



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

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> June 1, 2024

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 USA<sup>sm</sup>:*

- 1 Articles/Op-Ed regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Presentation.
- 2023 HW USA Conference Videos are Available.

*Information Regarding Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Nov. 1st, 2023: Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society:* <https://healthconference.org>

## *Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2023 Activities Report:*

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20231231-HWUSA-Report-2023.pdf>

## *Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2022 Activities Report:*

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

## *Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2021 Activities Report:*

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

## *Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2020 Activities Report:*

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

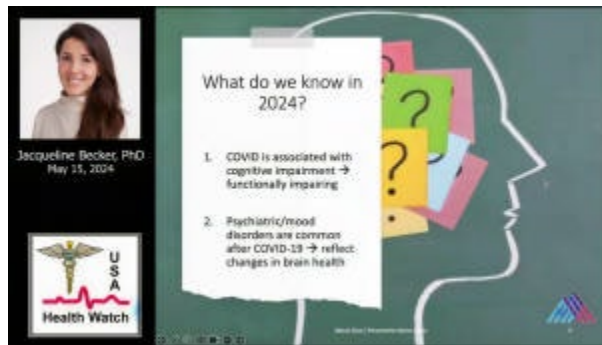


## **URethinking Airborne Pathogens: WHO Proposes New Terminology for Disease Spread**

"Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated a paradigm shift in preventing

pathogens from spreading through the air. If that phrasing seems non-scientific and does not use the jargon of "airborne pathogens" or "aerosolized pathogens", it is by design... Too many healthcare experts believe that an "airborne" pathogen will only spread under certain circumstances or unusual conditions, such as during an aerosolizing procedure... Infection disease professionals must not only advocate but also act. A good first step is to carry a portable CO2 monitor to help evaluate indoor air quality at your health care workplace. One should advocate for continuous CO2 monitoring in your facility and make sure HEPA filtration is used with adequate ventilation." [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/rethinking-airborne-pathogens-who-proposes-new-terminology-disease-spread) Infection Control Today. May 15, 2024. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/rethinking-airborne-pathogens-who-proposes-new-terminology-disease-spread>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Meetings



### Overview of the Impacts of Long COVID on Behavioral Health.

Dr. Jacqueline H Becker discusses the definition of Long COVID along with its incidence, impacts on disparate populations and challenges in treatment. The presentation emphasizes the impact of Long COVID on cognitive abilities, executive function and personalities along with

potential biological and environmental etiologies. Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> meeting May 15, 2024.

View Video: <https://youtu.be/aZdv-zXA4N4>



### Upcoming Meetings - Save the date

**June 19, 2024: 12:00 Noon EST:** Dr. Jonathan Fluxman, COVID-19 Safety and the United Kingdom's COVID-19 Inquiry.

Space is limited. To attend any of these meetings, send an email to [kavanagh.ent@gmail.com](mailto:kavanagh.ent@gmail.com)

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Articles of Interest



**The current avian flu infected human cases carry mutations which enhance the viruses' ability to spread in humans. This is not good news.**

**Reference 1:** Technical Update: Summary Analysis of the Genetic Sequence of a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A(H5N1) Virus Identified in a Human in Michigan

"The genome of the human virus from Michigan did not have the PB2 E627K change detected in the virus from the Texas case, but had one notable change (PB2 M631L) compared to

the Texas case that is known to be associated with viral adaptation to mammalian hosts, and which has been detected in 99% of dairy cow sequences but only sporadically in birds"

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/spotlights/2023-2024/h5n1-technical-update-may-24-2024.html>

**Reference 2:** "The PB2 E627K mutation contributes to the high polymerase activity and enhanced replication of H7N9 influenza virus

Also not that "the PB2 E627K mutation, which occurs in over 70 % of the H7N9 (human) patient isolates, promotes the replication of H7N9 virus by enhancing PB2 polymerase activity and enhances virulence in mice." <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24394699/>

## **Masks and respirators for prevention of respiratory infections: A state of the science review**

"Our synthesis of evidence from over 100 published reviews and selected primary studies -- Key Findings:

- First, there is strong and consistent evidence for airborne transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and other respiratory pathogens.
  - Second, masks are, if correctly and consistently worn, effective in reducing transmission of respiratory diseases and show a dose-response effect.
  - Third, respirators are significantly more effective than medical or cloth masks.
  - Fourth, mask mandates are, overall, effective in reducing community transmission of respiratory pathogens.
  - Fifth, masks are important sociocultural symbols; non-adherence to masking is sometimes linked to political and ideological beliefs and to widely circulated mis- or disinformation.
  - Sixth, while there is much evidence that masks are not generally harmful to the general population, masking may be relatively contraindicated in individuals with certain medical conditions, who may require exemption. Furthermore, certain groups (notably D/deaf people) are disadvantaged when others are masked."
  - Finally, there are risks to the environment from single-use masks and respirators
- <https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/cmr.00124-23>

## **Does COVID-19 Persist?**

### **— An unexpected idea gains traction and may provide clues about long COVID**

"The researchers found that a quarter of COVID-infected people had SARS-CoV-2 antigens in their blood for up to 14 months after infection. The most common was spike.

"This allowed us to demonstrate more definitively than prior work that post-acute antigen persistence is occurring in at least a subset of people post-COVID and that it can be detected by a blood assay," Peluso said. "Now we need to better understand whether we can tie measurements on this assay to long COVID phenotypes or other post-acute complications, which will require a much larger study.""

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/neurology/longcovid/110225>

## **COVID-19 shatters decades of global health progress, slashing life expectancy**

"Long-standing gains in life expectancy and reductions in many of the leading causes of death have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the adverse effects of which were spread unevenly

among populations. Despite the pandemic, there has been continued progress in combatting several notable causes of death, leading to improved global life expectancy over the study period. Each of the seven GBD super-regions showed an overall improvement from 1990 and 2021, obscuring the negative effect in the years of the pandemic. Additionally, our findings regarding regional variation in causes of death driving increases in life expectancy hold clear policy utility. Analyses of shifting mortality trends reveal that several causes, once widespread globally, are now increasingly concentrated geographically. These changes in mortality concentration, alongside further investigation of changing risks, interventions, and relevant policy, present an important opportunity to deepen our understanding of mortality-reduction strategies. Examining patterns in mortality concentration might reveal areas where successful public health interventions have been implemented. Translating these successes to locations where certain causes of death remain entrenched can inform policies that work to improve life expectancy for people everywhere."

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)00367-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)00367-2/fulltext)

### **Responding to the rise in pertussis cases in South Dakota** **SIoux FALLS, S.D. (Dakota News Now)**

"According to the South Dakota Department of Health, cases of pertussis, a bacterial infection also known as whooping cough, are up 4500%. The state's infectious disease dashboard shows that 45 cases have been reported so far this year. The highest number of those came from the northeast and southeast parts of the state. Dr. Dan Boadwine with the Avera Medical Group said that it's estimated that 80% of individuals who are at risk and exposed to pertussis will contract the infection. The highly contagious nature of pertussis means that safety measures are important to limit the spread. Dr. Boadwine said that diseases like whooping cough typically begin spreading in areas where vaccine rates are lower. Even a small rise in cases becomes serious because of how contagious pertussis is." <https://www.dakotanewsnw.com/2024/05/18/responding-rise-pertussis-cases-south-dakota/>

### **"Everyone I know got sick": Taylor Swift's concerts, Covid clusters?**

(Translated Using Microsoft Edge): "Since the four shows of the American star at Paris La Défense Arena, many fans tell us that they have fallen ill with sometimes severe symptoms. Without regretting having attended the concerts, while the venue defends its air treatment system....Dozens or even hundreds of fans of the American mega star have been saying on social networks in recent days that they have fallen ill since attending (t)his show of more than three hours at Paris La Défense Arena. The singer performed four times from Thursday, May 9 to Sunday, May 12, to begin her major European tour of the "Eras Tour". The symptoms of these "swifties", as Taylor Swift's groupies are called, are always the same: sore throat, cough, runny nose, fever, etc. "Oh, I'm not the only one?!" writes one of them on X. <https://archive.ph/sMxMi#selection-2705.127-2975.8>

### **2024, May 9: Brain abnormalities in survivors of COVID-19 after 2-year recovery: a functional MRI study**

Translation: Both mild and severe COVID-19 caused anatomical damage (to an equal degree) in the brain including the frontal lobes. This damage corresponded to cognitive complaints, and psychiatric and neurological symptoms. These symptoms were worse than seen in the control

group. Thus, there is direct CNS damage resulting in cognitive and psychiatric changes above what can be explained by pandemic environmental stress.

"This long-term study suggests that individuals recovering from COVID-19 continue to experience cognitive complaints, psychiatric and neurological symptoms, and brain functional alteration. The rs-fMRI results indicated that the changes in brain function in regions such as the putamen, temporal lobe, and superior parietal gyrus may contribute to cognitive complaints in individuals with long COVID even after 2-year infection. Compared with healthy controls, survivors of mild-moderate acute symptoms group and severe-critical group had a significantly higher score of cognitive complain(t)s involving cognitive failure and mental fatigue. However, there was no difference of cognitive complaints between two groups of COVID-19 survivors. The performance of three groups was similar on the score of MoCA, N-back and SRT. The rs-fMRI results showed that COVID-19 survivors exhibited significantly increased ALFF values in the left putamen (PUT.L), right inferior temporal gyrus (ITG.R) and right pallidum (PAL.R), while decreased ALFF values were observed in the right superior parietal gyrus (SPG.R) and left superior temporal gyrus (STG.L). Additionally, decreased ReHo values in the right precentral gyrus (PreCG.R), left postcentral gyrus (PoCG.L), left calcarine fissure and surrounding cortex (CAL.L) and left superior temporal gyrus (STG.L). Furthermore, significant negative correlations between the ReHo values in the STG.L, and CFQ-14 and mental fatigue were found." The Lancet: Regional Health: May 9, 2024.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanwpc/article/PIIS2666-6065\(24\)00080-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanwpc/article/PIIS2666-6065(24)00080-4/fulltext)

### **The impact of vaccines and behavior on US cumulative deaths from COVID-19**

"The federal government should develop a new infrastructure for rapidly gathering public health data, suggests a paper on the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic discussed at the Brookings Papers on Economic Activity (BPEA) conference on March 28. The improvised strategy to fight COVID-19—public and private behavioral changes to slow transmission until vaccines could be deployed—prevented close to 800,000 deaths in the United States, write the authors, Andrew Atkeson of UCLA and Stephen Kissler of the University of Colorado-Boulder. Absent that two-pronged strategy, their epidemiological model (using blood test data on disease exposure and vaccination) suggests that 1.98 million COVID-related deaths would have occurred over the past four years rather than the 1.18 million deaths that did occur."

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-impact-of-vaccines-and-behavior-on-us-cumulative-deaths-from-covid-19/>

### **A sobering report from Kaiser Family Foundation regarding nursing home quality: A Closer Look at the Final Nursing Facility Rule and Which Facilities Might Meet New Staffing Requirements**

**"Key takeaways include:**

-- Less than one in five (19%) of nursing facilities currently meet all three staffing minimums required in the final rule (Figure 1), which include 3.48 HPRD overall, 0.55 RN HPRD, and 2.45 NA HPRD. Nearly 60% of facilities would meet the interim requirement of an overall requirement of 3.48 HPRD.

-- A smaller share of for-profit facilities currently meet all requirements in the final rule than non-profit and government facilities (11% versus 41% and 39%, respectively).



-- Rural nursing homes are as likely as urban facilities to meet the final rule's requirements based on current staffing levels, but rural facilities will have longer to comply with the new requirements.

-- In over half of states, fewer than one-quarter of facilities meet all three staffing minimums required in the final rule. The share of facilities that meet the requirements ranges from 5% or lower in four states (AR, TN, TX, and LA) to 50% or higher in five states and D.C. (AK, ND, ME, DC, HI, and OR)." KFF <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/a-closer-look-at-the-final-nursing-facility-rule-and-which-facilities-might-meet-new-staffing-requirements/>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Peer-Reviewed Publications, News Articles & OpEds



### Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers, & Society: A review

**Abstract:** The incidence of long COVID in adult survivors of an acute SARS-CoV-2 infection is approximately 11%. Of those afflicted, 26% have difficulty with day-to-day activities. The majority of long COVID cases occur after mild or asymptomatic acute infection. Children can spread SARS-CoV-2 infections and can also develop long-term neurological, endocrine (type I diabetes), and immunological sequelae. Immunological hypofunction is exemplified by the recent large outbreaks of respiratory syncytial virus and streptococcal infections. Neurological manifestations are associated with anatomical brain damage demonstrated on brain scans and autopsy studies. The prefrontal cortex is particularly susceptible. Common symptoms include brain fog, memory loss, executive dysfunction, and personality changes. The impact

on society has been profound. Fewer than half of previously employed adults who develop long COVID are working full-time, and 42% of patients reported food insecurity and 20% reported difficulties paying rent. Vaccination not only helps prevent severe COVID-19, but numerous studies have found beneficial effects in preventing and mitigating long COVID. There is also evidence that vaccination after an acute infection can lessen the symptoms of long COVID. Physical and occupational therapy can also help patients regain function, but the approach must be "low and slow." Too much physical or mental activity can result in post-exertional malaise and set back the recovery process by days or weeks. The complexity of long COVID presentations coupled with rampant organized disinformation, have caused significant segments of the public to ignore sound public health advice. Further research is needed regarding treatment and effective public

communication. Proceedings from Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2023 Webinar. Medicine. Mar. 20, 2024.  
Download Article: [https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long\\_covid\\_s\\_impact\\_on\\_patients\\_workers\\_.50.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long_covid_s_impact_on_patients_workers_.50.aspx)

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**Nov. 1st, 2023**  
**Health Watch**  
**USA<sup>sm</sup> Webinar**

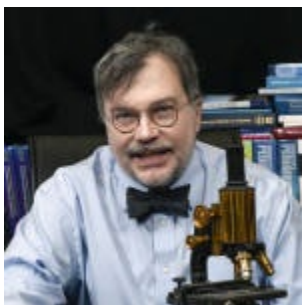
**Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society**  
**Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>**

**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."

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**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>

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**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](https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline_Worker_Safety_in_the_Age_of_COVID_19_A.126.aspx)



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