



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Dec. 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 USAsm:

- 1 Continuing Education Course.
- 1 Presentation.
- 3 Articles and OpEds.
- 1 Federal Written Comment.
- 2023 HW USA Conference Videos are Available.

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

Health Watch USAsm 2023 Activities Report:

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

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 - 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 and 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

Health Watch USAsm - Articles & OpEds



COVID is still a problem, and we need to do more to stop it | Opinion

"Prevention of COVID-19 is of utmost importance. For several years, many in our society largely based their COVID recommendations on a one infection and done strategy. We now know that many are coming down with multiple bouts of the disease. We were told that severe outcomes were hospitalization and death, otherwise you had a mild disease. Now we are faced with crippling long COVID which has ravaged many in our society. In the United Kingdom, long COVID affects as many as 33.6% of healthcare workers. At the same time, we were assured our children are safe, they will almost never get severely sick from the virus. However, we started seeing long-term effects from COVID-19 in some of the children we know, and hoped they were outliers. Some of us even believed that children could not spread the infection. These beliefs, many of which were perpetuated by some of our leaders, have placed our children in peril. It is almost impossible to find a vaccine for very young children due to lack of demand and far too few settings frequented by our children have instituted COVID mitigation strategies, such as clean air." [References](#) Nov. 1, 2024. Lexington Herald Leader. Read more at: <https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article294875999.html>



Breaking the Cycle: Long COVID's Impact and the Urgent Need for Preventative Measures

"We need to emulate the NIH, which, on November fourth, initiated a masking requirement at all National Institutes of Health (NIH) patient care areas. Our nation needs to come to grips with the fact that the pandemic is NOT over; the virus is very dangerous and poses risks to everyone. NIH is masking up, and so should we.... A mask ban enacted in public venues will increase viral spread. Even outdoors, if you are within 6 feet of an infected person, large droplet spread can easily occur. Any proposed or enacted mask ban is anti-public health and will result in needless cases of long COVID, death, and disability. It will adversely impact our economy and

the mental health of our citizens. We must break this cycle of infections and disability. Clean indoor air, the wearing of N95 masks in public places, and vaccinations are keys to preventing new cases of acute COVID-19 and long COVID." [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 15, 2024.

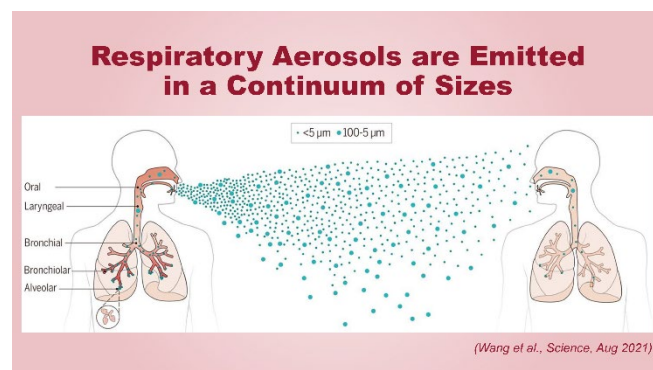
<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/breaking-cycle-long-covid-s-impact-urgent-need-preventative-measures>

CDC HICPAC Considers New Airborne Pathogen Guidelines Amid Growing Concerns

"Despite the persistence of SARS-CoV-2 and a looming H5N1 epidemic, most of the Committee, except for one member, appeared to want to maintain a status quo in our approach to airborne illnesses... Our current approach to reducing the spread of airborne pathogens must focus on reducing viral dosage. Strong evidence supports that N95 masks will reduce dosage exposure far better than surgical masks. However, this reduction may not prevent infection in all clinical settings. Instead of NOT recommending N95 masks, we must add additional layers to reduce exposure dosage. These layers include maximizing ventilation, testing, and source control. All are needed to maintain patient safety and a healthy health care workforce." [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 18, 2024.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/cdc-hicpac-considers-new-airborne-pathogen-guidelines-amid-growing-concerns>

Health Watch USAsm – Meetings



Infection Disease Hazards and Protections in Health Care -- Aerosol Transmission, Spread by Air

Jane Thomason, MSPH, CIC from National Nurses United discusses the dangers and prevention of aerosolized pathogens. The United States is currently seeing dangerous increases in Tuberculosis, Measles, Meningococcus, Candida auris, and COVID-19 cases. It is estimated that there are between 34,000 to 151,000 cases of influenza and

between 3,200 to 6,400 cases of Tuberculosis. Frontline healthcare workers are 11.6 times more likely to have COVID-19 than the general population. Aerosol transmission is an important mechanism of spread in many diseases and our understanding of the mechanism of spread has changed. Particles of various sizes spread through the air, with particle sizes below 100 microns having a propensity to aerosolize. Aerosolization can occur with breathing, speaking, and coughing. Surgical masks are not designed to prevent transmission of aerosolized pathogens. N95 masks provide the minimum level of protection which should be used. Despite the science, a NNU survey of nurses found respirators are only used 65% of the time when treating TB patients and 36% of the time when treating patients with measles. Nearly half of nurses report that facilities are using surgical masks when treating COVID-19 patients. Health Watch USAsm meeting Nov. 22, 2024. <https://youtu.be/ciWkl7d2Lqw>



Upcoming Meetings:

-- Dec. 18, 2024 7pm ET: Dr. Arjun Venkatesh, The economic and workforce impact of SARS-CoV-2.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0300947>

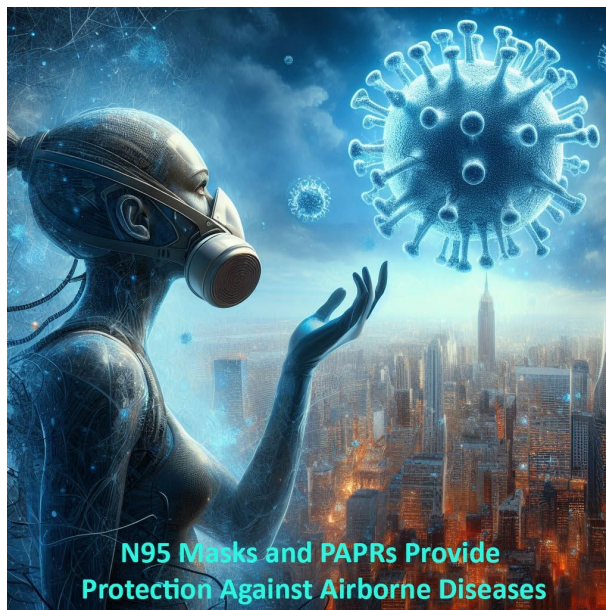
-- Jan. 15, 2025 7 pm ET: Wilmore Webley, MD, Update on COVID-19 Vaccines

Space is limited. To attend future meetings, send an email to kavanagh.ent@gmail.com

Health Watch USAsm – Federal Comment

Public written comment regarding CDC's recommendations for the Prevention of Transmission of Infectious Diseases and the importance of using negative pressure rooms and N95 masks for airborne pathogens. In addition, the CDC should recommend the implementation of ASHRAE Standard 241 for clean indoor air. Nov. 14, 2024. View Written Comment <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Initiatives/PDF-Downloads/20241114-WrittenComment-HealthWatchUSA.pdf>

Oral Public Comments: [Day 1, Nov 14th](#) [Day 2, Nov 15th](#)





Health Watch USAsm – Articles of Interest



EPA is now citing ASHRAE 241 for guidance regarding ventilation in schools

[Ventilation and Respiratory Viruses | US EPA
https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/ventilation-and-respiratory-viruses#buildings](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/ventilation-and-respiratory-viruses#buildings)

Most schools, offices, and commercial buildings have HVAC systems that bring in outdoor air and can filter some of the particles out of the air. Typically, these systems are maintained by building or HVAC professionals. Professionals who operate school, office, and commercial buildings should consult guidance by ASHRAE (formerly known as American Society of

Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers), and other professional and government organizations for information on ventilation and air filtration to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses indoors. Increasing ventilation and filtration are usually effective strategies; however, due to the complexity and diversity of building types, sizes, construction styles, and the complexity of HVAC system components and other building features, a professional should interpret ASHRAE and other pertinent guidelines for their specific building and circumstances.

Learn More About Ventilation in Schools, Offices, and Commercial Buildings

- [Air Cleaners, HVAC Filters, and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | US EPA](#)
- [ASHRAE - Guidance on COVID-19](#)
 - [ASHRAE Standard 241 – Control of Infectious Aerosols.](#)

Long COVID in kids: Symptoms vary by age, differ some from adults

"The research included 751 COVID-19 infected and 147 uninfected school-age children, along with 3,109 infected and 1,369 uninfected adolescents at more than 60 health care institutions across the United States....Forty-five percent of the infected and 33% of the uninfected school-age children had at least one prolonged symptom. For adolescents, the numbers were 39% of the infected and 27% of uninfected adolescents. A single symptom can indicate long COVID, the researchers said, though those with more symptoms and more serious symptoms have the hardest time... For the adolescents who had the lingering symptoms associated with long COVID, the most common were tiredness, sleepiness or low energy (80%), muscle or joint pain (60%), headaches (55%) and trouble with memory or focusing (47%)...For the younger children, the first cluster had high rates of many symptoms. The second featured high rates of headache (95%), body/muscle/joint pain (60%) and daytime tiredness/sleepiness or low energy (52%). The third cluster included a lot of trouble sleeping (64%) and memory/focusing problems (62%). The Desert Sun

<https://www.deseret.com/lifestyle/2024/08/21/long-covid-children-adolescents-symptoms/>

Predicting post-COVID-19 condition in children and young people up to 24 months after a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR-test: the CLoCk study

‘While 24.7% (233/943) of CYP (Children and Young People) met the PCC (Post COVID Condition) definition 3 months post-infection, only 7.2% (68/943) continued to meet the PCC definition at all three subsequent timepoints, i.e. at 6, 12 and 24 months.’

To our knowledge, these are the only prediction models estimating the risk of CYP persistently meeting the PCC (Post COVID) definition up to 24 months post-infection. The models could be used to triage CYP after infection. CYP with factors predicting longer-term symptomology, may benefit from earlier support. <https://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-024-03708-1>

New study reports that 8 out of 115 workers in dairy farms with bird flu outbreaks in cattle contracted the virus. Half of the infected did not report symptoms. No fatalities were reported. No worker wore PPE. Let's hope that if the virus does become efficient in infecting humans and transmitting between humans, that it does not have the same lethality.

CDC expands avian flu testing for farm workers, notes 7% infection rate in those exposed to infected cows

Four of the workers said they remembered having symptoms, which included conjunctivitis. Tasks included milking cows and cleaning barns. None of the workers wore respiratory protection, and less than half used eye protection.

Only one of the workers reported working with cows known to be infected.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/avian-influenza-bird-flu/cdc-expands-avian-flu-testing-farm-workers-notes-7-infection-rate-those>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7344a3.htm>

Australians lost around 100 million work hours in one year due to long COVID, study shows

"More than one million Australians who contracted long COVID at the height of the pandemic have faced difficulties working or have reduced their hours due to the condition, a study shows. Academics from the Australian National University (ANU), University of NSW (UNSW) and Melbourne University have found around 100 million labour hours were lost in 2022 due to adults with the condition being unable to work or cutting hours. The study shows that this, in turn, cost the national economy almost \$10 billion in lost productivity." <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/australians-lost-around-100-million-work-hours-in-one-year-due-to-long-covid-study-shows/dt8d7ejzo>

Article in support of universal masking in healthcare settings

Testing and Masking Policies and Hospital-Onset Respiratory Viral Infections

"In this study, stopping universal masking and SARS-CoV-2 testing was associated with a significant increase in hospital-onset respiratory viral infections relative to community infections. Restarting the masking of health care workers was associated with a significant decrease. " After universal masking and testing ended, it increased to 15.5% (95% CI, 13.6%-17.4%), then fell to 8.0% (95% CI, 5.0%-11.0%) following resumption of masking among health care workers. "

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2827170>

Disturbing finding of Spike protein persistence in the brain, long after the acute infection has cleared.

Persistence of spike protein at the skull-meninges-brain axis may contribute to the neurological sequelae of COVID-1

" Using optical clearing and imaging, we observed the accumulation of SARS-CoV-2 spike protein in the skull-meninges-brain axis of human COVID-19 patients, persisting long after viral clearance.... Vaccination reduced but did not eliminate spike protein accumulation after infection in mice. Our findings suggest persistent spike protein at the brain borders may contribute to lasting neurological sequelae of COVID-19. [https://www.cell.com/cell-host-microbe/fulltext/S1931-3128\(24\)00438-4](https://www.cell.com/cell-host-microbe/fulltext/S1931-3128(24)00438-4)

Long COVID: Patients, Workers & Society

COVID-19

4 CME/CEU Credits
CME- Physicians, PA, NHA, NP
Kentucky Approved Credits 4 Hours: EMS, Social Work, PT, Respiratory, Dentistry, OT, Community Health Worker, and Kentucky Board of Nursing (4.8 credits Nursing)

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

Download Brochure: https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference_downloads/20231101-HWUSA_Brochure-5.pdf



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



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