



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

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Oct. 1, 2023

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 Sept. Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>:**

- 4 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Presentations.

**Information Regarding Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Sept. 14th, 2022 COVID-19 Conference - Frontline Worker Safety:** <https://healthconference.org>

**Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2022 Activities Report:**  
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20221231-HWUSA-Report-2022-2.pdf>

**Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2021 Activities Report:**  
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20211231-HWUSA-Report-2021.pdf>

**Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2020 Activities Report:**  
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20201231-HWUSA-Report-2020.pdf>

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

**Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19: A Global Perspective:** The 2022 Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> COVID-19 webinar/conference assembled 16 speakers from 4 continents who shared information regarding frontline worker safety in the age of COVID-19.

**Download summary white paper** (Journal of Patient Safety):  
[https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline\\_Worker\\_Safety\\_in\\_the\\_Age\\_of\\_COVID\\_19\\_A.126.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline_Worker_Safety_in_the_Age_of_COVID_19_A.126.aspx)

**Presentation Videos and online continuing education** are available at:  
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2022/index.html>



**COVID is closing Kentucky schools – again. Embracing disinformation paralyzes our response. The myth that children do not have to worry about COVID, along with other respiratory diseases, is based on misinformation.**

Unfortunately, too many of our schools have unhealthy buildings with outdated HVAC systems. This will adversely impact our children's learning, along with placing them at risk for acquiring respiratory diseases (RSV, flu and even colds). I felt the spending of COVID funds on outdoor sports and running tracks, as opposed to improvements in indoor air quality and COVID mitigation strategies, exemplified Kentucky's embrace of disinformation and inability to safeguard the lives and well-being of our children. Let's make Kentucky the national leader in providing a safe educational environment for our children. The first and easiest steps will be to upgrade school ventilation and to respect parents who are masking their children. Courier Journal. Sept. 6, 2023. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2023/09/06/kentucky-school-districts-close-covid-upgrade-buildings-ventilation/70765140007/>

USA Today Sept 6, 2023: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2023/09/06/kentucky-school-districts-close-covid-upgrade-buildings-ventilation/70765140007/>

#### **Links with no paywall (MSN & Yahoo News)**

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/more-sports/covid-is-closing-kentucky-schools-again-embracing-disinformation-paralyzes-our-response/ar-AA1gjURN>

<https://news.yahoo.com/covid-closing-kentucky-schools-again-100752591.html>



#### ***Health Watch USA's 17th Annual Conference: Exploring Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers, and Society***

"Health Watch USA's 17th annual conference/webinar, on November 1, 2023, 'Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society,' will encompass a comprehensive exploration of long COVID across all age groups. Kevin Kavanagh, MD, MS, board chairman for Health Watch USA:

'Our society largely believes that all is well if one is not at risk for hospitalizations. Even policymakers are ignoring the ravages of long COVID. This webinar will highlight the personal and economic devastation produced by long COVID and the misinformation that is minimizing its risks in the eyes of the public.... But, frankly, the main message of the conference will be that we still must take this virus very seriously.'" Infection Control Today. Sept. 7, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/health-watch-usa-s-17th-annual-conference-exploring-long-covid-s-impact-patients-workers-society>

#### **Organized Disinformation Fanning the COVID-19 Flames of Vaccine Hesitancy**

"Our pandemic response has undoubtedly been stymied, largely due to the divisive effects of organized disinformation. Many disseminators of disinformation downplay the idea of a multi-layer approach and proclaim that if you can still catch COVID-19 while wearing a mask, they do not work, ignoring that seldom is a single intervention 100% effective. Everything from treating a cold to cancer involves multilayer approaches, as does automobile and airline safety. Why should COVID-19 be any different? .... As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations increase, do not fall prey to disinformation. It is wise to be vaccine-boosted, wear a mask in high-risk settings, and carry a CO2 monitor to determine safe indoor ventilation. These steps will help us all avoid the disabilities caused by long COVID and help to maintain the health of our families and the

nation's workforce." [References](#) Sept. 18, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/organized-disinformation-fanning-covid-19-flames-vaccine-hesitancy>

### **How to Prepare For Possible “Tripledemic” of RSV, Influenza, and SARS-CoV-2**

The interaction between the respiratory viruses SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and RSV, poses ongoing challenges. Personal protective measures, testing, and vaccination are critical components of our strategy to mitigate the impact of these viruses. New research focuses on real-time SARS-CoV-2, RSV, and influenza detection. A proof-of-concept portable monitor has been developed to detect SARS-CoV-2 within 5 minutes. This technology could also be applied to RSV and influenza. Thus, we must not abandon public health and only rely on personal protection. This is a recipe which may force us to endure another tripledemic. Instead, we should prevent all respiratory illnesses to the highest degree possible, with strategies which are adopted and supported by society. Infection Control Today. Sept. 25, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/how-prepare-possible-tripledemic-rsv-influenza-sars-cov-2>

### ***As COVID-19 Hospitalizations Increase Alarmingly, Workers and Patients Call for Better Standards***

After almost 4 years of COVID with over 10,000 patients currently hospitalized, a 22% increase over last week, one must ask, what has the CDC been doing? According to many people, the CDC has been trying to roll back our protections and ability to fight the spread of disease when experts are strongly advising those at high-risk to mask up in indoor settings...Durin an ongoing pandemic, credibility is of utmost importance. As one commentator stated, “We need consistent messaging to educate the public about the true dangers of COVID and being disabled by long COVID.” If the public cannot rely on the agency to communicate safe and effective recommendations on masking and ventilation, how then can they be expected to rely on the CDC’s advice on vaccine uptake? And if we minimize the dangers of SARS-CoV-2, how then can we expect the public to see the urgency in obtaining the updated booster?" [References](#) Infection Control Today. Aug. 28, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/as-covid-19-hospitalizations-increase-alarmingly-workers-patients-call-better-standards>

**MEDPAGE TODAY\***

**CDC Advisory Group Under Fire for Proposed Infection Control Guidelines — Nurse union, occupational health**

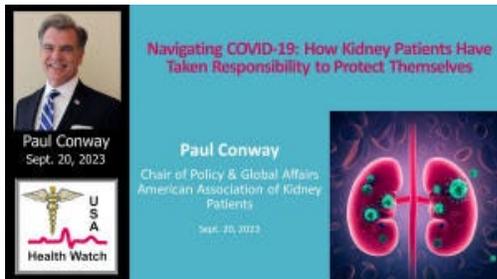
### **experts, patients say weaker guidelines help only employers**

"NNU and others say the proposed guidelines weaken existing infection control standards, privileging employer and hospital bottom lines over employee and patient safety. "The guidance that they're updating applies to every infectious disease in healthcare settings, from tuberculosis, to measles, to influenza, to MDROs [multidrug-resistant organisms], to COVID. All of it," said Thomason." ... A Murky Approval Process? "Kevin Kavanagh, MD, of Health Watch USA, a patient advocacy and research organization, and co-authors wrote in an article for Infection Control

Today "the process of recommendation formulation is flawed and lacks transparency," citing HICPAC committee votes held before public comment and meeting presentations not publicly posted." Med Page Today. Aug. 25, 2023.

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/infectioncontrol/106030>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Meeting Presentations & Comments



### **Navigating COVID-19: How Kidney Patients Have Taken Responsibility to Protect Themselves.**

Paul Conway, Chair of Policy & Global Affairs - American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) presents on the continued dangers of COVID-19 and calls on the Federal government and healthcare industry to continue strategies to protect vulnerable patients.

In addition to continued mitigation and prevention of COVID-19, the government should:

- Align regulation and payment policies for vaccine innovation.
- Foster innovation for immunosuppressive drugs for transplant patients via the FDA immediately.
- Formalize telemedicine flexibilities.
- Expand home dialysis options so more patients can qualify.
- Protect the rights of kidney patients under the ADA.
- Expand data transparency and access to patients, researchers and elected officials.

Finally, the CDC needs to implement stronger mitigation strategies in healthcare settings to ensure the safest possible healthcare for vulnerable patients. Health Watch USA(sm) meeting Sept. 20, 2023. <https://youtu.be/NFmIGCrM3I0>



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

### **Expected CDC guidance on N95 masks outrages health care workers**

NBC News & KFF Health News: "A CDC advisory committee has been updating its 2007 standards for infection control in hospitals this year. Many health care professionals and scientists expressed outrage after the group released a draft of its proposals in

June. The draft controversially concluded that N95 face masks are equivalent to looser, surgical face masks in certain settings — and that doctors and nurses need to wear only surgical masks when treating patients infected by “common, endemic” viruses, like those that cause the seasonal flu."Their conclusion runs contrary to the CDC’s 2022 report, which found that an N95 mask cuts the odds of testing positive for the coronavirus by 83%, compared with 66% for surgical masks and 56% for cloth masks. It also excludes a large clinical trial published in 2017 finding that N95 masks were far superior to surgical masks in protecting health workers from influenza infections....Their conclusion runs contrary to the CDC’s 2022 report, which found that an N95 mask cuts the odds of testing positive for the coronavirus by 83%, compared with 66% for surgical masks and 56% for cloth masks. It also excludes a large clinical trial published in 2017 finding that N95 masks were far superior to surgical masks in protecting health workers from influenza infections." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/expected-cdc-guidance-on-n95-masks-outrages-health-care-workers/ar-AA1gOcvI>

### **A Huge Threat to the U.S. Budget Has Receded. And No One Is Sure Why.**

"That budgetary good news isn’t all good news for people with Medicare. Reductions in heart attacks and strokes have had big benefits for public health, but the paucity of major medical breakthroughs has been accompanied by slowing improvements in life expectancy for seniors. The cost containment strategies in hospitals may mean patients have been denied the treatments of their choice. Medicare may even wind up saving money because of Covid-19 — because the older Americans who died from the disease tended to have other illnesses that would have been expensive to treat if they had survived, according to an analysis from the Medicare actuary." <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/05/upshot/medicare-budget-threat-receded.html>

### **Opinion: The mistake hospitals made on Covid-19**

"Since the beginning of 2023, Covid-19 has steadily killed over 47,000 people in the US. At this rate, it is on track to remain in the top 10 causes of death in the US this year. The HICPAC suggested in a draft of updated guidelines for Covid protection in health care setting that surgical masks were just as effective as well-fitting N95 masks. This sparked an outcry from hundreds of health care workers across the country who were concerned about the proposed shift in guidance. Airborne disease-carrying particles can travel through the gaps in loose-fitting surgical masks and infect health care workers, who may then infect their coworkers and patients, leading to more hospital outbreaks. Most voting members of the CDC HICPAC represent large, powerful hospitals.... Vulnerable patients ... should be able to access health care without being exposed to Covid or other serious infections. We should apply our knowledge from the last three years to protect patients and health care workers from Covid-19 and future pandemic pathogens. We all deserve better." Sept. 19, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/19/opinions/covid-19-hospital-policies-pak-jirmanus-wang/index.html>

### **Vaccination after developing long COVID: impact on clinical presentation, viral persistence and immune responses.**

Another article showing the benefits of vaccination in the prevention of Long COVID. This article demonstrated benefits after one develops Long COVID. Symptoms were observed to improve.

- COVID-19 vaccination post-PCC (post-COVID-19 conditions) reduced number of symptoms and increased well-being
- COVID-19 vaccination post-PCC down-regulated systemic markers of inflammation
- COVID-19 vaccination post-PCC did not abrogate the persistence of viral products
- A viral reservoir not cleared by one or two vaccine doses may persist

International Journal of Infectious Diseases

[https://www.ijidonline.com/article/S1201-9712\(23\)00720-8/fulltext](https://www.ijidonline.com/article/S1201-9712(23)00720-8/fulltext)

### **Multiorgan MRI findings after hospitalisation with COVID-19 in the UK (C-MORE): a prospective, multicentre, observational cohort study**

"After hospitalisation for COVID-19, people are at risk of multiorgan abnormalities in the medium term. Our findings emphasise the need for proactive multidisciplinary care pathways, with the potential for imaging to guide surveillance frequency and therapeutic stratification." "Multiorgan abnormalities on MRI were more frequent in patients than in controls (157 [61%] of 259 vs 14 [27%] of 52;  $p < 0.0001$ ) and independently associated with COVID-19 status (odds ratio [OR] 2.9 [95% CI 1.5–5.8];  $p_{\text{adjusted}} = 0.0023$ ) after adjusting for relevant confounders."

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(23\)00262-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(23)00262-X/fulltext)

### **Brain Pathology in COVID-19: Clinical Manifestations and Potential Mechanisms**

"Even though Omicron caused less severe disease than Delta, the incidence of neurological manifestations is similar. More than 30% of patients experienced "brain fog", delirium, stroke, and cognitive impairment, and over half of these patients presented abnormal neuroimaging outcomes." <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12264-023-01110-0>

### **Evidence of leaky protection following COVID-19 vaccination and SARS-CoV-2 infection in an incarcerated population**

This study observed that hybrid immunity is best, further validating the recommendation for those previously infected to become vaccinated. "During the Omicron period, prior infection, vaccination, and hybrid immunity reduced the infection risk of residents without a documented exposure (HR: 0.36 [0.25–0.54]; 0.57 [0.42–0.78]; 0.24 [0.15–0.39]; respectively) and with cellblock exposures (0.61 [0.49–0.75]; 0.69 [0.58–0.83]; 0.41 [0.31–0.55]; respectively) but not with cell exposures (0.89 [0.58–1.35]; 0.96 [0.64–1.46]; 0.80 [0.46–1.39]; respectively)."

Lind, M.L., Dorion, M., Houde, A.J. et al. Nat Commun 14, 5055 (2023).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-023-40750-8>

### **Study finds medical distinctions in long COVID sufferers for first time**

"The discovery that patients who complain of debilitating symptoms many months after their exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus do, in fact, exhibit different immune and hormonal responses to

infection marks the first evidence that "long COVID" is a distinct medical condition, according to a new study by researchers at Yale School of Medicine and Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai." UPI News. Sept 25, 2023. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/study-finds-medical-distinctions-in-long-covid-sufferers-for-first-time/ar-AA1hfo7X>

" Collectively, these findings may help guide future studies into the pathobiology of LC (long COVID) and aid in developing relevant biomarkers."

Nature: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06651-y>

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### **Petition: Apple Watch to measure CO2 levels**

Please sign and promote our Move On Petition. The new Apple Watch measures blood O2 level and we would like to suggest adding measurement of CO2 (carbon dioxide) in room air.

Poor indoor ventilation and air quality promotes the spread of airborne diseases causing workers, students and patrons to have increased rates of respiratory illnesses. In addition, poor air quality degrades work performance and inhibits learning.

CO2 (carbon dioxide) is used as a measurement of adequate indoor ventilation and safe air quality. Ideally, it should be below 700 ppm. All too often it is above 1000 where there is decreased mentation and a significant danger of spreading airborne diseases (i.e. flu, RSV & COVID). If Apple added this capability, it would greatly increase public awareness of unsafe indoor settings, and be the first steps in transforming our society to adapt to the new era of airborne diseases.

Petition: <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/safe-indoor-air-add-co2-measurement-to-apple-watch>



**Nov. 1st, 2023**  
**Health Watch**  
**USA<sup>sm</sup> Webinar**

**Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society**  
**Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>**

**For More Information Go To:** <http://www.healthconference.org>

**Speakers for the Nov. 1st 2023 Webinar Include:**



**Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD Past White House Coordinator Coronavirus Response (USA)** "Impact of Long COVID on the United States".



**Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD**, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine. will present on "Global Vaccines and Vaccinations: The Science vs The Anti-science."

Dr Hotez will discuss the impact of developing new low cost and accessible vaccines for global health, including a recombinant protein COVID-19 "people's vaccine" now administered to more than 100 million adolescents and children in India and Indonesia. He will also discuss new trends in antivaccine sentiments in the US and an escalating and globalizing antisience empire.

**Additional Presenters:**

**1. Pam Belluck**, New York Times Reporter -- Presentation: "How Long COVID is affecting people's jobs and their needs at work."

**2. Eleni Iasonidou, MD**, Pediatrician, Founder of Long Covid Greece and a one of the very first Greek representatives to join Long Covid Kids. Presentation: "Long Covid and its impact on

children."

**3. Georgios Pappas, MD, PhD**, Physician, Researcher and Advocate. Specializing on zoonoses and preparedness against deliberate and natural outbreaks/ epidemics – Presentation: "Combating Disinformation regarding COVID-19 and Long COVID."

**4. Jane Thomason, MSPH, CIH**, Industrial Hygienist, National Nurses United & California Nurses Association -- Presentation: "The impact of Long COVID on Nurses."

**5. Greg Vanichkachorn, MD, MPH**, Occupational and Aerospace Medicine, Mayo Clinic-- Presentation: "Symptoms, treatment and rehabilitation of patients with Long COVID."

**6. Dr. Wilmore Webley**, PhD, University of Massachusetts, -- Presentation: "The effectiveness of vaccines to prevent Long COVID."

**7. Brian T. Walitt, MD, MPH**, Clinician with the NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. -- Presentation: "Neuropsychiatric manifestations of Long COVID & Chronic Fatigue Syndrome."

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**Continuing Education Is Planned for Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapy, Dentistry and Respiratory Therapy. For More information Go To:**  
<http://www.healthconference.org>

**Download Speaker Bios:** [https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference\\_downloads/Bios-Speakers-2023-HWUSA-Conference-6.pdf](https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2023Conference_downloads/Bios-Speakers-2023-HWUSA-Conference-6.pdf)

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**Download last year's summary white paper from 2022 Worker Safety Conference (Journal of Patient Safety):** [https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline\\_Worker\\_Safety\\_in\\_the\\_Age\\_of\\_COVID\\_19\\_A.126.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Fulltext/9900/Frontline_Worker_Safety_in_the_Age_of_COVID_19_A.126.aspx)

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