It does not make economic sense to discontinue preprocedural testing for COVID-19 or to drop masking requirements. It is amazing how facilities will not pay for high quality personal protective equipment (PPE). The cost in disability, lives and in healthcare disruption more than justifies expenditures for these strategies.

Health Watch USAsm meeting: Aug. 16, 2023. <https://youtu.be/qJltlfQsO8k>

Health Watch USAsm - Articles of Interest

Support Growing For Universal Masking In Healthcare.

Lessons From the COVID-19 Pandemic: Updating Our Approach to Masking in Health Care Facilities

Annals of Internal Medicine: "In our view, the ongoing disease burden among persons at highest risk for severe COVID-19, the large proportion of transmission from asymptomatic and presymptomatic cases, uncertainty about the future course of the pandemic (4), and the effects of post-COVID-19 conditions merit integration of lessons learned from the pandemic into health care precautions and policies.... In fact, it is likely that before the pandemic, we vastly underappreciated the degree of harm caused by hospital-acquired respiratory viral infections that were preventable by masking among patients and HCWs (7).... This provides further rationale to integrate precautions, such as masking, as part of general practice to protect patients, especially those who are most vulnerable to severe disease." <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M23-1230>



CDC Weighs Lower Infection Safety Precautions For Healthcare Workers

Forbes: "More than 900 experts in infectious disease, public health, industrial hygiene, aerosol science and ventilation engineering signed a letter to Mandy Cohen, MD, the new CDC director, explaining how the new draft guidelines weaken protections for healthcare workers. They state, "Surgical masks cannot be recommended to protect health care personnel against inhalation of infectious aerosols." HICPAC's proposals also fail to include ventilation, UV disinfection and HEPA filtration, all essential tools against an airborne pathogen." Aug. 21, 2023. <https://www-forbes-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.forbes.com/sites/judystone/2023/08/21/cdc-weighs-lower-infection-safety-precautions-for-healthcare-workers/amp/>

Many long-covid symptoms linger even after two years, new study shows

Washington Post: "People who endured even mild cases of covid-19 are at heightened risk two years later for lung problems, fatigue, diabetes and certain other health problems typical of long covid, according to a new study that casts fresh light on the virus's true toll. The analysis, published Monday in the journal Nature Medicine, is believed to be the first to document the extent to which an array of aftereffects that patients can develop — as part of the sometimes debilitating syndrome known as long covid — linger beyond the initial months or year after they survived a coronavirus infection. " <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2023/08/21/long-covid-lingering-effects-two-years-later/>

Postacute sequelae of COVID-19 at 2 years

Nature Medicine: " Within the 80 prespecified sequelae, 69% and 35% of them became not significant at 2 years after infection among nonhospitalized and hospitalized individuals, respectively. Cumulatively at 2 years, PASC contributed 80.4 (95% confidence interval (CI): 71.6–89.6) and 642.8 (95% CI: 596.9–689.3) disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 1,000 persons among nonhospitalized and hospitalized individuals; 25.3% (18.9–31.0%) and 21.3% (18.2–24.5%) of the cumulative 2-year DALYs in nonhospitalized and hospitalized were from the second year."

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-023-02521-2>

Long COVID and Activity Limitation Among Adults

The incidence of Long COVID has declined but remains unchanged since Jan 4-16, 2023. The number of patients with significant limitations of their activities has remained unchanged at about 26%. Currently 6% of non-institutionalized adults in the general population (irrespective of having COVID-19) report having Long COVID along with 11% of adults who report a previous COVID-19 infection.

Long COVID and Significant Activity Limitation Among Adults, by Age — United States, June 1–13, 2022, to June 7–19, 2023

"Prevalence of long COVID among noninstitutionalized U.S. adults aged ≥18 years decreased from 7.5% during June 1–13, 2022 to 6.0% during June 7–19, 2023 and from 18.9% to 11.0% among adults reporting previous COVID-19. After an initial decline, prevalence remained unchanged beginning January 4–16, 2023. Approximately one quarter of adults with long COVID report significant activity limitations." https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7232a3.htm?s_cid=mm7232a3_w

Brain MRI findings in neurologically symptomatic COVID-19 patients: a systematic review and meta-analysis

"25 publications containing a total number of 3118 COVID-19 patients with neurological symptoms who underwent MRI were included. The most common MRI findings and the respective pooled incidences in decreasing order were acute/subacute infarct (22%), olfactory bulb abnormalities (22%), white matter abnormalities (20%), cerebral microbleeds (17%), grey matter abnormalities (12%), leptomeningeal enhancement (10%), ADEM (Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis) or ADEM-like lesions (10%), non-traumatic ICH (10%), cranial neuropathy (8%), cortical gray matter signal changes compatible with encephalitis (8%), basal ganglia abnormalities (5%), PRES (Posterior Reversible Encephalopathy Syndrome) (3%), hypoxic-ischemic lesions (4%), venous thrombosis (2%), and cytotoxic lesions of the corpus callosum (2%)." <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00415-023-11914-9>

Long COVID is devastating and far from rare. As infections rise again, why are we still ignoring it?

"While the general public ignores and downplays the risk of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID, long COVID may well prove to be one of the biggest health problems of the 21st Century, presenting a real risk that a secondary pandemic of chronic illness will be overlooked. ...an alarming scientific

pattern is revealing itself across intersecting areas of research, which suggests that long COVID could be linked to neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's – having to do with the misfolding of alpha-synuclein proteins in the human nervous system. but what is clear is that long haulers (people with long COVID) often report symptoms that line up with what those going through the prodromal (subclinical) phases of various brain diseases describe – meaning that long COVID patients are quite possibly experiencing the early stages of neurodegeneration." Salon. Aug. 13, 2023.

<https://www.salon.com/2023/08/13/long-is-devastating-and-far-from-rare-as-infections-rise-again-why-are-we-still-ignoring-it/>

Severe COVID-19 may lead to long-term innate immune system changes

"Severe COVID-19 may cause long-lasting alterations to the innate immune system, the first line of defense against pathogens, according to a small study funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health. These changes may help explain why the disease can damage so many different organs and why some people with long COVID have high levels of inflammation throughout the body. "

"Iterations in innate immune phenotypes and epigenetic programs of HSPC persisted for months to 1 year following severe COVID-19 and were associated with distinct transcription factor (TF) activities, altered regulation of inflammatory programs, and durable increases in myelopoiesis. "

[https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674\(23\)00796-1](https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674(23)00796-1)

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/severe-covid-19-may-lead-long-term-innate-immune-system-changes>

Germans Blame Barbenheimer for COVID Surge

"Germany is experiencing a summer surge in COVID cases, and experts say something Spiegel calls the "Barbenheimer effect" is partly to blame. Epidemiologists say mass gatherings, including trips to the cinema to see blockbusters Barbie and Oppenheimer, often as a double bill, have played a role in what appears to be a steep rise in infections, the Guardian reports. According to government statistics, COVID-related visits to doctors are up 175% week-on-week and hospitalizations are up 50%. Official statistics show a very low case rate, but very few people are being tested. Monitoring stations have detected an increase in viral load in wastewater."

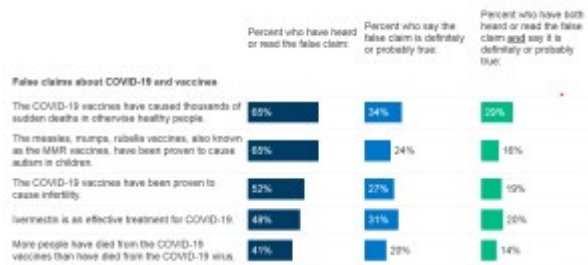
<https://www.newser.com/story/339082/germans-blame-barbenheimer-for-covid-surge.html>

Unintentional Pediatric Ingestion of Cannabis—Addressing a Growing Public Health Risk

"According to the FDA, the nation's poison control centers saw more than 10 000 cases of unintentional exposure to edible THC products from January 2021 to May 2022. An analysis of the US National Poison Data System data for pediatric exposures to edible cannabis products in children younger than 6 years from 2017 to 2021 concluded, "unintentional cannabis exposures in young children are increasing rapidly," resulting in hospitalizations and potential toxic reactions."

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2808591>

Large Shares of U.S. Adults Have Heard Items Of Health Misinformation, Though Fewer Say They Are True



Exposure to and Belief in Health Misinformation Claims

"Overall, health misinformation is widely prevalent in the U.S. with 96% of adults saying they have heard at least one of the ten items of health-related misinformation asked about in the survey. The most widespread misinformation items included in the survey were related to COVID-19 and vaccines,

including that the COVID-19 vaccines have caused thousands of deaths in otherwise healthy people (65% say they have heard or read this) and that the MMR vaccines have been proven to cause autism in children (65%)." SOURCE: KFF Health Misinformation Tracking Poll Pilot (May 23-June 12, 2023) <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-health-misinformation-tracking-poll-pilot/>

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Nov. 1st, 2023
Health Watch
USAsm Webinar

Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society
Health Watch USAsm

For More Information Go To: <http://www.healthconference.org>

Speakers for the Nov. 1st 2023 Webinar Include:



Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD Past White House Coordinator Coronavirus Response (USA) "Impact of Long COVID on the United States".



Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine. will present on "Global Vaccines and Vaccinations: The Science vs The Anti-science."

Dr Hotez will discuss the impact of developing new low cost and accessible vaccines for global health, including a recombinant protein COVID-19 "people's vaccine" now administered to more than 100 million adolescents and children in India and Indonesia. He will also discuss new trends in antivaccine sentiments in the US and an escalating and globalizing antiscience empire.

Additional Presenters:

1. Pam Belluck, New York Times Reporter -- Presentation: "How Long COVID is affecting people's jobs and their needs at work."

2. Eleni Iasonidou, MD, Pediatrician, Founder of Long Covid Greece and a one of the very first Greek representatives to join Long Covid Kids. Presentation: "Long Covid and its impact on children."

3. Georgios Pappas, MD, PhD, Physician, Researcher and Advocate. Specializing on zoonoses and preparedness against deliberate and natural outbreaks/ epidemics – Presentation: "Combating Disinformation regarding COVID-19 and Long COVID."

4. Jane Thomason, MSPH, CIH, Industrial Hygienist, National Nurses United & California Nurses Association -- Presentation: "The impact of Long COVID on Nurses."

5. Greg Vanichkachorn, MD, MPH, Occupational and Aerospace Medicine, Mayo Clinic-- Presentation: "Symptoms, treatment and rehabilitation of patients with Long COVID."

6. Dr. Wilmore Webley, PhD, University of Massachusetts, -- Presentation: "The effectiveness of vaccines to prevent Long COVID."

7. Brian T. Walitt, MD, MPH, Clinician with the NIH's National Institute of Neurological

Disorders and Stroke. -- Presentation: "Neuropsychiatric manifestations of Long COVID & Chronic Fatigue Syndrome."

Continuing Education Is Planned for Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapy, Dentistry and Respiratory Therapy. For More information Go To:
<http://www.healthconference.org>

Download Speaker Bios: https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference_downloads/Bios-Speakers-2023-HWUSA-Conference-6.pdf

Download Webinar Agenda: https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference_downloads/Agenda-1.pdf

For More Information Go To: <http://www.healthconference.org>

Download last year's summary white paper from 2022 Worker Safety Conference (Journal of Patient Safety): https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline_Worker_Safety_in_the_Age_of_COVID_19_A.126.aspx

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