



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Aug. 1, 2024

Member of the National Quality Forum & designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

Activity for the Month of Nov. Health Watch USAsm:

- 2 Articles/Op-Eds regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Peer Reviewed Article
- 2 Presentation.
- 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 - Peer-Reviewed Publications, News Articles & OpEds



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



courier journal
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

**Long COVID is hitting Kentucky hard.
Vaccinations and proper ventilation are
important.**

Mounting research is finding that delayed deaths and disability from damage to a multitude of different organs is greater than that from the acute infection. Kentucky is confronting this challenge by not improving indoor ventilation, not masking in high-risk settings and not keeping up-to-date on vaccinations. All of this in the face of raising rates of infections in Kentucky driven by new variants (KP.3). Project 2025 appears to blame programs focused on high-risk populations for the 7% drop in life

expectancy in white populations. The same programs which help prevent frontline minority workers from developing Long COVID.....And vaccinations, even mandates, are not anti-patriotic. In 1775, George Washington mandated that his troops receive smallpox vaccinations. He knew that with a 30% fatality rate smallpox was a grave threat to his army... The process of vaccination was called "variolation" which had a fatality rate of 5 to 10%, but was safer than getting the disease. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2024/08/01/long-covid-deadly-kentucky-vaccinations/74475382007/) Courier Journal. Aug. 1, 2024. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2024/08/01/long-covid-deadly-kentucky-vaccinations/74475382007/>

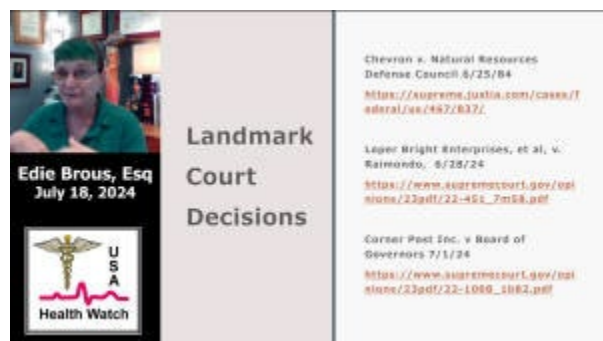


Reevaluating the 6-Foot Rule: Efficacy and Challenges in COVID-19 Prevention

"During the June 3, 2024, House Oversight Committee regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic, the six-foot rule was again thrown into the spotlight, and questions about its appropriateness and effectiveness were raised. One of the Representatives questioned the continuation of advocating for six feet of social distancing after it was known the virus was aerosolized. This question exemplifies one of the underlying problems in our pandemic response—dividing the spread of respiratory pathogens into aerosols and large droplets.....Although the 6-foot rule will protect against large non-aerosolized particles, it will not afford the needed protection if one is exposed to a highly infectious airborne virus that spreads through the air. Because aerosols float in the air, ventilation is a key factor in their elimination. In highly ventilated indoor settings or outdoor venues, aerosolized particles will dissipate, but large particles will not. Thus, the 6-foot rule adds substantial protection if you do not have a mask and are outdoors. In highly ventilated indoor settings, the same may be true. This is why a CO2 monitor is handy for measuring indoor ventilation. However, the safest option indoors or in crowded outdoor settings is wearing an N95 mask." [References](#) Infection Control Today. July 22, 2024.

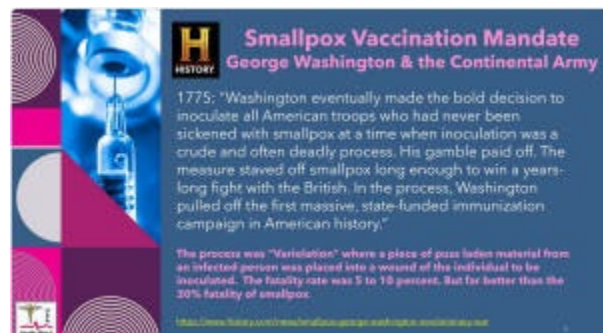
<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/reevaluating-6-foot-rule-efficacy-challenges-covid-19-prevention>

Health Watch USAsm - Meetings



The Changing Role of Agency Oversight & The Recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision.

Edie Brous, esq, past president of the American Association of Nurse Attorneys discusses the changes in the process and evolution of regulatory oversight which has occurred through the last century and the potential transformational changes the recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision will initiate. Nurse Attorney Brous presents "A short history on how we got to the Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo decision and its implications for worker safety." Health Watch USAsm meeting. July 18, 2024. View Video: <https://youtu.be/SPLVRjubkNw>



A historical perspective on vaccines and why they can be patriotic and necessary.

A historical perspective on vaccines and why mandates even in the face of risks and complications can be both patriotic and necessary.

<https://youtu.be/lkJojn-mCk>



Aug. 21, 2024 (07:00 PM Eastern Time) meeting we will have Dr. Karen B. Lasater, PhD, RN, FAAN from the University of Pennsylvania who will present her new and important research on "Hospital nurse staffing variation and Covid-19 deaths."

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38917747/>

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

Health Watch USAsm - Articles of Interest



Study shows enforced masking on long flights prevents SARS-CoV-2 transmission

"In a recent study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, researchers in the United States (U.S.) conducted a systematic review to determine the factors involved in the transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) within flights.

The study also found that long-haul flights with enforced masking had almost no reports of SARS-CoV-2 transmission within the aircraft despite meals being served. The researchers believe the enforced masking could have caused the passengers to eat as quickly as possible. Furthermore, enforced masking also allows the flight attendants to ensure that

passengers are appropriately masked.

Overall, the study found that flight duration was a factor in the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within the aircraft in flights with non-enforced masking. In contrast, long-haul flights with enforced masking had no reports of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within the aircraft despite serving meals. The researchers also found that each additional hour of flight was associated with a 1.53-fold higher probability of viral transmission in flights without enforced masking. These findings highlight the protective effect of face masks against SARS-CoV-2." <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20240528/Study-shows-enforced-masking-on-long-flights-prevents-SARS-CoV-2-transmission.aspx>

COVID-19 Is Widespread In 'Common Backyard Wildlife' In US

"A variety of backyard wildlife, such as rabbits, mice and bats, had SARS-CoV-2 infections, potentially making evolution of this virus more unpredictable.... Professor Finkelstein and collaborators identified the virus in deer mice, Virginia opossums, raccoons, groundhogs, Eastern cottontail rabbits, and Eastern red bats. Interestingly, the team collected two mice at the same site on the same day that had the exact same variant, indicating they either both got it from the same human, or one mouse infected the other. Additionally, they found one opossum was infected with a COVID variant with mutations that had never been seen before. Such mutations could make the virus more dangerous and transmissible, and could also create challenges for vaccine development. "

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2024/07/29/covid-19-is-widespread-in-common-backyard-wildlife-in-us/>

COVID-19 Can Leave a Lasting Mark on the Brain—Especially for Older People

"COVID-19 no longer poses the urgent public-health threat it once did. But recent research points to a good reason to keep the virus in mind: it could leave a lasting stamp on (your brain). Studies suggest that COVID-19 is associated with possibly long-lasting changes to the brain, potentially contributing to cognitive problems like brain fog, mental fatigue, and memory loss, as well as neurological and mental-health issues. The virus seems able to damage blood vessels and support cells in the brain and may kickstart changes to the immune system that also affect brain function, says Dr. Wes Ely, co-director of the Center for Critical Illness, Brain Dysfunction, and Survivorship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

What does that mean for the average person as the virus once again circulates widely? Many people of all ages recover just fine, mentally and physically, after a COVID-19 case. But lingering cognitive effects are a real risk, particularly for older people, Ely says. Older adults are more likely to experience severe COVID-19, which has long been linked to a higher risk of long-term complications. And they may have had preexisting cognitive issues that become worse after infection." <https://time.com/7000672/covid-19-brain-damage-older-people/>

UK in 'worse state' to deal with pandemic than before Covid, say experts

"The UK is probably less well-equipped to cope with a pandemic than it was before Covid because of deteriorating health inequalities, the crisis in the NHS and pressures in care homes, leading experts have warned. The head of the British Medical Association (BMA) said that the overall situation meant the nation would be "still massively underprepared" when a new pandemic hit."

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/jul/19/uk-in-worse-state-to-deal-with-pandemic-than-before-covid-say-experts>

Vaccines Significantly Reduce the Risk of Long Covid, Study Finds

In the first two years of the pandemic, the rate of long Covid was starkly lower among people who were vaccinated, researchers reported.

Pam Bulluck of the NYTs: "Vaccines Significantly Reduce the Risk of Long Covid, Study Finds...In the first two years of the pandemic, the rate of long Covid was starkly lower among people who were vaccinated, researchers reported...Researchers found that among unvaccinated people infected between June 19 and Dec. 18, 2021, when Delta was the dominant variant, the rate of long Covid a year later decreased slightly to 9.5 percent from 10.4 percent among those infected in the first 15 months of the pandemic. The rate decreased further — to 7.8 percent — among unvaccinated people infected between Dec. 19,

2021, and Jan. 31, 2022, during the Omicron wave. Among vaccinated people who had been infected, the rates of long Covid were markedly lower. Differences in variants and other aspects of the Delta and Omicron periods played a role, the authors said, but they attributed about 72 percent of the decrease to vaccines." <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/health/long-covid-vaccines.html>

Vaccination credited for 70% reduction in long COVID risk over course of pandemic

"The risk of developing long COVID has decreased significantly over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to an analysis of data led by Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. Unsurprisingly, the rate of long COVID was the highest among those with the original strain, Al-Aly said, with 10.4% of those who had infections that developed into long COVID. That declined to 9.5% among those in the unvaccinated groups during the delta era and 7.7% during omicron. Among the vaccinated, the rate of long COVID during delta was 5.3% and 3.5% during omicron. Researchers attributed about 70% of the risk reduction to vaccination against COVID-19 and 30% to changes over time, including the SARS-CoV-2 virus's evolving characteristics and improved detection and management of COVID-19." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/vaccination-credited-for-70-reduction-in-long-covid-risk-over-course-of-pandemic/ar-BB1qaKII>

Admission screening testing of patients and staff N95 masks are cost-effective in reducing COVID-19 hospital acquired infections

"Findings: Compared to no admission screening testing and staff surgical masks, all scenarios were cost saving with health gains. Staff N95s + RAT admission screening of patients was the cheapest, saving A\$78.4M [95%UI 44.4M-135.3M] and preventing 1,543 [1,070-2,146] deaths state-wide per annum. Both interventions were individually beneficial: staff N95s in isolation saved A\$54.7M and 854 deaths state-wide per annum, while RAT admission screening of patients in isolation saved A\$57.6M and 1,176 deaths state-wide per annum.

Interpretation: In acute care settings, staff N95 mask use and admission screening testing of patients can reduce hospital-acquired COVID-19 infections, COVID-19 deaths, and are cost-saving because of reduced patient bed days and staff replacement needs." <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670124002366>

Antimicrobial Resistance Threats in the United States, 2021-2022

"New data from CDC show that six bacterial antimicrobial-resistant hospital-onset infections increased by a combined 20% during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic period, peaking in 2021, and remaining above pre-pandemic levels in 2022.

These pathogens include:

- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus (VRE)
- Extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing Enterobacterales
- Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE)
- Carbapenem-resistant Acinetobacter
- Multidrug-resistant (MDR) Pseudomonas aeruginosa

In 2022, rates for all but one of these pathogens, MRSA, remain above pre-pandemic levels. In addition, the number of reported clinical cases of Candida auris (C. auris) - a type of yeast that can spread in healthcare facilities, is often resistant to antifungal medications, and cause severe illness - increased nearly five-fold from 2019 to 2022.

The number of reported clinical cases of *C. auris* increased nearly five-fold from 2019 to 2022. Clinical cases are identified when specimens collected from patients during routine clinical care test positive for *C. auris*." <https://www.cdc.gov/antimicrobial-resistance/media/pdfs/antimicrobial-resistance-threats-update-2022-508.pdf>

Colorado is rocked by outbreak of H5N1 bird flu - weeks after confirming the plague

"Nearly 70 Colorado-based poultry workers have symptoms of the avian bird flu, marking the largest outbreak to date, the CDC revealed today. There were three cases confirmed to have H5N1, also known as avian influenza, on Friday and 16 other symptomatic workers were tested on Monday, but the results are still pending. It brings the total number of human cases to nine and experts fear virus could mutate to become more dangerous if it continues to jump between species. They're so concerned about an outbreak that the federal government has paid Moderna - of covid vaccine fame - \$176 million to create H5N1 vaccine for humans in case it becomes a national pandemic."

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-13639833/Colorado-avian-bird-flu-outbreak-plague.html>

COVID-19 leads to long-term changes in the immune system, study shows

"According to the researchers, the long-term consequences of COVID-19 are presumably caused by an infection and the resulting long-term impairment of the function of the bone marrow, the central production site of immune cells. "Our results provide a possible explanation that certain long-term consequences of COVID-19 could be related to the damage to the cellular immune system caused by SARS-CoV-2 and the apparently reduced maturation and/or emigration of immune cells from the bone marrow," Winfried Pickl and Rudolf Valenta summarize the study results. This hypothesis forms the basis for further research in order to achieve a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying Long-COVID."

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20240715/COVID-19-leads-to-long-term-changes-in-the-immune-system-study-shows.aspx>

Bird flu has been invading the brains of mammals. Here's why

"In spring 2022, a handful of red foxes in Wisconsin were behaving oddly. Veterinary pathologist Betsy Elsmo learned that a local wildlife rehabilitation center was caring for foxes with neurological symptoms like seizures, tremors, uncoordinated movements and lethargy ... Additional testing confirmed the diagnosis in the kit and the other foxes, Elsmo and colleagues reported in the December 2023 Emerging Infectious Diseases. The animals had contracted a lethal strain of H5N1 avian influenza that emerged in late 2020 in Europe and has since spread around the world. At the time infections were discovered in the Wisconsin red foxes, bird flu was expanding its incursion into North America. Since H5N1 arrived on North American shores in December 2021, it has infected animals as wide-ranging as polar bears, skunks, sea lions, bottlenosed dolphins and cows (SN: 7/8/24). And one unwelcome revelation of the ongoing outbreak is the virus's propensity to invade the brains of myriad mammals."

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/bird-mammal-brain-outbreak-influenza>

Study suggests reinfections from the virus that causes COVID-19 likely have similar severity as original infection

"NIH-funded analysis of health record data shows severe reinfections often follow severe first infections.

"About 27% of those with severe cases, defined as receiving hospital care for a coronavirus infection,

also received hospital care for a reinfection... In contrast, about 87% of those who had mild COVID cases that did not require hospital care the first time also had mild cases of reinfections."

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/study-suggests-reinfections-virus-causes-covid-19-likely-have-similar-severity-original-infection>

Post-COVID syndrome prevalence: a systematic review and meta-analysis

"Forty eight studies met the eligibility criteria and were included in this review. 16 were accepted for meta-analysis to estimate the pooled prevalence for PCS worldwide, which was 41.79%" "PCS prevalence estimated at ≥ 3 rd, ≥ 6 th, and ≥ 12 th months timepoints were each 45.06% (95% CI: 41.25–48.87%), 41.30% (95% CI: 34.37–48.24%), and 41.32% (95% CI: 39.27–43.37%), respectively" "Based on continental regions, pooled PCS prevalence was estimated at 46.28% (95% CI: 39.53%-53.03%) in Europe, 46.29% (95% CI: 35.82%-56.77%) in America, 49.79% (95% CI: 30.05%-69.54%) in Asia, and 42.41% (95% CI: 0.00%-90.06%) in Australia."

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-024-19264-5>

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