



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Sept. 1, 2026

Designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare
by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

Activity for the Month of June - Health Watch USAsm:

- 1 Continuing Education Course.
- 3 Articles.
- 1 Meeting Presentation.
- 2025 HW USA [Conference Videos are Available](#).
- 2024 HW USA [Conference Videos are Available](#)

Health Watch USAsm Nov. 1st, 2023 Conference Presentation Videos & Proceedings: Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society: <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/index.html>

Health Watch USAsm Nov. 1st, 2025 Conference Presentation Videos & Proceedings: Combating Infectious Disease Challenges: <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2025/index.html>

Health Watch USAsm Activities Reports: [2020](#) [2021](#) [2022](#) [2023](#) [2024](#)

COMBATING INFECTIOUS DISEASE CHALLENGES

Have we gone twenty steps forward or backwards?



Health Watch USA's 2025-2026 Public Health *Continuing Medical Education*

International speakers from New Zealand, Australia & Singapore.

Course Objectives:

1. Discuss the dangers imposed by four infectious pathogens, SARS-CoV-2, measles, H5N1, and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
2. Identify preventative strategies to prevent the spread of airborne pathogens.
3. To better educate patients regarding misinformation surrounding vaccinations, in order to reduce patient infections and promote public safety.
4. Identify the role of bacteriophages in treating antibiotic resistant bacteria.

The course is currently available at <https://healthconference.org> and [Combating Infectious Disease Course - Health Watch USA](#)

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the Joint Providership of the Kentucky Medical Association and Healthwatch USA. The Kentucky Medical Association is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The Kentucky Medical Association designates this enduring material activity for 4.5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits.[™] Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.



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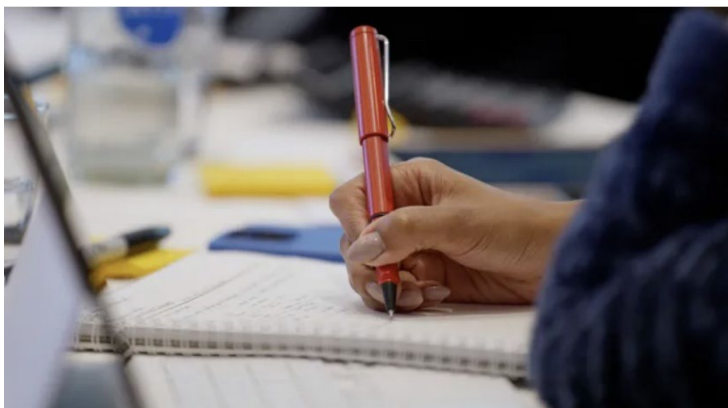
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- [Chickens, Cows, and Cats: A Barnyard Story about Bird Flu, Cynda Crawford, DVM, PhD](#)
- [H5 Influenza As It Moves Through North American Food Animals, Carol Cardona, DVM, PhD](#)



I'm writing without AI; humans seem to be devolving. | opinion

"There is no doubt that writing is difficult, but it is this mental challenge of memory, information analysis, logic and critical thinking which is so important. But AI is everywhere. I do not enjoy starting my morning reading AI slop...currently, when I place thoughts in my word processor, or even when I write an op-ed, there is a cute little AI button

hovering next to my work. Like an opium dealer tempting one to just sample its wares and become addicted to its reworking and writing. At my age, I need to preserve all that I have and to exercise my brain as much as possible. Every press of the AI substituting Tab Button is one step closer to the memory care unit. My advice: Ignore the button that will substitute AI for your prose. It will eventually cause your ability to grasp and remember words along with the ability to critically think, read and write to fade into the long-forgotten past."

References Courier Journal. Aug. 13, 2026. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2026/08/13/ai-artificial-intelligence-writing-reading-brain-thinking/91269265007/>

AI is replacing nurses in NY. I fear the same fate for KY. | opinion

"Nurse staffing levels are strongly tied to patient outcomes. Their replacement at any level of care needs to be performed with the utmost caution and certainly not with inadequately-tested technology...Artificial intelligence is marketed as being more efficient, but it also appears to be creating work for itself to do. And if no one is employed, who will buy the products or pay taxes? All of this necessitates the need for government oversight - and soon - because the dire AI predictions are starting to become realities."

References Courier Journal. July 28, 2026. [2026-9-HW \(Link to Article\)](#)

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White House Executive Order Reshapes Childhood Vaccine Recommendations, Drawing Public Health Concerns

Regarding splitting up of the MMR Vaccine. "Kevin Kavanagh, MD, is also concerned about parents having to take off time from work. "Breaking up the vaccines into individual components was described as "inconvenient" by the President. However, I feel it will add to both expense and lost time at work, resulting in vaccination dropout. In addition, it will

increase the time the child could potentially be exposed to the disease." ... "No one can predict which disease a child will get, and not having ready access to universal health care makes comparisons between European and the U.S. health care systems problematic at best," Kavanagh told ICT."

Regarding Autism: “It was also suggested that this may decrease rates of autism,” Kavanagh said. “The original small study that suggested a linkage between vaccines and autism has been thoroughly discredited and has been described by the BMJ Editor as being fraudulent. In the city of Yokohama, Japan, when individual MMR components were administered separately, there was an increase, not a decrease in autism. There have been at least 35 studies involving millions of children that have failed to show a link between the 2.” Infection Control Today. Aug. 17, 2026. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/white-house-executive-order-reshapes-childhood-vaccine-recommendations-drawing-public-health-concerns>



The Price of Forgetting What Vaccines Prevent

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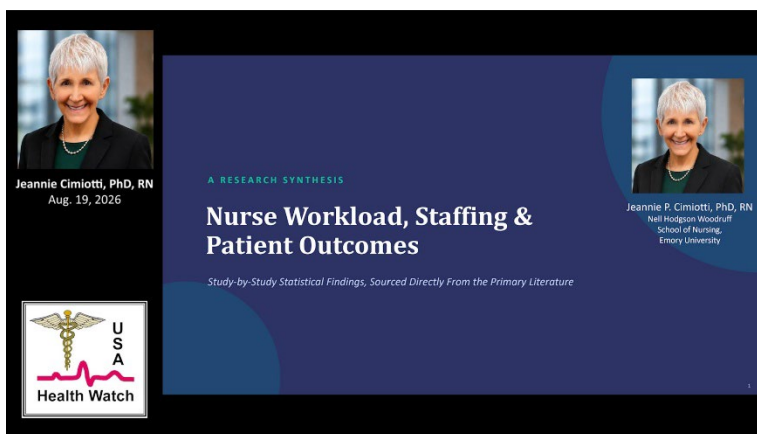
This week the Pennsylvania Health Department reported two “measles-associated” deaths in unvaccinated individuals. Later it was reported that at least one of the deceased was a child, an unvaccinated infant. The infant died of a ruptured spleen but whether it was enlarged and susceptible to rupture due to infection is hard to determine post rupture. Measles is most severe in

those under the age of 5, and infants between the ages of 6 months and 1 year at high risk. This is the susceptibility window when the protection from maternal antibodies has waned and before the first measles shot can be safely given. If given at too young of an age, the immunity produced with revaccination may not be durable. Even though infants cannot be vaccinated, communities can, which produces protective herd immunity which is one of the pillars of public health. And if you disagree with the above, remember the United States until recently had effectively eliminated measles, and if not for anti-vaxxers this discussion and article would be irrelevant and unnecessary. Infection Control Today. [References](#) Aug 28, 2026.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/price-forgetting-what-vaccines-prevent>

Health Watch USAsm Presentations

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Nurse Retention and Promotion of the Workplace Environment

Dr. Jeannie Cimiotti, professor at Emory University’s Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing and longtime Health Watch USA member, presented research on how nurse workload, staffing, and work environment affects nursing burnout, job satisfaction and most importantly, patient outcomes. Drawing on more than 20 years of studies, she emphasized that nursing care strongly influences mortality, failure to rescue,

infection rates, and readmissions. Her work shows that assigning fewer patients to each nurse is associated with lower 30-day mortality and fewer preventable deaths, especially in hospitals with supportive work environments. Studies comparing California’s mandated staffing ratios with New Jersey and Pennsylvania suggested that similar ratios could have prevented substantial numbers of deaths and improved nurse

satisfaction and care quality. Dr. Cimiotti also discussed sepsis research showing that additional registered nurse hours per patient day reduce mortality, while heavier workloads increase deaths and readmissions. She highlighted pediatric findings linking higher nurse workloads to increased readmissions, and evidence that nurse practitioners improve outcomes in acute care. Overall, she argued that adequate nurse staffing, better work environments, and reduced burnout are essential to patient safety and healthcare quality. Health Watch USA Meeting Aug. 19, 2026. [References](#) View Video <https://youtu.be/Cmk0VpBcPF4>

6 Key Points:

1. Nursing workload directly affects patient outcomes. Research cited in the presentation connects nurse staffing levels with mortality, failure to rescue, infections, readmissions, ICU admissions, and length of stay.
2. Lower patient-to-nurse ratios are associated with fewer deaths. Studies comparing California's staffing mandate with New Jersey and Pennsylvania found that mandated ratios could have prevented substantial numbers of deaths and improved care quality.
3. Sepsis outcomes improve with more registered nurse time. Additional registered nurse hours per patient day were associated with lower sepsis mortality, while heavier nurse workloads increased mortality and readmissions.
4. Burnout is a patient safety issue, not only a workforce issue. High nurse burnout was linked to higher rates of catheter-associated urinary tract infections and surgical site infections, with significant preventable costs.
5. Supportive work environments strengthen the impact of staffing. Better staffing was most effective when paired with strong work environments, leadership support, and adequate resources for bedside nurses.
6. Investing in nurses can reduce costs and improve retention. Evidence presented showed that improved staffing, higher registered nurse skill mix, nurse practitioner presence, and retention strategies can lower adverse outcomes, shorten stays, reduce turnover, and save money.



Upcoming Meetings.

Sep. 16, 2026. 7 PM ET Ann Zaia, PhD, MSN, Mast Cell Inflammation

Oct. 21, 2026. 7 PM ET Omer Awan MD, MPH, Cyclospora – Incidence, Treatment, Diagnosis and What Needs to be Done.

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

"I just want to say to all of you cowards out there - don't be such a chicken squat. Get out there and get your shot," - Dolly Parton 🎸 🎸

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/nov/17/dolly-parton-partly-funded-moderna-covid-vaccine-research>

U.S. Measles Deaths Reported — Pennsylvania confirms two deaths in unvaccinated individuals, state's first in 35 years

"Pennsylvania confirmed two measles-associated deaths, the state's first in 35 years and the first for the U.S. in a record-breaking 2026. The Pennsylvania Department of Health said both occurred in unvaccinated individuals in Lancaster County, but did not specify the individuals' age or other additional details, citing privacy..... One of the most contagious infectious diseases, measles often causes a characteristic rash and fever. Severe infections can lead to serious health complications or death, particularly in children younger than 5 years. One dose of the MMR vaccine is 93% effective at preventing measles, while two doses are 97% effective. With 393 confirmed cases in 2026, Pennsylvania has the third-highest measles case count following South Carolina's 670 and Utah's 526." <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/publichealth/122744>

Two Unvaccinated People Died from Measles in Pennsylvania, Officials Say

"The deaths, which one doctor called "extremely rare in the modern era," were the first in the United States in 2026. Two unvaccinated people in Pennsylvania have died from measles, as a large outbreak there continues to spread, the state's Health Department reported on Tuesday morning. They were the first measles deaths this year in the United States. The deaths come during a record-setting year for measles in the United States: More cases have been reported in 2026 than in any other year since the virus was declared eliminated in 2000. Outbreaks have popped up all over the country. Lancaster County, Pa., where both patients lived, has been at the center of an outbreak that has so far hospitalized 70 people and infected more than 390, a third of whom were children. Health officials, citing privacy reasons, did not say whether the two patients were children or adults." <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/25/well/measles-deaths-pennsylvania-outbreak.html>

I have stated several times that conspiracy theories about vaccines are being pushed by Foreign adversaries of the United States. A new study from Japan entitled:

Longitudinal predictors of vaccine conspiracy beliefs: findings from a five-wave panel study in Japan.

The study "...identified two distinct dimensions of conspiracy thinking: institutional conspiracy beliefs, which reflect distrust toward governments and pharmaceutical companies, and implausible conspiracy beliefs, which involve extreme claims such as microchip implantation." and the first "reflect enduring orientations of distrust rather than temporary reactions to pandemic-specific information."

All of this can be used to destabilize our country, directly through governmental distrust but also through both the human and financial cost to our citizens. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-026-57049-5>

South Texas school district cancels classes due to 'rapid spread of COVID-19'

Just two weeks into the new school year, a Rio Grande Valley school district is closing all campuses for two days because of what officials described as the "rapid spread of COVID-19." San Perlita Independent School District announced Monday that all school operations will be suspended Tuesday and Wednesday "as a precautionary measure." Classes will resume as scheduled on Thursday. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/south-texas-school-district-cancels-classes-due-to-rapid-spread-of-covid-19/ar-AA2aX2N2?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

The article below describes an unimaginable AI breakthrough which will greatly benefit mankind, however, the possibility of using science for evil is great. This places gain of function research on a new level and greatly increases the risks for biological weapons. There is no question whether we need a strong and expanded CDC.

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Scientists have designed a functioning virus from scratch using AI. What you need to know

"Artificial intelligence has designed viruses that can infect bacteria and reproduce—a first that shows AI is beginning to do more than analyze the genetic code of living things. It can write new versions of it, too. The viruses in question are bacteriophages, or phages—viruses that infect bacteria rather than people, animals or plants. Researchers used AI to design hundreds of new versions of a well-studied phage, then built the viruses from scratch in the laboratory."

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2026-08-scientists-functioning-virus-ai.html>

A biblical disease is back with a vengeance in Florida — experts warn which animal is to blame

"Well, "ancient" is only partly true — leprosy, aka Hansen's Disease, is a 4,000-year-old illness, but it infects as many as 200,000 around the world today. In the US, there are a few hundred cases a year and numbers are climbing. Florida has some of the highest rates of infection in the country, with 17 so far this year. Nine-banded armadillos are a common sight across the southern US.... They are, for the most part, harmless. But experts say the adorable armored creatures may be the culprit behind a rising number of cases of an ancient disease." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/general/a-biblical-disease-is-back-with-a-vengeance-in-florida-experts-warn-which-animal-is-to-blame/ar-AA28RSEP>

Cases of 'breakbone fever' (dengue fever) spreading locally in Florida for first time in 15 years

"The mosquito-borne disease, also called dengue fever, is usually brought stateside by international travelers." However:

1. Florida has reported 10 locally acquired cases of dengue fever this year, including the first in Pinellas County in 15 years;
2. Dengue fever, also known as "breakbone fever" due to the extreme body aches it can cause, is spread by infected mosquitoes; severe symptoms include fever, rash and body aches;

3. The CDC advises wearing protective clothing and using insect repellent to prevent mosquito bites in at-risk areas."

People. Aug. 18, 2026. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/diseases-and-conditions/cases-of-breakbone-fever-spreading-locally-in-florida-for-first-time-in-15-years/ar-AA2anUOI>

The article below discusses the possibility of reactivation of the EB virus as a cause of Multiple Sclerosis. This is just one example of reactivation of latent viruses. Reactivation is also suspected to happen in some individuals with COVID-19.

A childhood virus almost everyone catches is now linked to multiple sclerosis

Almost everyone carries it. The Epstein-Barr virus, best known as the cause of infectious mononucleosis, infects the vast majority of people at some point in life, usually with such mild or unnoticeable symptoms that most never realize they were exposed. For decades that near-universal infection seemed largely benign once the initial illness passed. But a growing body of evidence now points to Epstein-Barr virus as a leading suspect in the development of multiple sclerosis, a disabling disease of the central nervous system. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/general/a-childhood-virus-almost-everyone-catches-is-now-linked-to-multiple-sclerosis/ar-AA29Ysfk>

COVID can wake up a slew of dormant viruses inside you.

"Reactivation of typically harmless anelloviruses, in particular, seems to be linked with developing long COVID, study finds."

"A severe bout of COVID-19 can wake up an army of dormant viruses hiding inside the body. That's according to a study of more than 1,000 people hospitalized with the disease that is published today in Nature¹. The analysis finds that this reactivation of pathogens is linked to especially intense bouts of COVID-19 and to the development of long COVID." Nature, News, Kozlov M. Aug. 5, 2026. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-02443-2>

1 in 4 infected UK healthcare workers developed long COVID, report shows

About one in four UK healthcare workers who contracted COVID-19 had long-COVID symptoms for five weeks or longer, and 26.5% of health workers worldwide were still experiencing related symptoms a year later, according to a new report examining the pandemic's long-term effects on the healthcare workforce." <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/1-4-infected-uk-healthcare-workers-developed-long-covid-report-shows>

We're constantly told to choose products with

**"none of the *bad* stuff,
only the good stuff."**

But here's the problem: preservatives—often labeled as "bad chemicals"—actually keep the real bad stuff out. They prevent dangerous bacteria and fungi from growing in our vaccines, cosmetics, and food.

When we remove preservatives to make products seem "cleaner," we're not eliminating risk, we're creating it. If people really wanted to avoid harmful substances, they'd want the preservatives that stop contamination and infection. Sometimes the "artificial" ingredient is exactly what protects us from genuine danger.

THE
UNBIASED
SCIENCE
PODCAST



Health Watch USAsm – Combating Misinformation

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We have posted a number of COVID-19 resources regarding common areas of misinformation.

These include:

- The Dangers of Long COVID and COVID-19 in Children: [Download Resource](#)
- COVID-19 Vaccine Prevention of Long COVID: [Download Resource](#)
- COVID-19 Vaccine's Effectiveness & Risks: [Download Resource](#)
- The ineffectiveness of Hydroxychloroquine & Ivermectin in the treatment of COVID-19: [Download Resource](#)
- Vaccines Do NOT Cause Autism [Download Resource](#)

Health Watch USA Op-eds Regarding COVID-19 & Children

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- COVID is still a problem, and we need to do more to stop it | Opinion. Lexington Herald Leader. Nov. 1, 2024. <https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article294875999.html#storylink=cpy>
- COVID is closing Kentucky schools – again. Embracing disinformation paralyzes our response. Sept. 6, 2023. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2023/09/06/kentuckyschool-districts-close-covid-upgrade-buildings-ventilation/70765140007/>
- 70% of COVID-19 Cases Transmitted By Children. Infection Control Today. June 5, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/70-covid-19-cases-transmitted-by-children>
- FDA's ridiculous claims about COVID vaccines hurt KY kids. Courier journal. Dec. 31, 2025. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2026/01/02/fda-covid-vaccine-cdc-trump/87974411007/>

Active Public Health Continuing Education Courses

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2024: 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

2025-2026: Combating Infectious Disease Challenges

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International speakers from New Zealand, Australia & Singapore. 4.5 credit hours for Physicians - Category I AMA Credit. Course Objectives:

1. Discuss the dangers imposed by four infectious pathogens, SARS-CoV-2, measles, H5N1, and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
2. Identify preventative strategies to prevent the spread of airborne pathogens.
3. To better educate patients regarding misinformation surrounding vaccinations, in order to reduce patient infections and promote public safety.
4. Identify the role of bacteriophages in treating antibiotic resistant bacteria.

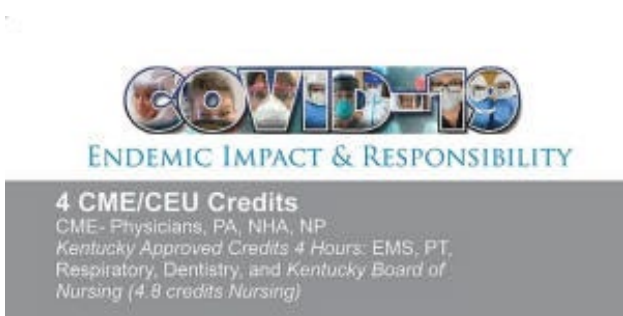
The course is currently available at <https://healthconference.org> and [Combating Infectious Disease Challenges](#)

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Health Watch USAsm – 2023 & 2024 Conference Presentations

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COVID-19: Endemic Impact & Responsibility



Link to 2024 Presentation Videos:

[COVID-19: Endemic Impact & Responsibility Sept. 1, 2024](#)

Link to 2023 Presentation Videos:

[Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society](#)

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

Health Watch USAsm – 2025 Webinar Presentations

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2025 Webinar Introduction & Science Behind Masking: Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, Board Chairman of Health



The Statement: "More high-quality RCTs are needed..." is true,

<https://www.sensible-med.com/p/the-cochrane-mask-fiasco>
-- Vinay Prasad,

1. But to be high quality a Randomized Controlled Trials must be double-blinded or significant biases can occur.

2. And with public health, RCT often cannot be ethically performed. Take for example the effectiveness of parachutes; which was the subject of the famous BMJ article regarding ethical implications of RCTs.

Smith GC, Pell JP. Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma related to gravitational challenge: systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *BMJ*. 2003 Dec 20;327(7429):1459-61. doi: 10.1136/bmj.327.7429.1459. <https://www.bmj.com/content/327/7429/1459.long>

Watch USAsm gives the webinar introduction and discusses misinformation and disinformation regarding masking. Similar barriers found with adopting face masks can also be found with other public health strategies. Exposure dosage to an airborne pathogen is important in reducing the risks of transmission, which underscores the importance of masking and improving indoor air ventilation and quality. Health Watch USAsm Webinar. Aug. 29, 2025. [View Video](#) [View Slides](#)

Associated Infection Control Today Article: How Misinformation Tries

to Debunk the Science Behind Masking <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/how-misinformation-tries-discredit-science-behind-masking>

Key Points from Webinar Introduction

- The webinar marks the 20th anniversary of Healthwatch USA, focusing on infectious disease challenges and progress.
- Topics addressed include vaccinations, worker safety, elimination strategies, bird flu, phages as treatment for antibiotic resistance, and public health misinformation.
- Misinformation and disinformation have significant impacts on public health efforts, sometimes leading to violence and the enactment of ineffective policies.
- Recent CDC events include armed attacks, layoffs, leadership changes, & being asked to endorse controversial policies.
- Exposure dosage is important in reducing the risks of transmission. Which underscores the importance of masking and improving indoor air ventilation and quality.
- Masking as a public health strategy faces difficulties in compliance and study design, impacting trial results.
- Evidence suggests that mask effectiveness depends on correct and consistent use, type of mask, and exposure time.
- A layered approach—using multiple strategies simultaneously—is essential for effective infection control.
- Randomized controlled trials for masking are challenging due to ethical and practical considerations.
- Large studies and reviews show that masks, especially N95 respirators, reduce transmission of respiratory pathogens.
- Ivermectin trials have failed to show benefit in treating COVID-19, suggesting research should focus elsewhere.
- Improved air quality and ventilation should complement masking, particularly in healthcare settings.
- Short-term use of N95 masks for specific situations remains a recommended public health strategy.



William Schaffner, MD
Aug. 29, 2025



Awareness and belief in health misinformation
Misinformation is pervasive, but trust in health misinformation is less so.
Percent who have heard or read false claim (only 5 of 10 claims shown)
Percent who say false claim is definitely or probably true

False Claim	Percent who have heard or read false claim	Percent who say false claim is definitely or probably true
The COVID-19 vaccines have caused thousands of sudden deaths	~60%	~25%
The MMR vaccines have been proved to cause autism in children	~60%	~25%
The COVID-19 vaccines have been proved to cause infertility	~60%	~25%
Ivermectin is an effective treatment for COVID-19	~60%	~25%
More people have died of COVID-19 vaccines than of COVID-19 virus	~60%	~25%

JAMA 331:1037-3094

Communications and pandemic mitigation strategies—Health Watch USA 2025

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William Schaffner, MD discusses that dealing with vaccine hesitancy, such as a patient's reluctance to receive a flu shot, requires more than simply offering facts—it necessitates empathy, validation, and a focus on building trust. When a patient expresses uncertainty about vaccination, the healthcare provider's response should never be surprise or judgment. Instead, it is vital to acknowledge and validate the patient's

concerns, maintaining open, supportive dialogue. Asking patients to share their specific worries and responding with understanding helps ease anxiety and fosters a sense of partnership. Providers are encouraged to normalize healthy behaviors by sharing relatable examples, such as mentioning that they and their families are vaccinated, and highlighting

that most people in the community do the same. This approach leverages social norms and comfort to promote positive health actions. Even if a patient remains hesitant, it's important not to argue, but to accept their reluctance and assure them the conversation will continue in the future. Effective communication about vaccines also involves keeping messages clear, fact-based, and accessible. Healthcare professionals should be honest about the benefits and limitations of vaccines, offering reassurance and emphasizing the goal of preventing serious disease. Ultimately, how patients feel during these interactions—respected, understood, and cared for—has a lasting impact. The role of the healthcare provider is not only to impart knowledge but to nourish trust, serving as both teacher and caregiver in the journey toward better health outcomes. Health Watch USAsm Webinar Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/h45wnmG79xl>

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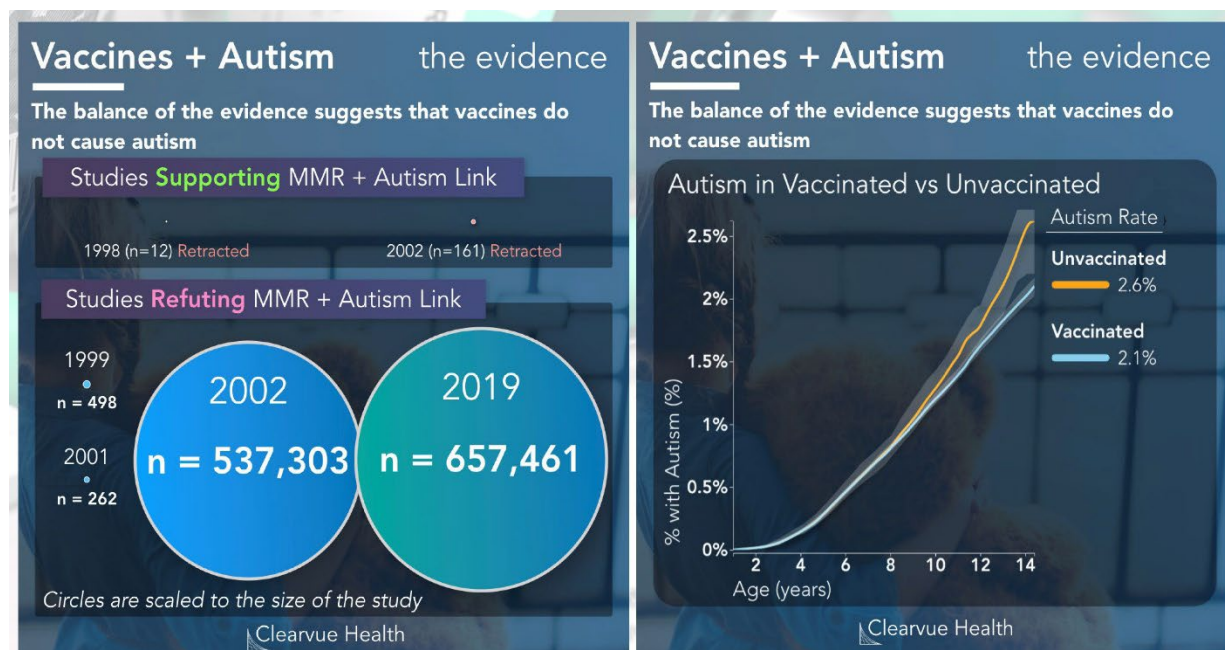
Measles 50 years later

Wilmore Webley, PhD, Professor of Microbiology and Senior Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion at the



University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Webley discusses the research and vaccine history of the measles virus, along with its severe clinical impact. He emphasizes that measles causes not only acute illness but also “immune amnesia,” erasing immune memory and leaving survivors vulnerable to other diseases. Due to the virus’s extreme contagiousness, a high rate of immunity in the community, greater than 95%, is necessary for herd immunity to take place and to stop the spread of the virus. As the presentation discusses, the benefit of the vaccine greatly outweighs its risks. Unfortunately, misinformation is rampant, and immunization rates are falling. In many areas they are well below

the level needed to achieve herd immunity. Much of the misinformation can be traced back to a deeply flawed 1998 study by Andrew Wakefield which was published in the Lancet and later retracted by the Journal. The study was not controlled, suboptimally conducted, and involved only 12-patients.(1) **Numerous large studies have not found a relationship between vaccines and autism. In one study, unvaccinated individuals were even found to have a statistically non-significant higher rate.(2,3) It is ironic that hundreds of thousands of patients have been studied to counter the initial 12-patient report.** Research dollars could have been spent elsewhere, such as researching other causes of autism. Health Watch USAsm conference, Aug. 29, 2025. View Video of Presentation: <https://youtu.be/AOgySUPnGKk>

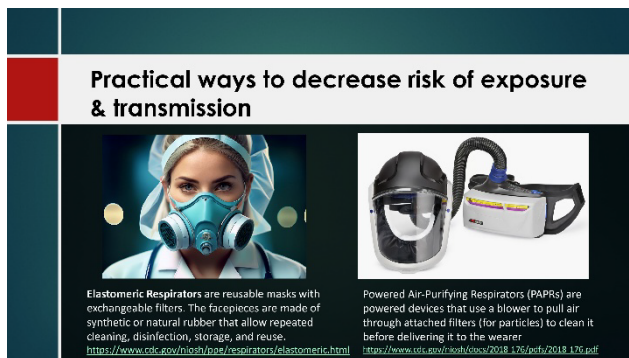


<https://www.clearvuehealth.com/b/autism-mmr-stats/>

(1) Godlee F, Smith J, Marcovitch H. Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent. BMJ. 2011 Jan 5;342:c7452. doi: 10.1136/bmj.c7452. PMID: 21209060. <https://www.bmj.com/content/342/bmj.c7452.long>

(2) Hviid A, Hansen JV, Frisch M, Melbye M. Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccination and Autism: A Nationwide Cohort Study. Ann Intern Med. 2019 Apr 16;170(8):513-520. doi: 10.7326/M18-2101. Epub 2019 Mar 5. PMID: 30831578. <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M18-2101>

(3) Data on the MMR Vaccine & Autism | Visualized Health. Mar. 7, 2019. <https://www.clearvuehealth.com/b/autism-mmr-stats/>



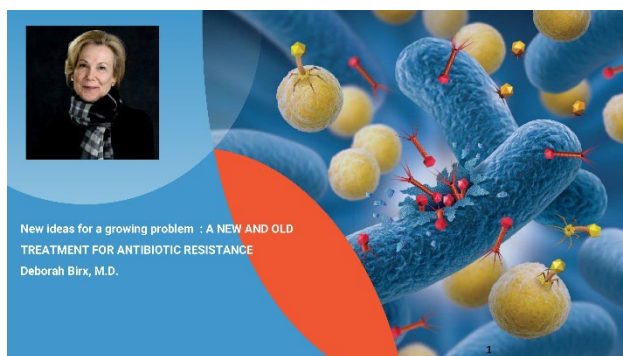
A View from the Frontlines: The Current State of Infection Control in U.S. Healthcare Facilities

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Lisa Baum MA, a lead representative for the New York State Nurses Association, highlighted persistent issues in infection control within healthcare facilities, emphasizing the spread of nosocomial infections including airborne infectious diseases. Despite improvements, infection rates and associated deaths remain high, exacerbated by underreporting and insufficient data—particularly for airborne diseases. Critical contributing factors include understaffing, rapid

room turnovers, inadequate cleaning, inadequate ventilation and lack of training on effective use of disinfectants, such as proper dwell time for pathogen elimination. Environmental services staff shortages and overcrowding in emergency departments further increase transmission risks, with patients sometimes placed in hallways or separated only by curtains. Ventilation is a recurring concern. While negative pressure rooms and advanced local exhaust systems exist; they are not widely implemented. There are inadequate regulation and the regulations that do exist are not adequately enforced. Personal protective equipment (PPE), though essential, is not the most effective control in the hierarchy, often hampered by supply chain challenges and improper fit. The pandemic revealed deeper systemic flaws, with crisis measures sometimes prioritizing operational needs over safety.

Lisa Baum advocates for layered controls: improved identification and isolation protocols, robust testing, enhanced staffing, better ventilation, and a shift to reusable PPE. She stresses the necessity of regulatory reforms to ensure consistent and effective infection prevention and supports empowering organizations like NIOSH to restore scientific leadership in occupational health. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/1Aa5AhHU0JA>



Bacterial Phages, a New and Old Treatment for Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria

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Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD, discusses bacteriophages and their potential for treating patients with life-threatening antibiotic-resistant infections.

Bacteriophages, viruses that infect specific bacteria, offer a promising alternative for treating infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria such as *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Unlike broad-spectrum antibiotics, phages are highly

selective, targeting only their host bacteria without disrupting the beneficial gut microbiome. Interest in phage therapy is rising as antimicrobial resistance escalates, but regulatory approval is still pending in countries like the United States due to the challenges of manufacturing, purifying, and validating these biologics.

Clinical development has been slow because producing stable, pure phage preparations requires them to be grown on their host bacteria and thoroughly purified to avoid immune reactions. Most phage treatments in the United States have been used compassionately in critically ill patients, but rigorous placebo-controlled trials are essential for regulatory FDA approval.

Recent trials have investigated phage therapy for difficult cases of bacteremia and pneumonia, often in combination with antibiotics. Results show that phage therapy can reduce relapse rates, shorten hospital stays, and minimize adverse reactions. In a recent trial on patients with severe MRSA infections, including those with endocarditis. The response was 100 percent with the addition of phage without any relapse at one week post stopping antibiotics, as compared to a 25 percent relapse rate in the placebo arm.

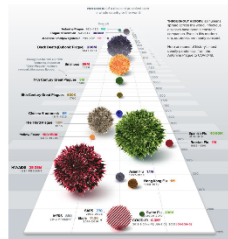
The field now aims to prove efficacy through large phase three superiority trials, which could establish phages as a viable standard of care. Ultimately, phage therapy has the potential not only to treat resistant infections but also to lessen antibiotic use, preserve the microbiome, and improve outcomes in patients with serious bacterial diseases. Health Watch USAsm webinar Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/CQmpXcliJg8>

When exclusion/elimination may be justified

Modelling suggests we can expect a 'Covid-19 magnitude' pandemic with an 18–26% chance over the next decade, > 2% likelihood per annum

Risk assessment uses multiple factors for assessing severity and controllability

Sources: Madhav et al 2023. Center for Global Development



Source: The Visual Capitalist: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/history-of-pandemics-deadliest/>

Why elimination should be the default strategy for future severe pandemics

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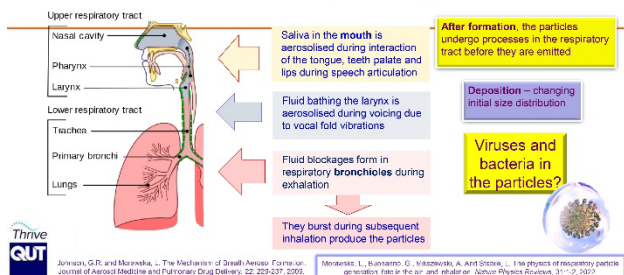
In this presentation, Professor Michael Baker, a key figure in New Zealand's COVID-19 response, discusses the country's elimination strategy against the pandemic. A public health physician and epidemiologist at the University of Otago, Baker highlights that a clear strategy is crucial for effective pandemic management. He emphasizes three primary response strategies: mitigation, suppression, and elimination. In March 2020, New Zealand adopted an elimination approach characterized by rapid border closures and

stringent public health measures to stamp out infections despite having only 100 reported cases at the time.

Baker details how elimination allowed New Zealand to maintain near zero transmission of COVID-19 for almost two years, thereby affording time to enhance vaccination efforts and improve healthcare responses before widespread infection. This strategy resulted in low cumulative mortality compared to other nations, which generally employed less coordinated approaches. He notes that the elimination strategy bought time to manage healthcare and maintain community functions, leading to fewer restrictions and economic impacts compared to countries that faced uncontrolled outbreaks.

However, he acknowledges challenges such as public compliance, equity concerns, and the logistics of implementing border controls. As new variants emerged, New Zealand transitioned from elimination to suppression and now operates under a mitigation strategy. Baker concludes that successful pandemic responses rely on evidence-informed strategies and political leadership, advocating for global coordination in health responses and preparedness for future pandemics. In discussion, he notes negative excess mortality in New Zealand during the pandemic, highlighting the role of infectious disease management in reducing overall mortality. Aug. 29, 2025. Health Watch USAsm Webinar: Combating Infectious Disease Challenges. View Video: <https://youtu.be/I7DIJA87sl8>

Generation of respiratory particles



Understanding and Reducing the Spread of Respiratory Pathogens Through The Air

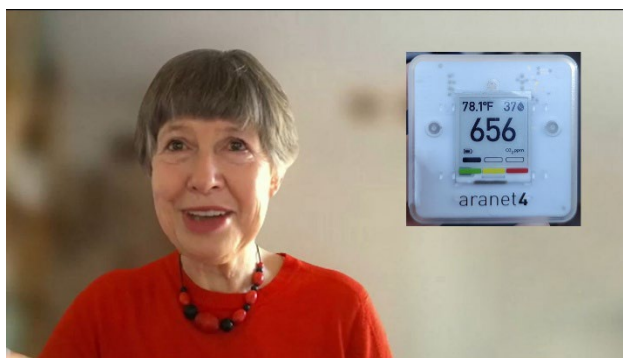
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Dr. Lidia Morawska, PhD, an expert in air quality, discussed the science behind infectious respiratory particles, emphasizing the importance of understanding their generation and spread. All respiratory activities, especially louder ones like singing, produce particles that can remain suspended in the air for extended periods, increasing the risk of transmission of viruses such as SARS-CoV-2. Smaller particles, originating deeper in the respiratory tract, tend to carry higher viral loads.

Dr. Morawska highlighted historical resistance to recognizing airborne transmission, noting that scientific consensus and interdisciplinary collaboration were essential in shifting global perspectives, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. She cited the need for robust ventilation far beyond merely opening windows, as mechanical ventilation systems significantly reduce infection rates. A study in Italy demonstrated lower COVID-19 cases in classrooms equipped with mechanical ventilation compared to those without.

The presentation underscored the necessity for better building designs focused on indoor air quality and continuous monitoring of ventilation performance. Dr. Morawska advocated for indoor air quality regulations akin to outdoor standards, pointing out that voluntary measures often fall short, especially in schools. Low-cost CO₂ sensors offer practical means for individuals and institutions to assess air quality and mitigate risks. Ultimately, Dr. Morawska called for clean indoor air as a public health norm, suggesting that improved air quality regulation would yield benefits comparable to other historical advances in sanitation, with far less investment required. Health Watch USAsm webinar. Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/MpDChemSBD8>

More about Dr. Morawska: <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2021/6095975/lidia-morawska/>



Portable CO₂ Monitors: Dr. Lidia Morawska, PhD, explains the usefulness of carrying a portable CO₂ monitor when one enters public spaces. (CO₂ is a surrogate for clean air. Lower levels are better.) One can use the monitor to determine the safety of indoor air and to help you in deciding whether or not to wear a mask (N95 Respirator). Q & A period moderated by Noel Eldridge, MS, at Health Watch USAsm's 2025 Conference. View Video: https://youtu.be/bmg_G2tEOKU



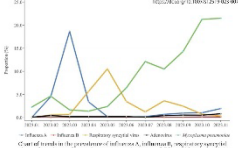
Matthias Maiwald, MD
Aug. 29, 2028



Mycoplasma pneumoniae – Situation in China 2023

What's behind China's mysterious wave of childhood pneumonia?

Current *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* epidemic among children in Shanghai: unusual pneumonia caused by viral pathogen



Increase of respiratory illnesses among children in Beijing, China, during the autumn and winter of 2023

Unusual re-emergence of respiratory pathogens after lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in Singapore

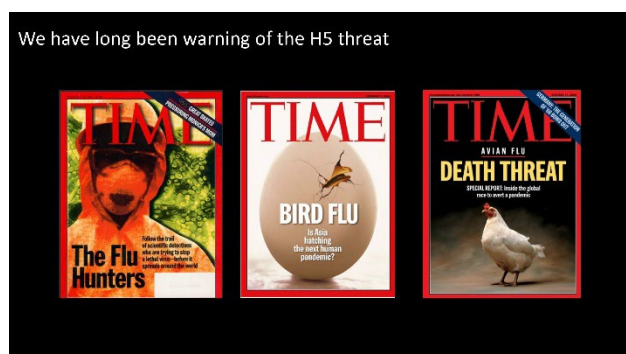
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Dr. Matthias Maiwald presented an in-depth analysis of the trends in respiratory pathogens in Singapore following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. Using data from 120,000 clinical samples (mainly pediatric) collected between 2019 and mid-2025, he outlined how pandemic containment measures initially caused a dramatic decrease in common respiratory viruses and bacteria, such as influenza, RSV, and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*.

As restrictions were gradually eased, certain non-enveloped viruses like enterovirus/rhinovirus and adenovirus reappeared first, likely due to their environmental stability at phases of increased social contact. Other pathogens returned in unusual patterns—RSV and influenza A exhibited out-of-season peaks, and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* resurged after a long absence, concurrent with significant outbreaks in China. The outbreaks in China had notably high rates of macrolide resistance. Some pathogens, such as pertussis, remained nearly absent throughout the observation period.

Dr. Maiwald discussed several hypotheses for these patterns, including immunity debt (reduced exposure leading to greater vulnerability), innate immune system changes, and immune dysregulation after Covid-19 infection. He emphasized that the overall burden of respiratory infections in 2025 is approaching pre-pandemic levels but may still be slightly elevated. The reemergence of pathogens was quite uneven, with some surging above historical norms and

affecting different age groups or presenting more severe cases. Health Watch USAsm webinar on Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/jRwadwS31T0>



Bird Flu, the risks and prevention of a future pandemic

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Dr. Richard Webby, a virologist at St. Jude's and a leading expert on influenza, presented an overview of the current landscape of H5N1 avian influenza ("bird flu") and its potential threats to human health. He explains that influenza viruses, especially those in wild migratory birds, are highly diverse. Most remain in their natural hosts, but occasionally spillover events infect other animals, including poultry, swine, and sporadically humans—though sustained human-to-human transmission has not been

observed.

Dr. Webby highlights how certain influenza subtypes, like H5N1, have caused concern for decades. The virus first infected humans in Hong Kong in 1997, leading to fatalities but was contained by culling poultry. Since then, H5N1 spread globally through wild birds, leading to outbreaks in domestic animals and, more recently, a significant incursion into the Americas. In 2024, the virus unexpectedly infected US dairy cattle, a species not previously considered at risk, with human cases mostly limited to conjunctivitis in exposed workers. Despite this, the virus hasn't shown key mutations needed for efficient human spread.

Control strategies focus on surveillance, culling in poultry, movement controls in cattle, and, in some countries, vaccination of animals. Human vaccines exist but are rarely deployed. Dr. Webby emphasizes that the economic consequences, particularly for the poultry industry, have been severe, with billions lost, and stresses the importance of ongoing vigilance to prevent a future pandemic. Health Watch USAsm webinar Aug. 29, 2025. View Video: <https://youtu.be/GyKR462luJQ>

What cats are at risk for bird flu?

- Cats with outdoor access in locations where H5N1 flu virus is infecting birds and mammals
- Cats living on dairy farms, poultry farms, or with backyard flocks
- Exposure to dairy or poultry farmworkers and their clothing



UF Shelter Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Chickens, Cows, and Cats: A Barnyard Story about Bird Flu -

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Dr. Cynda Crawford, DMV, PhD discusses H5N1 or "Bird Flu" and its impact on domestic cats, poultry and dairy cattle at the 2025 Health Watch USAsm webinar: "Combating Infectious Disease Challenges."

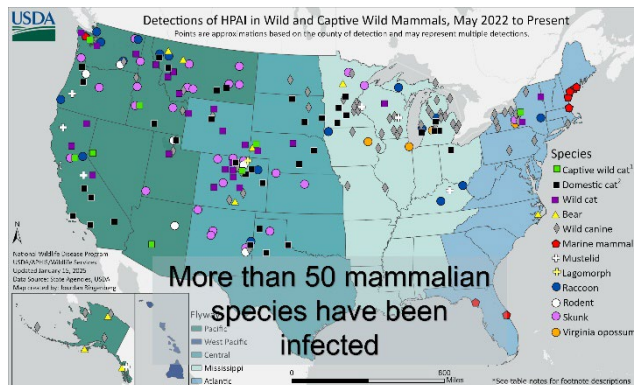
Presentation Summary: The presentation by Dr. Cynda Crawford explores the evolving ecology and impact of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza (bird flu) across the United States. Traditionally, wild waterfowl are the natural hosts of

influenza A viruses, but in recent years, the H5N1 subtype has spread extensively, affecting all 50 U.S. states' poultry, leading to the infection and depopulation of approximately 175 million birds.

Since 2022, H5N1 has spilled over from wild birds into commercial and backyard poultry, then into a wide range of mammals—over 200 terrestrial and marine species, including seals, sea lions, and for the first time, dairy cattle. Dairy cows experience H5N1 as a localized mammary gland infection resulting in mastitis and sudden drops in milk production, with high viral loads detected in milk but generally nonfatal outcomes for the animals. New genotypes have been identified, highlighting frequent viral reassortment.

A notable event occurred in March 2024 when barn cats on a Texas dairy farm died rapidly after consuming raw milk from infected cows, marking the first documented mammal-to-mammal transmission of H5N1 via milk. Cats suffer severe, often fatal neurological disease, and the mortality rate among infected cats is estimated at 50–70%. There is no

current evidence of cat-to-cat or cat-to-human transmission. The situation raises public health concerns about cows and cats as potential “mixing vessels” for new, more dangerous H5N1 strains, emphasizing the need for enhanced surveillance, biosecurity, and consideration of vaccines for at-risk animals. Health Watch USAsm webinar. Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: <https://youtu.be/drvk7vSj6LE>



Following H5 Influenza As It Moves Through North American Food Animals

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Dr. Carol Cardona discussed the evolution and spread of H5 influenza, focusing on its movement through North American food animals. She noted the initial incursion of goose Guangdong H5 in 2014, leading to widespread outbreaks in commercial poultry, which were controlled through mass depopulation. The virus returned in 2021, this time driven by wild waterfowl as primary reservoirs, with poultry now mostly victims rather than sources of transmission.

Cardona highlighted that stamping out poultry, while effective in halting farm-to-farm spread, does not control the virus in wild birds. Over 170 million birds have been depopulated due to outbreaks, including 150 million from wild bird infections and another 20 million related to bovine infections. H5 has expanded into more than 50 mammalian species and continues to adapt to new hosts, including cattle, goats, alpacas, and bears.

Control options for H5 include stamping out, vaccination (which faces economic and export barriers), and biosecurity, though each has limitations due to the virus’s evolving host range. Cardona stressed the lack of surveillance in wild mammals and called for improved prevention strategies. She addressed misconceptions about asymptomatic carriers and pointed to genetic resistance in some animals, although no mechanism is known in chickens. The presentation concluded by emphasizing the unpredictable nature of influenza and the need for adaptable control measures. Health Watch USAsm Webinar Aug. 29, 2025. View Presentation Video: https://youtu.be/SALHVe_aAJ4

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