



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Jan. 1, 2025

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 December Health Watch USAsm:

- 1 Continuing Education Course.
- 1 Presentations.
- 3 Articles and OpEds.
- 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>

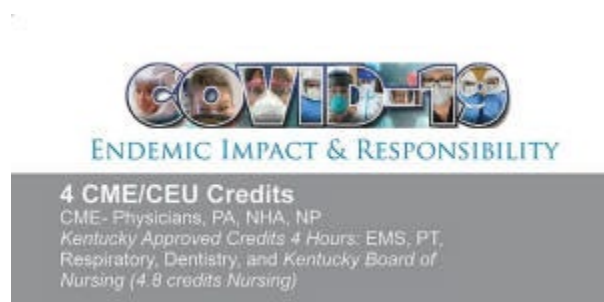
Health Watch USAsm 2021 Activities Report:

<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

courier journal
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Is Robert F. Kennedy Jr. a public health threat? He might have some good ideas

"Remember RFK Jr. is a lawyer who represents plaintiffs who are injured by the health care system, so he views recommendations through a different lens. Thus, an overarching question to ask RFK Jr., is if he would recommend using vaccines and obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine? Not just that people have access to vaccines or are told of vaccine complications, but as the leader of our health care system would he set an example and recommend receiving one. But above all we need to remember that elections have consequences, and President Trump has the right to nominate whomever he wants. The Senate then vets and, if appropriate, confirms the nominee. Pending an acceptable hearing, if one does not have RFK Jr. confirmed, then who else might be nominated next - Dr. Joseph Ladapo, the Surgeon General of Florida?"

References Courier Journal. Dec. 17, 2024. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2024/12/17/kennedy-trump-good-ideas-public-health-red-dye-ban/77011181007/>



Are we headed for an AI robotic takeover of service and manufacturing sectors? | Opinion

It is hard to tell what is real and what is not. It is hard to convince my ultra right-wing relatives that chips in vaccines are an impossible conspiracy theory, but computer chips in brains are real... I wonder, are we setting the stage for an AI robotic workforce and military, all controlled by a central quantum computer which can perform calculations a billion times faster than our fastest supercomputer? ... All of this sounds like a web of fantastical conspiracy theories. So, let's give conspiracy theorists a break, because the real news sounds just as improbable and the fodder for science fiction novels. And before you ask, yes, I am a human and wrote this op-ed. But then again, that is exactly what an AI would say. **References** Courier Journal. Dec. 30, 2024. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2024/12/30/unemployment-ai-robotic-workforce-takeover-opinion/77243208007/>

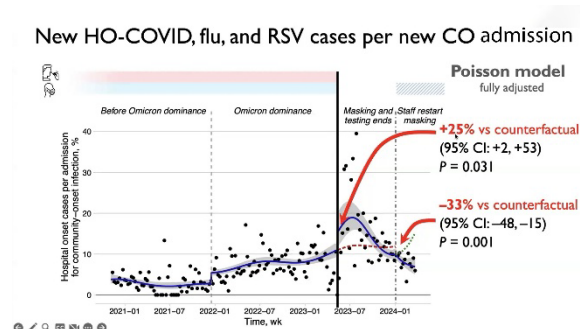
"We want to encourage CMS to expand their COVID-19 reporting requirements with the development of the following metrics:

1. Hospital-onset Infections for COVID-19;
2. Total COVID-19 infections in health care workers;
3. Total emergency room visitations and emergency room COVID-19, influenza, and RSV infections.

The toll COVID-19 has taken on our country is sobering and necessitates the implementation of mitigation strategies. Masking and admission testing have been shown to lower the incidence of COVID-19 acquisitions in hospitals. In the same study, a death rate of 8 in 100 randomly selected infected individuals was recorded. This is consistent with other data showing a 9.5% death rate for hospital-onset Infections of COVID-19. In Australia, of all COVID-19 deaths, 14% may have acquired their infection in a hospital. Increasing ventilation and clean air have also decreased the spread of aerosolized respiratory pathogens. These interventions must be widely implemented throughout our health care system to protect patients and medical staff. CMS can drive mitigation strategies by incorporating COVID-19 metrics into their hospital financial incentive programs." [References](#) Infection Control Today. Dec. 18, 2024.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/addressing-post-covid-challenges-urgent-need-enhanced-hospital-reporting-metrics>

Health Watch USAsm – Meetings



Association between hospital-onset respiratory viral infections and masking and testing policies at ten US hospitals

Dr. Theodore Pak, MD, PhD, Harvard Medical School presented on "Association between hospital-onset respiratory viral infections and masking and testing policies at ten US hospitals" during the Dec. 18, 2024, Health Watch USA(sm) Meeting. During his presentation Dr. Pak

stressed that hospital acquired respiratory infections are common and most transmission is by pre or asymptomatic individuals. There is a 20% to 40% risk of a patient acquiring COVID-19 after exposure to an infected roommate. Universal testing and masking are of very low cost especially when compared to hospital-onset Omicron infections which have a crude mortality rate of 3.2% to 13% of patients in Germany, Singapore and the United Kingdom. The cessation of testing in the United Kingdom was associated with an increase in hospital onset COVID-19 infections. A study of 10 hospitals in Massachusetts found that with the cessation of universal masking and COVID-19 testing, hospital onset of respiratory viruses (SARS-CoV-2, flu, RSV) had a 25% increase. Hospital onset cases then fell by 33% with the reinstitution of mandatory staff

masking. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/oTucFHkZELO> Health Watch USAsm meeting Dec. 18, 2024



Upcoming Meetings:

-- 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 – Articles of Interest



What if everyone had masked up? Analysis of app data has an answer

"Modelling study based on almost 250,000 positive COVID-19 tests in the United Kingdom shows that universal masking could have cut transmission markedly."

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-03976-0>

U.S. Milk to Be Tested for Bird Flu Virus

NYT: "The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin testing the nation's milk supply for the bird flu virus known as H5N1, nearly a year after the virus began circulating through dairy cattle, the

department announced on Friday. Under the new strategy, officials will test samples of unpasteurized milk from large storage tanks at dairy processing facilities across the country. Farmers and dairy processors will be required to provide samples of raw milk on request from the government. And farm owners with infected herds will be required to provide details that would help officials identify more cases and contacts."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/06/health/usda-bird-flu-milk-testing.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>

CO2 monitors to be mandatory in all Dutch classrooms.

"Despite thousands of the air quality-monitoring devices having already been installed in classrooms nationwide, some 40 percent of schools still don't have them in all classrooms, reports NOS. 'A number of schools have not gone that far yet, so we need to step up a bit,' says Wiersma. Research shows that tracking carbon dioxide levels indoors is a cost-effective way to monitor the risk of coronavirus infection." <https://airspothealth.com/a/blog/co2-monitors-to-be-mandatory-in-all-dutch-classrooms>

Bad News: According to Scripps Research Scientists the H5N1 virus may be one mutation away from effectively infecting human cells

"Scripps Research scientists identify mutation that could facilitate H5N1 "bird flu" virus infection and potential transmission in humans."

<https://www.scripps.edu/news-and-events/press-room/2024/20241205-wilson-paulson-h5n1.html>

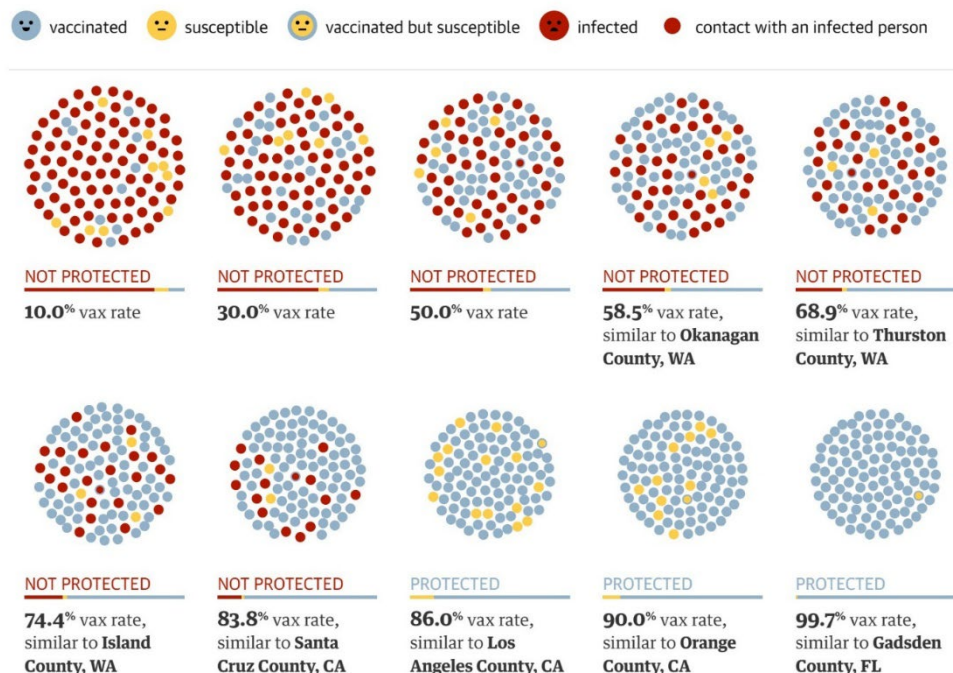
This is extremely bad news, and is occurring in a state which prohibits their health department from promoting flu vaccines.

Virus in Louisiana bird flu patient shows mutations that could increase transmissibility to humans, CDC analysis finds

"A genetic analysis of samples from the patient in Louisiana recently hospitalized with the country's first severe case of H5N1 bird flu show the virus likely mutated in the patient to potentially become more transmissible to humans, but there's no evidence the virus has been passed to anyone else." <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/27/health/cdc-bird-flu-virus-mutations-analysis/index.html>

Louisiana forbids public health workers from promoting COVID, flu and mpox shots

"A group of high-level managers at the Louisiana Department of Health walked into a Nov. 14 meeting in Baton Rouge expecting to talk about outreach and community events. Instead, they were told by an assistant secretary in the department and another official that department leadership had a new policy: Advertising or otherwise promoting the COVID, influenza or mpox vaccines, an established practice there — and at most other public health entities in the U.S. — must stop." <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/12/20/nx-s1-5223440/louisiana-ban-public-health-promoting-covid-flu-mpox-vaccines-landry-rfk-jr-anti-vaccine>



Watch how the measles outbreak spreads when kids get vaccinated – and when they don't

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/ng-interactive/2015/feb/05/-sp-watch-how-measles-outbreak-spreads-when-kids-get-vaccinated>

This is very concerning. Researchers have documented immune dysfunction in children with Long COVID. The increase in pediatric infections we are seeing may well be from COVID-19's damage to the immune system.

Long COVID syndrome in children: neutrophilic granulocyte dysfunction and its correlation with disease severity

Nature: "Many children suffer from lingering symptoms after COVID-19, known as long COVID syndrome (LCS), otherwise called Post COVID-19 Condition (PCC). Despite extensive research, the prevalence of symptoms, its impact on quality of life, and underlying mechanisms still need to be fully understood. As neutrophilic granulocytes play an essential role in COVID-19, and their prolonged disruption was found to cause immunological diseases, we hypothesized their ongoing disturbed functionality in LCS."

Results: "Persistent fatigue was the most common symptom in children with LCS, while both control groups complained about anxiety most frequently. LCS children experienced significantly more symptoms, impairing their QoL-F compared to CG+. Neutrophilic granulocyte dysfunction was found in LCS children, with decreased superoxide-producing activity and phagocytosis compared to CG+. The number of complaints of children with LCS correlated significantly with altered neutrophil effector functions."

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41390-024-03731-1>

Below is what Pfizer has said about removing mask mandates and social distancing. Infections are going to increase as will the demand for Paxlovid.

- * If you want to avoid a COVID infection, wear a mask (preferably N95).
- * If you want to help your fellow man, wear a mask (preferably N95).
- * Or -- If you want to strike a blow at the healthcare industry, stay healthy and wear a mask (preferably N95).

Angela Hwang — Group President, Pfizer Biopharmaceuticals Group: "So I think when you add all of this up, what we are seeing is the fact that there is demand for this product (Paxlovid). We also see that the social — that the removal of the mask mandate, the social distancing requirements that have been removed, you also know that in the EU that just in the last week, they've removed the emergency period of the EUA. That means that people are going to get out there. We know with all of that, infections are going to increase. And that's the role that Paxlovid can play." <https://news.alphastreet.com/pfizer-inc-pfe-q1-2022-earnings-call-transcript/>

Very disturbing article about the takeover of a news site with AI. People impersonated and articles written by AI. Local residents were scammed and duped. Be careful of your source and critically analyze all information.

AI slop is already invading Oregon's local journalism

"The Ashland Daily Tidings — established as a newspaper in 1876 — ceased operations in 2023, but if you were a local reader, you may not have known. Almost as soon as it closed, a website for the Tidings reemerged, boasting a team of eight reporters, Minihane included, who cranked out densely reported stories every few days...The reality was that none of the people allegedly working for the Ashland Daily Tidings existed, or at least were who they claimed to be. The bylines listed on Daily Tidings articles were put there by scammers using artificial intelligence, and in some cases stolen identities, to dupe local readers."

<https://www.opb.org/article/2024/12/09/artificial-intelligence-local-news-oregon-ashland/>

Article also reported by Ryan Haas, Oregon Public Broadcasting

https://www.heraldandnews.com/news/ai-slop-is-already-invading-oregon-s-local-journalism/article_15699c50-b73c-11ef-84b1-f35ba6eb4c63.html

Ashland Daily Tidings website reemerged using AI

<https://kobi5.com/news/ashland-daily-tidings-website-reemerged-using-ai-259362/>

UK doctors and nurses with long COVID to sue for compensation

"LONDON - Nearly 300 British doctors, nurses and other health workers with long COVID are suing the health service for compensation, saying they were not given proper protection during the pandemic. They say their lives have been devastated by a host of severe health complications. Most cannot return to work and many are housebound. "

<https://www.context.news/socioeconomic-inclusion/uk-doctors-and-nurses-with-long-covid-to-sue-for-compensation>

Long COVID is becoming a serious social and economic issue for Australia

"Among the current generation of kids, many are growing up with their mother or father confined to bed or confined to bed themselves. According to a study by ANU, long COVID is hitting up to an estimated 20% of Australians three months after they contracted COVID — mostly women, but also men and children. In the current COVID wave, that means a lot of people coming down sick for a long time. Long COVID is keeping people from their jobs and their lives, and as COVID cases continue, it is unclear whether the rate of new long COVID cases is increasing faster than the old cases recover."

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2024/12/02/long-covid-symptoms-viruses-health-labour-australia/>

Long COVID major public health challenge: 6.2% patients live with sustained symptoms, says WHO

"Patients with Post-COVID-19 condition not only have lingering symptoms of the disease but also have multi-organ impact." <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health/long-covid-major-public-health-challenge-62-patients-live-with-sustained-symptoms-says-who>

Hundreds of patients died after catching COVID in Victorian hospitals, new data shows

“Documents obtained by ABC News under Freedom of Information laws reveal at least 6,212 patients caught COVID in hospital in 24 months — 3,890 in 2022 and 2,322 in 2023. Of those, 586 died — almost six per week, on average — with men dying at a higher rate than women (11 per cent vs 8 per cent). Though hospital-acquired infections and deaths declined in 2023 — in line with COVID mortality trends in the broader community — the proportion of patients who died after catching the virus in hospital hardly budged, dropping from about 10 per cent in 2022 to about 9 per cent in 2023. ABC.Net May 5, 2024.”

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-06/hundreds-died-catching-covid-victoria-hospitals-testing-masking/103784896>

Scientists warn over 'mirror bacteria' that could wipe out mankind

"Leading scientists have issued an urgent warning over the 'unprecedented' risk posed by a lab-made life which could wipe out mankind. So-called 'mirror life' are synthetic organisms that are constructed out of mirrored versions of the molecules found in nature. Experts warn that these mirror organisms would be 'invisible' to life on Earth, allowing them to slip past the immune defences of all known organisms. If mirror bacteria were to escape from the lab, there would be nothing to prevent them from establishing themselves in the wild and threatening plants, animals, and humans with lethal infections."

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/science/biology/scientists-warn-over-mirror-bacteria-that-could-wipe-out-mankind/ar-AA1vNMeF?ocid=BingNewsVerp>

Scientists urge halt to research on creating synthetic “mirror” bacteria that could evade human immunity, disrupt ecosystems

<https://thebulletin.org/2024/12/scientists-urge-halt-to-research-on-creating-synthetic-mirror-bacteria-that-could-evade-human-immunity-disrupt-ecosystems/>

A ‘Second Tree of Life’ Could Wreak Havoc, Scientists Warn

“Research on so-called mirror cells, which defy fundamental properties of living organisms, should be prohibited as too dangerous, biologists said.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/12/science/mirror-life-microbes-research.html>

Health Watch USAsm - 2023 Conference Presentations

Long COVID: Patients, Workers & Society



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)

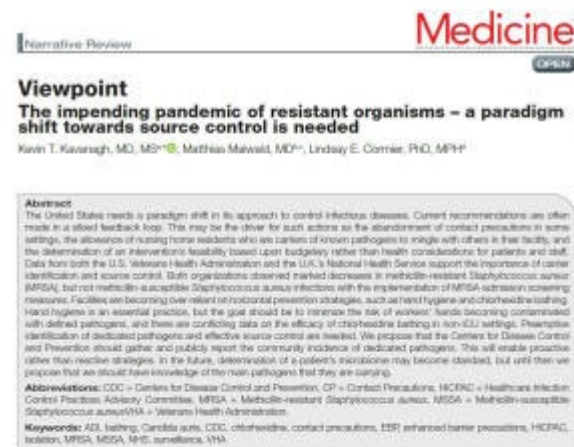
Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society

Link to Presentation Videos:

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

Download /View Conference Proceedings: Kavanagh KT, Cormier LE, Pontus C, Bergman A, Webley W. Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society. Medicine. Published Mar. 22, 2024. https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long_covid_s_impact_on_patients_workers_.50.aspx

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



Health Watch USAsm - Peer-Reviewed Publications

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



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