



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Feb. 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 January Health Watch USAsm:

- 1 Continuing Education Course.
- 2 Presentations.
- 1 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 Physicians - 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



Balancing Freedom and Safety: When Public Health Mandates Are Necessary

Infection Control Today: "How we incorporate public health strategies into our society is not a theoretical discussion but an urgently needed one, necessitated by the evolving and threatening pathogens looming on the horizon. These strategies include masking, closures, lockdowns, vaccines, and improving ventilation. During the initial phases of an outbreak, the goals of pathogen elimination and delaying cases until therapeutics are available are of utmost

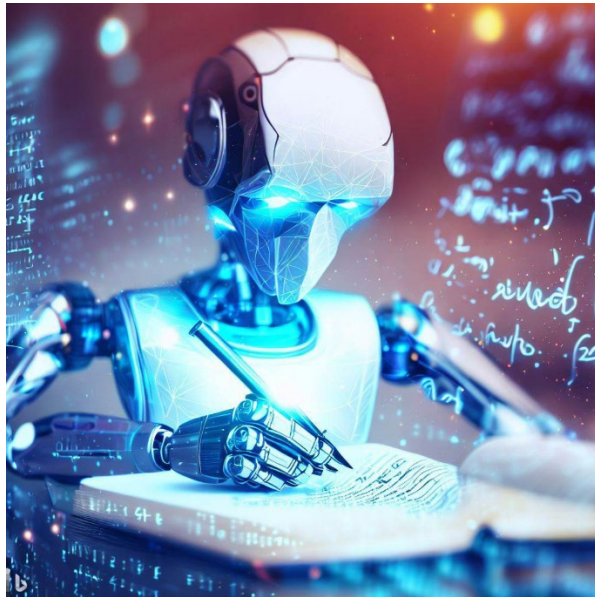
importance. We cannot assume the human body will naturally ward off an infection with its immune system. We are part of the natural order, and civilizations, along with entire species, can be eliminated by infectious diseases. What sets us apart is our intelligence and understanding of science. This gives us an advantage in our survival, but it is an advantage that will only be effective if utilized." [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/balancing-freedom-safety-when-public-health-mandates-are-necessary)
Jan. 9, 2025. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/balancing-freedom-safety-when-public-health-mandates-are-necessary>



The Importance of Identifying Carriers of Dangerous Pathogens.

I am writing to the Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria regarding the importance of carrier identification for the containment of dangerous pathogens and prevention of their infections. A recent study by Dustin Long and colleagues that demonstrated this importance with

their findings that the majority, 86%, of patients who developed post-surgical infections, did so from bacteria which were from their own preoperative microbiome. Download Written Public Comment: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-identifying-carriers-dangerous-pathogens-kevin-kavanagh-46n1e>

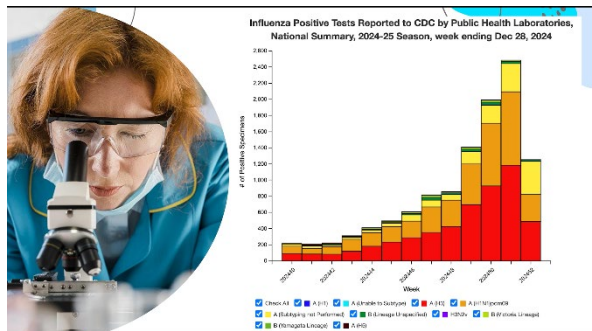


Warning: AI Generated Scientific Articles and Reviews Fraught with Dangers

"Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere. It can be truly beneficial, producing products which were not otherwise "humanly" possible, but AI also has the potential for doing great harm. In Journalism, its potential for harm is boundless and we must resist its misuse. Lapses in logic can be found in AI assisted and generated articles and reviews. Even more concerning is the application of AI in research and scientific journalism. Using AI to generate a first draft of a narrative scientific text should never be done. Even proofing or reviewing the content of the

article must be done with caution." <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ai-generated-scientific-articles-reviews-fraught-dangers-kavanagh-fzrze/>

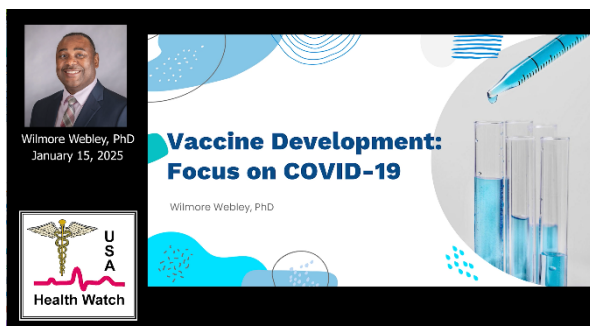
Health Watch USAsm – Meetings



Vaccine Development: Focus on Bird Flu, H5N1

Dr. Wilmore Webley, PhD, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, discusses the progressive mutations of the Bird Flu, H5N1, along with its transformation to better infect mammals along with the potential to infect humans. There are currently three vaccines available for prevention and European countries are starting to vaccinate farm workers. Improved vaccines are being developed including a universal influenza vaccine. Health Watch

USA Meeting. January 15, 2024. <https://youtu.be/ZB-g-pZif6U>



Vaccine developments: Focus on COVID-19

Dr. Wilmore Webley, PhD discusses cognitive damage from COVID-19 and how CNS damage along with other sequelae have made vaccine usage an imperative. In addition, Dr. Webley discusses the types of COVID-19 vaccines and their efficacy along with a summary of new vaccines which are in development. Health Watch USA(sm) meeting Jan. 15, 2025. Video

link <https://youtu.be/iq3Fo06gp8>



Upcoming Meetings:

-- Feb. 19, 2025. 7 pm ET: Dr. Deborah Birx. The role of bacteriophages in combating antibiotic resistant bacteria.

-- Mar. 19, 2025. 7 pm ET: Adam Van Bavel, Long COVID Patient Advocate. The impact of Long COVID on Patients, Communities and our Country.

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

Health Watch USAsm – Articles of Interest



Seasonal Flu Shot: First Defense Against an Eventful Avian Influenza Pandemic

"In this prospective observational study, immune protection against H5N1 and H7N9 avian influenza virus (AIV) was almost absent prior to vaccination. However, seasonal influenza vaccines induced a seroprotective response against the H5N1 subtype in nearly 15% of younger individuals."

"The results of our study indicate that probably the best vaccination strategy during the early stages of an AIV [avian influenza virus] pandemic will likely involve immunization first with seasonal IIV [inactivated influenza vaccine], followed, when it becomes available, with an AIV-specific vaccine or with specific newly designed H5N1 vaccines. This would lead to a more robust seroprotection compared with the single

administration of the monovalent H5N1 vaccine," the authors wrote."

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/seasonal-flu-shot-first-defense-against-eventful-avian-2025a10000ym>

CIDRAP: Analysis shows significant financial burden of long COVID in US

"Using current estimates of US long-COVID burden (assuming the probability of long COVID is 6% and symptoms last 1 year), cases cost an average of \$2.01 billion annually. The economic burden of long COVID already surpasses that of carpal tunnel, Lyme disease, and psoriasis, the authors said, and is likely to continue to grow." <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/analysis-shows-significant-financial-burden-long-covid-us>

Study tracks physical and cognitive impairments associated with long COVID.

Researchers following nearly 1,000 people with post-COVID-19 syndrome found few changes to their symptoms in the second year of illness. "When they looked at objective measures of health and cognition, the team found that people with persistent PCS had significant reductions in handgrip strength, maximal oxygen consumption, and ventilatory efficiency. Patients with persistent PCS and post-exertional malaise scored lower than control patients on cognitive tests measuring memory, attention, and processing speed; however, the researchers point out that they had no data on cognition before acute COVID-19 infection. The team was not able to identify differences in cardiac function or laboratory values, including tests of viral persistence." <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/1070763>

Undervaccination and severe COVID-19 outcomes: meta-analysis of national cohort studies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales

Rates of undervaccination against COVID-19 ranged from 32.8% to 49.8% across the four UK nations in summer, 2022. Undervaccination was associated with an elevated risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02467-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02467-4/fulltext)

SARS-COV-2 re-infection and incidence of post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC) among essential workers in New York: a retrospective cohort Another study finding an association between reinfections and long COVID, and with not being vaccinated and long COVID developing after the first infection.

SARS-COV-2 re-infection and incidence of post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC) among essential workers in New York: a retrospective cohort study

Lancet: "Findings: A total of 475 (prevalence = 18.9%, [95% confidence interval] = [17.4–20.5]) PASC patients were identified. The mean (standard deviation (SD)) age of participants who experienced PASC (54.8 (7.2) years) was similar to those who did not (54.2 (7.4) years). There were 403 (16.1% [14.6–17.5]) participants who experienced multiple instances of COVID-19. After adjusting for relevant demographic, lifestyle, and clinical variables, we found a significant association between the risk of experiencing PASC and multiple SARS-COV-2 infections (RR = 1.41 [1.14–1.74]), severe COVID-19 (RR = 3.17 [2.41–4.16]), and being unvaccinated at first infection (RR = 3.29 [2.46–4.41]). Interpretation: Although the pathogenetic mechanism for PASC remains unclear, identifying risk factors such as lack of vaccination or re-infection can assist in better understanding and managing the condition." [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X\(24\)00311-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X(24)00311-9/fulltext)

The following research contradicts the "Immune Dept" hypothesis. Maybe we should stop purposely placing our children at risk for developing dangerous infections?

JAMA Network: Burden of Infections in Early Life and Risk of Infections and Systemic Antibiotics Use in Childhood

" In this cohort study of 614 children with daily diary information on common infection load in early life, the overall infection burden in early life was associated with increased risks of moderate to severe infections and antibiotic treatments later in childhood." (Note: immunocompromised children were removed from the study) <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2828688?>

As stated by Anthony Leonardi, MBBS, PhD (<https://substack.com/home/post/p-154799602>) there are only two explanations:

1. That despite removing immunocompromised individuals from the cohort, there is some kind of immune problem these individuals had to begin with.
2. Frequent infections predispose to severe disease by virtue of aging or dysregulating the immune system.

Almost a million chickens in Ohio tested positive for bird flu. Here's what to know

"Nearly a million chickens tested positive for bird flu at a farm in a western county of Ohio, according to the Ohio Department of Agriculture in December. And officials are assuming reports of dead Canada geese, trumpeter swans, and a mallard duck across 11 Ohio counties, including Warren, means that bird flu has reached wild bird populations as well. The incidents reflect a global trend where bird flu has killed more than 300 million birds worldwide."

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2025/01/03/what-to-know-as-a-million-ohio-chickens-test-positive-for-bird-flu/77399994007/>

11 people in Oakland County (Michigan) had contact with H5N1-infected backyard flock, 2 are now sick

"Two people are sick and in isolation in Oakland County and nine others are being monitored after they had direct contact with H5N1 bird flu from an infected backyard flock, a spokesperson for Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter told the Free Press on Thursday. The two people who are ill have flu-like symptoms and are undergoing testing, said Bill Mullan, Coulter's spokesperson."

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/health/2025/01/09/h5n1-bird-flu-oakland-county-backyard-flock-2-people-sick-9-others-monitored/77582797007/>

COVID 5 years later: Learning from a pandemic many are forgetting

Science: "AWAJI, JAPAN—The COVID-19 pandemic, as best as we can tell, took more than 20 million lives, cost \$16 trillion, kept 1.6 billion children out of school, and pushed some 130 million people into poverty. And it's not over: Figures from October 2024 showed at least 1000 people died from COVID-19 each week, 75% of them in the United States, and that's relying only on data from the 34 countries that still report deaths to the World Health Organization (WHO)."

<https://www.science.org/content/article/covid-5-years-later-learning-pandemic-many-are-forgetting>

Science tells us that portable air filters reduce infections. It's time for public health authorities to make this clear

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876034124003848>

Ancient Romans Breathed in Enough Lead to Lower Their IQs, Study Finds. Did That Toxin Contribute to the Empire's Fall?

"Did lead poisoning contribute to the fall of the Roman Empire? It's a question historians have long debated, since the Romans sweetened their wine with lead acetate and sipped tap water that flowed through lead pipes. Now, new research suggests the Romans were also breathing in large amounts of lead from silver mining and smelting operations. The toxic metal polluting the air likely got into children's blood, leading to "widespread cognitive decline," researchers write in a new

paper published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Lead in the air might have caused an estimated 2.5- to 3-point drop in IQs throughout the Roman Empire, per the research." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/ancient-romans-breathed-in-enough-lead-to-lower-their-iqs-study-finds-did-that-toxin-contribute-to-the-empire-s-fall/ar-AA1x88rs>

CDC is monitoring HMPV spike in China as US cases increase

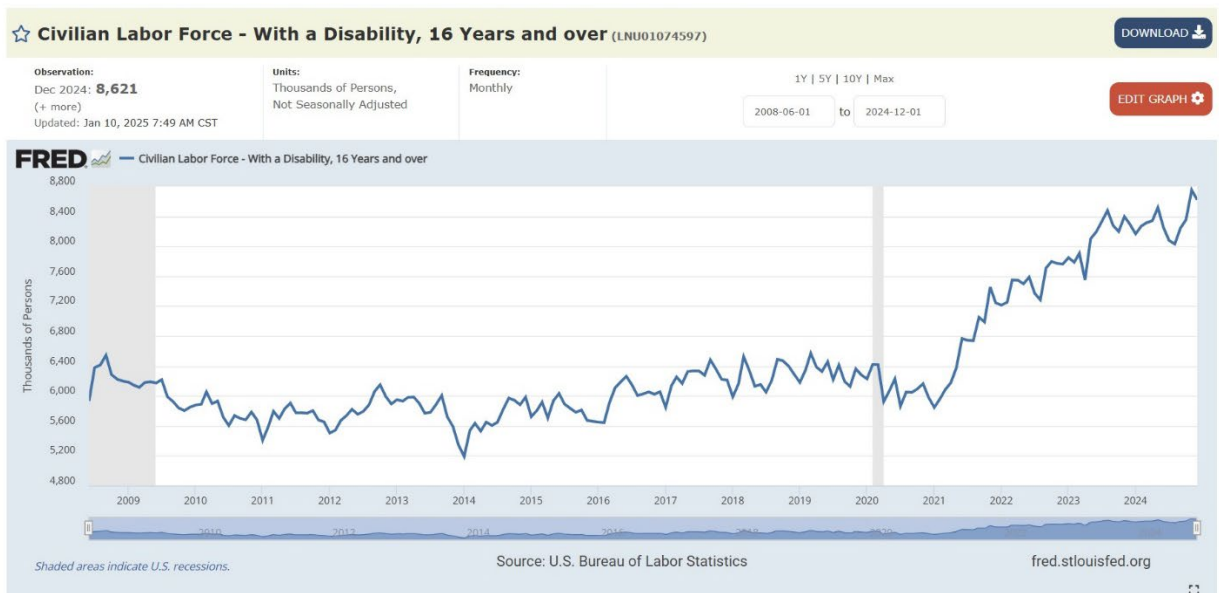
New York Post: "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently monitoring reports of a spike in human metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China, as the US sees an increase in such cases. The CDC said it was aware of increasing HMPV cases in northern China following reports from Beijing-run media confirming positivity rates have risen significantly among children 14 and younger. The CDC, however, stressed that the number of cases of the respiratory disease in America remains at "pre-pandemic" levels and is not a cause for concern." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/cdc-is-monitoring-hmpv-spike-in-china-as-us-cases-increase/ar-AA1x4FzR>

China Reacts As WHO Issues Reminder About COVID Responsibility

Newsweek: "The WHO has for years been asking China for more information about the virus behind the initial outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, five years ago. Chinese authorities covered up the outbreak for weeks before notifying citizens and the international community." The WHO's push for more information has continued even after it sent a fact-finding mission to Wuhan in January 2021. The experts were given limited access to raw data, patient records, and personnel involved early in the outbreak. Maria Van Kerkhove, infectious disease epidemiologist and technical lead for the WHO's COVID-19 response, has called China's limited disclosure "simply inexcusable... Mao Ning, spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said during Tuesday's regular press briefing that China had shared data about the outbreak and genome sequencing "at the earliest time possible." The country has also shared its anti-pandemic and clinical experience "without reservation," she added, "making great contributions to the global effort of fighting against COVID-19." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-reacts-as-who-issues-reminder-about-covid-responsibility/ar-AA1wQwrF>

The Current and Future Burden of Long COVID in the United States (U.S.)

"Simulations show that the average total cost of a Long COVID case can range from \$5,084-\$11,646 (assuming symptoms only last 1 year) with 92.5%-95.2% of these costs being productivity losses. Therefore, the current number of Long COVID cases could end up costing society at least \$2.01-\$6.56 billion, employers at least \$1.99-\$6.49 billion in productivity losses, and third-party payers \$21-68.5 million annually (6%-20% probability of developing Long COVID). " "The current health and economic burden of Long COVID may already exceed that of a number of other chronic diseases and will continue to grow each year as there are more and more COVID-19 cases. This could be a significant drain on businesses, third party payers, the healthcare system, and all of society." <https://academic.oup.com/jid/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/infdis/jiaf030/7972782>



Health Watch USAsm - 2023 Conference Presentations



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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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.

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