



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

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Sept. 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-Eds regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Continuing Education Course
- 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>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Continuing Education



### **COVID-19: Endemic Impact & Responsibility**

Four credit hours for Physician - Category I  
AMA Credits and Four hours of corresponding  
Kentucky Board Accreditation, Physical  
Therapy, Respiratory, EMS, & Nursing (4.8 hrs)

### **Course Objectives:**

- To better diagnose and recognize the multiple presentations of Long COVID, including behavioral health implications
- To be able discuss with patients the importance of preventing COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

- To combat patient misinformation regarding vaccines and the risks of COVID and Long COVID.
- To identify and reschedule patients who missed disease screenings during the pandemic.
- To discuss how COVID-19 is spread through the air by a continuum of particle sizes.
- To discuss with office staff other health care professionals' strategies to prevent the spread of respiratory pathogens including use of N95 masks and improvement in indoor ventilation.
- To better discuss with patients the benefits and need for vaccinations.

Link to Course (Southern Kentucky AHEC) <https://sokyahec.thinkific.com/courses/COVID-enduring>

Download Brochure: [https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2024Conference\\_downloads/20240901-HWUSA\\_Brochure-AHEC.pdf](https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2024Conference_downloads/20240901-HWUSA_Brochure-AHEC.pdf)

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - 2023 Conference Presentations

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



#### Link to Presentation Videos:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/index.html>

#### Download Brochure:

[https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference\\_downloads/20231101-HWUSA\\_Brochure-5.pdf](https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference_downloads/20231101-HWUSA_Brochure-5.pdf)

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

### Viewpoint: The Impending Pandemic of Resistant Organisms – A Paradigm Shift Towards Source Control is Needed

The United States needs a paradigm shift in its approach to control infectious diseases. Current recommendations are often made in a siloed feedback loop. This may be the driver for such actions as the abandonment of contact precautions in some



settings, the allowance of nursing home residents who are carriers of known pathogens to mingle with others in their facility, and the determination of an intervention's feasibility based upon budgetary rather than health considerations for patients and staff.

Data from both the U.S. Veterans Health Administration and the U.K.'s National Health Service support the importance of carrier identification and source control. Both organizations observed marked decreases in methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), but not methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* infections with the implementation of MRSA admission screening measures.

Facilities are becoming over-reliant on horizontal prevention strategies, such as hand hygiene and chlorhexidine bathing. Hand hygiene is an essential practice, but the goal should be to minimize the risk of workers' hands becoming contaminated with defined pathogens, and there are conflicting data on the efficacy of chlorhexidine bathing in non-ICU settings.

Preemptive identification of dedicated pathogens and effective source control are needed. We propose that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should gather and publicly report the community incidence of dedicated pathogens. This will enable proactive rather than reactive strategies. In the future, determination of a patient's microbiome may become standard, but until then we propose that we should have knowledge of the main pathogens that they are carrying. Medicine Aug. 2, 2024. [https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/08020/viewpoint\\_the\\_impending\\_pandemic\\_of\\_resistant.46.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/08020/viewpoint_the_impending_pandemic_of_resistant.46.aspx)

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Articles & OpEds



### **Urgent Need for a Paradigm Shift in Infectious Disease Control Amid 2024 Outbreaks**

We need a paradigm shift in our approach to infectious diseases.

A recent viewpoint in the journal Medicine discussed 5 areas of concern:

- The first and most important area of concern is a siloed feedback loop.
- The second area of concern is an overreliance on randomized controlled trials.
- The third area of concern is the overreliance on hand hygiene.  
We must not normalize
- The fourth area of concern is the normalization of deviance or acceptance of the status quo.
- The fifth area of concern is our views of the burden or cost-effectiveness of interventions.

Thus, we must extensively revamp our strategies to provide safe indoor environments and stop the spread of airborne diseases. This includes measuring CO2 levels to check for proper indoor ventilation, HEPA filtration, and installing UVC lighting fixtures. Most importantly, we need to internalize that even breathing and talking can spread airborne diseases. It does not require an aerosolizing procedure. AND N95 masks are required to provide increased protection against

contracting airborne diseases. It has recently been demonstrated in human volunteers that N95 masks reduce the exhaled viral load of SARS-CoV-2 by 98%. Thus, 2-way masking is most effective. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Aug. 26, 2024.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/urgent-need-paradigm-shift-infectious-disease-control-amid-2024-outbreaks>

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

### Covid-19 Patient Outcomes in the Context of Hospitals Chronically Under-Resourced Nursing Services

Karen B. Lasater PhD RN FAAN  
Associate Professor

Jessie M. Scott Term Chair in Nursing and Health Policy, Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research, University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing

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and Policy Research  
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### COVID-19 Patient Outcomes in the Context of Hospitals Chronically Under-Resourced Nursing Services

YouTube Video <https://youtu.be/6toFNY86ulc>

Dr. Karen B. Lasater, PhD, RN, FAAN presents on nurse staffing, working environment and nurse to patient ratios' impact on COVID-19 patient mortality. The presentation discusses the newly published article in the international Journal of Nursing Studies entitled: "Hospital nurse staffing variation and Covid-19 deaths: A cross-sectional study"

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0020748924001421>

The researchers observed that for each additional patient assigned to a nurse there was on average a 20% higher risk of in-hospital death. The article concludes: "Patients with Covid-19 admitted to hospitals with adequate numbers of RNs caring for patients, a workforce rich in BSN-qualified RNs, and high-quality nurse work environments (both prior to and during the Covid-19 pandemic) were more likely to survive the hospitalization. Bolstering these hospital nursing resources during ordinary times is necessary to ensure better patient outcomes and emergency-preparedness of hospitals for future public health emergencies." Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> meeting August 21, 2024.

YouTube Video <https://youtu.be/6toFNY86ulc>



#### Up Coming Meetings:

- Sept. 18, 2024, at 7 PM ET. Kevin T. Kavanagh Presenting: "Mitigating Infectious Disease Risks During Medical Visits."
- Oct. 16, 2024. TBA
- Nov. 20, 2024. Jane Thomason, NSPH, National Nurses United, presenting: "Preventing Infectious Disease Transmission and Promotion of Workplace Safety,"
- Dec. 18, 2024. Daniel Fink, MD, The Quite Coalition, discussing Loud Noises and Hearing Conservation.


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

## **CDC's New Ventilation Web Page: Taking Steps for Cleaner Air for Respiratory Virus Prevention**

"Take steps for cleaner air. This can mean bringing in fresh outside air, purifying indoor air, or gathering outdoors. Virus particles do not build up in the air outdoors as much as they do indoors." <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/air-quality.html>

The page also now has a Civil Rights caveat which I feel is in line with our Oct. 24, 2023 action letter. "CDC/HICPAC's Draft Guidance for Health Care Respiratory Protection and Infection Control and Compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act." <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20231230-CDC-HICPAC-ADA-Letter-Submitted.pdf>

### **Notice**

CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)). [Federal civil rights laws](#)  may require reasonable modifications or reasonable accommodations in various circumstances. Nothing in this guidance is intended to detract from or supersede those laws.

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



### **Evidence from Whole Genome Sequencing of Aerosol Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 almost Five Hours after Hospital Room Turnover**

*This is not good news. This report observed probable "in-room transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to two patients admitted nearly 2 and 5 hours, respectively, after discharge of an asymptomatic infected patient."*

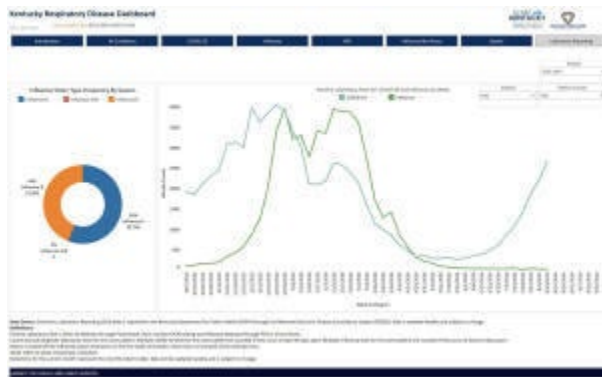
- The half-life for survival of SARS-CoV-2 in aerosols is estimated at 1-3 hours.
- We studied hospital transmission of SARS-CoV-2 using whole genome sequencing.
- Airborne SARS-CoV-2 may transmit infection after



more than 4 hours. [https://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553\(24\)00162-7/abstract](https://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553(24)00162-7/abstract)

### **Whooping cough wave is still accelerating nationwide. Here's what to know about symptoms and treatment.**

"A wave of whooping cough infections is continuing to worsen nationwide, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests, with weekly reported cases now accelerating to the highest levels seen in the U.S. for years... So far this year, a total of more than 10,000 pertussis cases have been reported by health departments. By mid-June, total cases this year reached more than triple what they were compared to the same time last year." <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/whooping-cough-pertussis-cases-cdc-symptoms/>



### **COVID is Surging in Kentucky.**

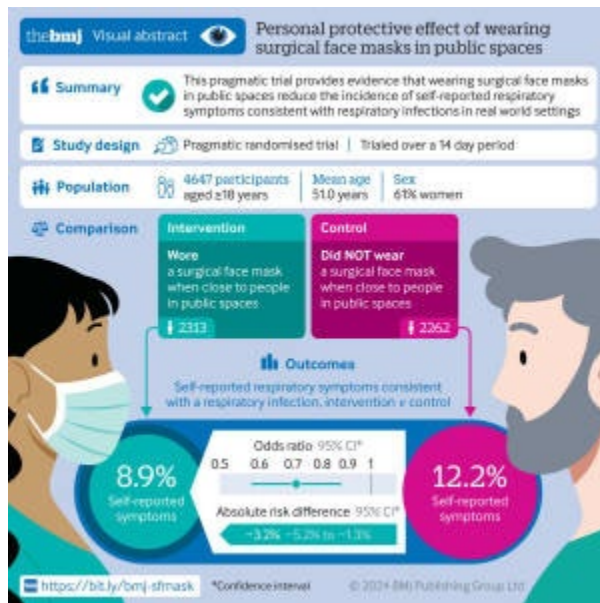
*This data is from the Kentucky Department of Health. It compares Seasonal Flu and COVID tests which are positive. As is easily seen, we are in the beginnings of a COVID surge, and this is COVID and not the flu.*

### **AAA Studies the COVID Pandemic's Tragic Effects on Traffic Safety**

"A new study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reveals the COVID-19 pandemic's deadly impact on traffic safety in the United States. Researchers at the AAA Foundation found dangerous behaviors like speeding, not using seatbelts, and impaired driving contributed to a significant rise in fatal crashes compared to pre-pandemic times.

Notably, the new research highlights a disparity in the pandemic's impact on traffic safety. The study highlights several key findings:

- Risky driving spiked: Speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol remain significant contributors to fatal crashes.
- Lack of seatbelt use: The increase in occupant deaths was almost entirely among those not wearing seatbelts.
- Fatal crashes across age groups: Drivers and victims of all ages up to 55 saw a significant rise in fatal crash involvement, with men disproportionately affected.
- Late-night danger zone: Contrary to initial assumptions, the increase in fatal crashes wasn't limited to times when the pandemic cleared previously congested daytime roads. Late nights and early mornings saw the most significant spikes.
- Unequal impact: The pandemic exacerbated existing disparities in traffic safety. Socially and economically disadvantaged counties and racial and ethnic minorities were disproportionately impacted." <https://newsroom.acg.aaa.com/aaa-studies-the-covid-pandemics-tragic-effects-on-traffic-safety/#>



## Personal protective effect of wearing surgical face masks in public spaces on self-reported respiratory symptoms in adults: pragmatic randomised superiority trial.

"163 events (8.9%) of self-reported symptoms consistent with respiratory infection were reported in the intervention arm and 239 (12.2%) in the control arm. The marginal odds ratio was 0.71 (95% confidence interval (CI) 0.58 to 0.87; P=0.001) favouring the face mask intervention."

<https://www.bmj.com/content/386/bmj-2023-078918>

*The below article is very concerning. The virus targets the brain. I wonder if the genetic pressure is to increase risky behavior which will enhance the spread of the disease and the selection of these mutations. Just a depressing thought.*

## Mutation in SARS-CoV-2 spike protein enhances brain infection

"Looking at the genomes of viruses found in the brain compared to the lung, we found that viruses with a specific deletion in spike were much better at infecting the brains of these animals. This was completely unexpected, but very exciting." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/mutation-in-sars-cov-2-spike-protein-enhances-brain-infection/ar-AA1pkNwl?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

## Long COVID Is Taking Big Toll on U.S. Workforce

"About 14% of working-age people with Long COVID symptoms hadn't returned to their jobs within three months of their initial infection, researchers found. "When we compare the rates observed in this study to the national population, it could mean as many as 2 million people may be out of work because of post-COVID conditions," said lead researcher Dr. Arjun Venkatesh, chair of emergency medicine at the Yale School of Medicine...

Among the nearly 3,000 participants who were employed prior to the pandemic, almost 10% reported having five or more symptoms of Long COVID months after their initial infection, researchers said." <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-08-19/long-covid-is-taking-big-toll-on-u-s-workforce>

## The public health and economic burden of long COVID in Australia, 2022–24: a modelling study

"Our model indicated that 172 530–872 799 people would have long COVID symptoms at the end of 2024. The number of working hours lost would be highest for people aged 30–49 years, leading to an estimated mean economic loss of up to \$9.6 billion (2020–21 value), or one-quarter of GDP growth during 2022" <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.5694/mja2.52400>

## **US State Restrictions and Excess COVID-19 Pandemic Deaths**

"This cross-sectional analysis including all 50 US states plus the District of Columbia found that if all states had imposed COVID-19 restrictions similar to those used in the 10 most (least) restrictive states, excess deaths would have been an estimated 10% to 21% lower (13%-17% higher) than the 1.18 million that actually occurred during the 2-year period analyzed. Behavior changes were associated with 49% to 79% of this overall difference." 2024, July

26. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2821581>

## **I was picked for Team GB. Then long Covid dashed my Olympic dream**

"What started as a mild cold left the rower Oonagh Cousins 'unable to function'. Now she's researching her condition — and raising awareness of ME, too"

<https://www.thetimes.com/uk/healthcare/article/link-long-covid-me-dzdxtp206>

## **MPXV and SARS-CoV-2 in the air of nightclubs in Spain**

*New research from Lancet Microbe underscores the importance of airborne spread with MPox. Another reason to improve indoor air. COVID, RSV, Flu, Mpox and other airborne pathogens make the investment in indoor air quality of paramount importance.*

"MPXV in the air had increased considerably on Aug 8, with four (57%) of seven positive samples containing more than 100 genomes per m<sup>3</sup>, or even more than 1000 genomes per m<sup>3</sup> in one case; this date coincided with the peak incidence of mpox in Spain. High viral loads in the air were detected in the dark room but also in bar areas, sometimes even at higher concentrations. MPXV was undetectable in November. Carbon dioxide concentrations were very high in all nightclubs, indicating poor ventilation and a high risk of airborne transmission...we showed high virus levels in the air of indoor public spaces, presumably exhaled from people who were infected with MPXV. This finding suggests that MPXV exposure occurs beyond skin or sexual contact, and future studies to address airborne monkeypox virus transmission are warranted." <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10038664/>

## **Progression From Presymptomatic to Clinical Type 1 Diabetes After COVID-19 Infection**

"The incidence of type 1 diabetes increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Temporal relationships between COVID-19 infection and the incidence of type 1 diabetes as well as the development of islet autoimmunity are reported.<sup>2,3</sup> It remains unknown whether COVID-19 infection accelerates disease progression in children with preexisting islet autoimmunity. The study examined whether there is an association between COVID-19 infection and progression to clinical diabetes in youth with presymptomatic type 1 diabetes."

"The incidence rate of type 1 diabetes during the pandemic period was 8.6 (95% CI, 6.2-11.7; P = .16 vs pre-pandemic period) while participants had tested negative for COVID-19 and was 14.0 (95% CI, 9.9-19.2) after COVID-19 infection (P = .04 vs pandemic COVID-19 negative; P < .001 vs pre-pandemic period). Incidence rates were 15.3 (95% CI, 8.7-25.1) for participants with a reported infection and 13.7 (95% CI, 8.9-20.4) for participants who had evidence of a COVID-19 infection based on antibody measurements only." JAMA Network:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2821151>



## **Food inflation sticks around as egg prices shoot back up again**

***Maybe we need to also consider H5N1 (bird flu).***

"Some not so egg-cellent news out of this month's CPI inflation report.

In the month of July, the cost of groceries jumped 1.1% compared to a year ago, per the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It's up 0.3% compared to June. The price of eggs, up 19.1% year over year and 5.7% month over month, contributed to the stubbornly high food prices.

The 12-month change in egg prices is the largest since April 2023, when the cost jumped 21.4% year over year. The average price for a dozen large Grade A eggs went from \$2.72 in June to \$3.08 in July. A dozen eggs cost \$2.52 at the start of 2024."

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/food-inflation-sticks-around-as-egg-prices-shoot-back-up-again-181807382.html>

## **Relative efficacy of masks and respirators as source control for viral aerosol shedding from people infected with SARS-CoV-2: a controlled human exhaled breath aerosol experimental study**

"We compared efficacy of masks (cloth and surgical) and respirators (KN95 and N95) as source control for SARS-CoV-2 viral load in exhaled breath of volunteers with COVID-19 using a controlled human experimental study. Volunteers (N = 44, 43% female) provided paired unmasked and masked breath samples allowing computation of source-control factors.....All masks and respirators significantly reduced exhaled viral load, without fit tests or training. A duckbill N95 reduced exhaled viral load by 98% (95% CI: 97%–99%), and significantly outperformed a KN95 ( $p < 0.001$ ) as well as cloth and surgical masks. Cloth masks outperformed a surgical mask ( $p = 0.027$ ) and the tested KN95 ( $p = 0.014$ )."

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964\(24\)00192-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964(24)00192-0/fulltext)

## **About 400 Million People Worldwide Have Had Long Covid, Researchers Say**

"The condition has put significant strain on patients and society — at a global economic cost of about \$1 trillion a year, a new report estimates."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/09/health/long-covid-world.html>

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