



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Dec. 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 Nov. Health Watch USAsm:

- 2 Articles/Op-Eds regarding COVID-19.
- 3 Written Comments.
- 1 Presentation.
- 2023 HW USA Conference Videos are Available.

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>

Nov. 1st, 2023, Health Watch USAsm Webinar



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

**Speaker Presentation Videos and PowerPoints Can Be Viewed
At: <https://healthconference.org>**

**To take the continuing education course (no charges apply) go
to: <https://sokyahec.thinkific.com/courses/longcovidimpact>**

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



Commentary: Charleston airport needs to improve its air quality

"Besides the concern about the spread of infectious disease — and not just COVID; I do not wish to spend thousands of dollars on a trip and be down for several days with even a cold — there is also the concern regarding cognition and worker performance. It should be noted that HEPA filters and UVC upper-room lighting do not lower carbon dioxide levels. Charleston International Airport needs to upgrade its indoor ventilation and heating and air conditioning systems. This requires more than just an upgrade of filters, because the increase in resistance to produce adequate airflow often requires new HVAC units, which may also require electrical upgrades. In addition, lowering the CO₂ level by increasing the mix of outside air is imperative for both worker and traveler safety." [References](#) Oct. 31, 2023.

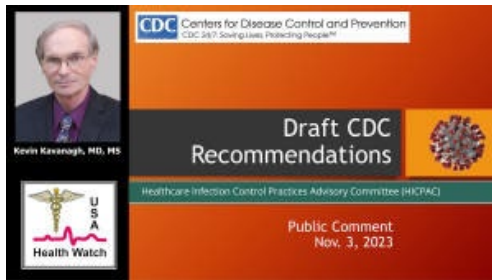
https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/commentary/commentary-charleston-airport-needs-to-improve-its-air-quality/article_efafa202-74b6-11ee-8b7c-cb511e38e4fc.html



CDC's HICPAC Update: Impact on COVID-19, Pathogen Control, and Immunocompromised Safety in Health care Settings

Recent CDC HICPAC revisions regarding SARS-CoV-2 control face criticism from the World Health Network and others due to alleged breaches in committee structure and erroneous infection control guidance, potentially impacting COVID-19 management and immunocompromised individuals in health care. As stated in an action letter sent to the CDC, for the immunocompromised the status quo is unacceptable, and weakening current regulations will result in a “direct threat” to their safety and well-being and does not maintain accessible features for safe and adequate access to a facility. This concern was further underscored by the findings of the INFORM and EPOCH research initiatives. The CDC must be “mindful of the provisions of the ADA and the impact recommendations will have regarding vulnerable individuals who both work in health care settings or are experiencing reduced access to healthcare because of unsafe healthcare environments.” [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 8, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/cdc-s-hicpac-update-impact-covid-19-pathogen-control-immunocompromised-safety-health-care-settings>

Health Watch USAsm - Meeting Presentations & Comments



New Draft Infection Control Recommendations - CDC HICPAC Public Comment Regarding CDC HICPAC Infection Control Recommendations - Dr. Kevin Kavanagh

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USA(sm) gives a public comment regarding the weakened CDC infection control guidance in view of the risks they impose to

immunocompromised individuals. The CDC needs to be mindful of the Americans with Disability Act and protect the most vulnerable in our society when they are formulating new infection recommendations. CDC HICPAC Public Comment, Nov. 3, 2023.

View Video of Comment: https://youtu.be/zUV5Tx_EFI4

Download Written Script of Comment: <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Presentations-Community/PDF-Downloads/20231103-KTK-Comment-HICPAC.pdf>

CDC/HICPAC's Draft Guidance for Health Care Respiratory Protection and Infection Control and Compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act.

Eleven healthcare/patient advocacy organizations along with 21 patient advocates and healthcare providers have petitioned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to consider the needs of immunocompromised patients and healthcare workers in their formulation of new draft recommendations for infection control. Such consideration is mandatory under The Americans with Disabilities Act.

The importance of this initiative is underscored by the recent EPOCH and INFORM studies which document and underscore the profound risks that immunocompromised individuals have when exposed to COVID-19. The [EPOCH-US Study](#) concluded that: "Immunocompromised populations appear to be at substantial risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes, leading to increased costs and HCRU. Effective prophylactic options are still needed for these high-risk populations as the COVID-19 landscape evolves." One of the areas which is both at high risk for COVID-19 transmission and unavoidable for immunocompromised individuals are healthcare settings.

View Letter: https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HICPAC-CDC/Downloads/20231024-CDC-HICPAC_ADA-Letter.pdf

ASPR - Nov. 30, 2023 - CDC Recommendations and Supply of N95 masks and Negative Pressure Rooms.

Comment calling for the assurance of an adequate supply of negative pressure patient rooms and an adequate supply and production capacity for N95 masks. New CDC proposals will decrease usage of these resources which will result in a decreased production capacity for N95 masks and an inadequate numbers of negative pressure rooms available for the next pandemic. <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20231130-ASPR-Masking-Requirements.pdf>

Is Nosocomial SARS-CoV-2 Still Worth Preventing?

JAMA Network: "... it is not difficult to imagine hospitals maintaining infection control practices to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Maintenance is imperative to protect all patients and health care staff. For the immunocompromised, access to healthcare is being restricted which is not only bad medicine but

appears to be in conflict with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). " JAMA Network. Nov. 13, 2023.
[View Comment https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2811653](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2811653)

Presentation: Panel Discussion, Working With The Community

American Federation of Teachers. Nov. 17, 2023.

Health Watch USAsm - Articles of Interest



Association of COVID-19 with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infections in children aged 0–5 years in the USA in 2022: a multicentre retrospective cohort study.

COVID-19 was associated with a significantly increased risk for RSV infections among children aged 0–5 years in 2022. Similar findings were replicated for a study population of children aged 0–5 years in 2021. Our findings suggest that COVID-19 contributed to the 2022 surge of RSV cases in young children through the large buildup of COVID-19-infected children and the potential long-term adverse effects of COVID-19 on the immune and respiratory system.
<https://fmch.bmj.com/content/11/4/e002456>

People With Long COVID Face Alarming Rates of Depression, Anxiety: Expert Q&A

"This means that biological underpinnings caused by long COVID affect brain chemistry and give rise to psychological changes, putting a patient at higher risk for depression and anxiety, she said. "
<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/997209>

Surgeon Generals Make Urgent Call for Healthy Building Policies

In an open letter, public health leaders implore officials to design building policies for occupant health. The letter lays out ways in which adopting healthy building practices can lead to health, economic, and societal benefits:

- Reducing Sick Building Syndrome can increase worker productivity, according to research published by Berkeley Lab.
- That study, along with another from Berkeley Lab, shows that increasing minimum ventilation rates in offices can significantly improve workers' health and productivity, saving employers money.
- Workplace wellness programs can lead to reduced medical costs and absenteeism among employees, according to a white paper published by the American Institute of Preventive Medicine.

- Improving indoor environmental quality can also improve occupant cognitive function, according to research published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.
- Research published in Buildings and Environment studied buildings that have earned WELL Certification and concluded the standard's features can improve occupant satisfaction, perceived well-being, reported mental health scores, and productivity.

<https://www.buildinggreen.com/newsbrief/surgeons-general-make-urgent-call-healthy-building-policies>

According to a large and growing body of research, by adopting healthy building practices, we can drive numerous health, economic and societal benefits:

- A potential \$200 billion annual productivity gain corresponding to a 20% to 50% reduction in Sick Building Syndrome symptoms for office workers in the U.S.
- An estimated \$38 billion in annual economic benefits from increasing minimum ventilation rates in U.S. offices from 8 to 15 liters per second (or a \$13 billion annual economic benefit if ventilation rates were only improved by a minimum of 8 to 10 liters per second).
- A return of \$3.48 for every dollar companies spend on workplace wellness programs due to reduced medical costs, and an additional return of \$5.82 due to reduced absenteeism.
- A 61% to 101% improvement in cognitive function, depending on the extent of enhanced indoor environmental quality improvements, which help yield employee productivity benefits to the tune of \$6,500 to \$7,500 per person per year.
- A net present value (NPV) of \$21,172 per employee, or \$115 per square foot (SF) over 10 years for a high-performance, healthy building, based on benefits only related to productivity, retention and improved well-being.
- Physical and mental health benefits similar to a longitudinal study finding nearly 30% improvement in occupant satisfaction, 26% increase in occupant perceived well-being scores, 10% improvement in reported mental health scores and 10 median points in productivity resulting from WELL Certification.

View Letter: <https://a.storyblok.com/f/52232/x/d369914f60/health-in-buildings-sign-on-letter-v6.pdf>

Deep immunological imprinting due to the ancestral spike in the current bivalent COVID-19 vaccine

To combat the evolving SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variants, bivalent COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, encoding both ancestral and Omicron BA.5 spikes, have replaced monovalent vaccines in numerous countries. However, fourth doses of either vaccine result in similar neutralizing antibody titers against Omicron subvariants, raising the possibility of immunological imprinting. To address this, we investigate antibody responses in 72 participants given three doses of a monovalent mRNA vaccine, followed by a bivalent or monovalent booster, or those with breakthrough infections with BA.5 or BQ. Bivalent boosters do not show notably higher binding or virus-neutralizing titers against various SARS-CoV-2 variants compared to monovalent ones. However, breakthrough infections lead to significantly better neutralization of Omicron subvariants. Multiple analyses, including antigenic mapping, suggest that the ancestral spike in bivalent vaccines is

causing deep immunological imprinting, preventing broadening of antibodies to the BA.5 component, thereby defeating its intended goal. Its removal from future vaccine compositions is therefore strongly recommended.

Graphical abstract [https://www.cell.com/cell-reports-medicine/fulltext/S2666-3791\(23\)00435-4](https://www.cell.com/cell-reports-medicine/fulltext/S2666-3791(23)00435-4)

Masks During Pandemics Caused by Respiratory Pathogens—Evidence and Implications for Action

Question: During the COVID-19 pandemic, what has been learned about whether face mask use is associated with lower transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in community settings, and how has it been learned

Findings: Literature review revealed many high-quality observational studies demonstrating the association of face mask use in the community and of mask mandates with reduced spread of SARS-CoV-2. Randomized clinical trials conducted during the pandemic provide limited information.

Meaning: **Robust available data support the use of face masks in community settings to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2** and should inform future responses to epidemics and pandemics caused by respiratory viruses. Jama Network:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2811136>

A Storm Is Gathering Around A CDC Committee

Kevin Bell, a retired lawyer and member of WHN, explained that the HICPAC committee is in violation of its charter, which requires 14 members; it only has nine. Also, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requires that committee memberships be "fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed.".... The WHN complaint asserts "the Committee must have in its membership a significant number of experts in fields such as aerosol science, industrial hygiene, UV and HEPA filtration, ventilation engineering, respiratory protection and occupational health and safety. Yet, the Committee does not have even one such member."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/judystone/2023/11/01/a-storm-is-gathering-around-a-cdc-committee/?sh=21ca93a160b2>

At least 14% of Americans have long COVID, research suggests

One in seven people in the US reported having had long COVID by the end of 2022, suggests a large-scale investigation of long COVID and symptom prevalence by academics at UCL and Dartmouth. The risk of anxiety and low mood appeared to be lower for those who have been vaccinated, including for those who have had long COVID.

<https://medicalxpress-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-americans-covid.amp>

New Tests May Finally Diagnose Long COVID

"A new study suggests testing for certain biomarkers may identify long COVID with accuracy approaching 80%."

"Markers of classical (C1s-C1INH complex), alternative (Ba, iC3b), and terminal pathway (C5a, TCC) activation were significantly elevated in patients with long COVID. These markers in combination had a receiver operating characteristic predictive power of 0.794. "

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/998886>

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.10.26.23297597v1>

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Nov. 1st, 2023
Health Watch
USAsm Webinar

Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society

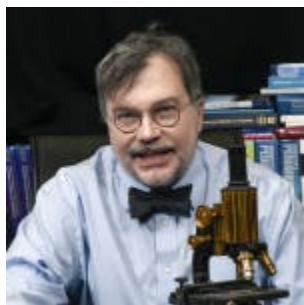
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For More Information Go To: <http://www.healthconference.org>

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 antisience 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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