



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

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

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

## **Activity for the Month of Aug. Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>:**

- 2 Continuing Education Courses.
- 1 Commentary.
- 3 Presentations.
- 2024 HW USA Conference Videos are Available.
- 2025 HW USA Conference Videos are Starting to Be Posted.

**Information Regarding Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> Nov. 1st, 2023: Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers & Society:** <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2023/index.html>

## **Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> 2023 Activities Report:**

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20231231-HWUSA-Report-2023.pdf>

## **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>

**COMBATING INFECTIOUS DISEASE CHALLENGES**  
**Have we gone twenty steps forward or backwards?**



## **Health Watch USA's 2025 Public Health Webinar**

Aug 29, 2025, international webinar, including speakers from New Zealand, Australia & Singapore. FREE 4 hrs. Cat 1 PRA AMA; and credits for physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing and social work, among others, from Kentucky Oversight Boards.

Download Brochure:

[https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2025Conference\\_downloads/20250829-HWUSA\\_Brochure-2.pdf](https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2025Conference_downloads/20250829-HWUSA_Brochure-2.pdf)

Presentations will become available over the next month on <https://healthconference.org>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> – Articles & Commentaries



### How Misinformation Tries to Discredit the Science Behind Masking

Public health is facing challenges from misinformation, leading to mistrust and even violence. The effectiveness of masking, especially during outbreaks, has been debated due to issues with study design, compliance, and exposure time. While some reviews, such as a large Cochrane article, questioned mask effectiveness, they often cited articles with poor compliance and study flaws. Other systematic reviews and large studies found that consistent and correct mask use—especially respirators like N95s—reduces viral transmission. Studies show that longer exposure increases infection risk, but masking and layered prevention strategies (using multiple methods together) substantially reduce this risk. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) for masking are hard to conduct due to ethical and practical

reasons, making it difficult to achieve definitive evidence similar to drug trials. Nevertheless, well-designed observational studies and community-level trials have demonstrated benefits to masking, particularly with proper compliance and in settings like schools. Comparisons between masking and drug interventions like ivermectin are misleading, as the quality of evidence and applicability differ. Ultimately, no single measure provides 100% protection, but combining interventions—masking, ventilation, and vaccination—can significantly lower the risk of viral transmission. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Aug. 18, 2025.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/how-misinformation-tries-discredit-science-behind-masking>

### Infection Control Today Coverage of the 2025 Webinar. Continuing the Fight Against Infectious Disease: Health Watch USA's 20th Annual Conference

This year's conference will go beyond headline risks. You'll explore airborne pathogen strategies, vaccine misinformation countermeasures, and the emerging promise of bacteriophages in treating drug-resistant infections. The agenda focuses on not just what threats exist, but also how to implement change in real-world settings.

Attendees will leave equipped to:

- ❖ Apply global, evidence-based principles to improve infection-related public health outcomes
- ❖ Implement best practices for surveillance, treatment, and prevention during and after outbreaks
- ❖ Improve indoor air safety and communicate health risks effectively

- ❖ Identify high-impact strategies for protecting vulnerable populations in health care settings

View full coverage: [Continuing the Fight Against Infectious Disease: Health Watch USA's 20th Annual Conference](#)

The Webinar/Conference was held on Aug 29, 2025. It will soon be available for viewing and for post-webinar credits as an online Continuing Education Program through Southern Kentucky AHEC. To learn more go to: <https://sokyahec.thinkific.com/>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> – Presentations



**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>

**2025 Webinar Introduction:** Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, Board Chairman of Health Watch USA(sm) 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 USA<sup>sm</sup> Webinar. Aug. 29, 2025. [View Video](#) [View Slides](#)

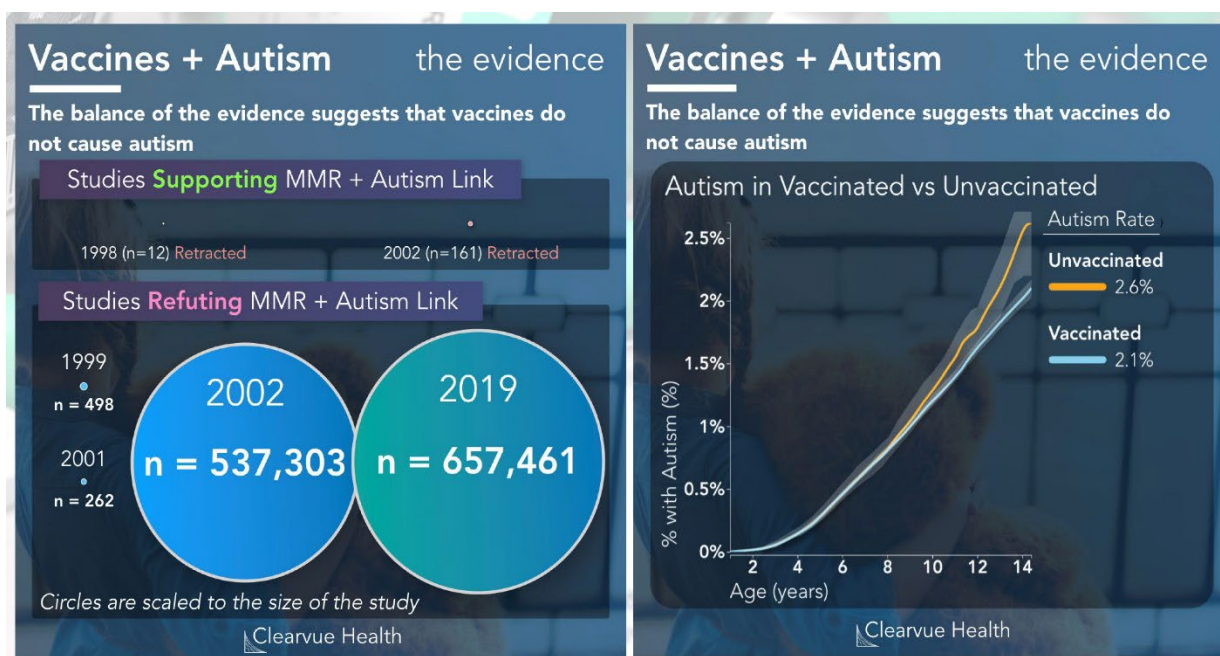
Associated Infection Control Today Article: How Misinformation Tries to Debunk the Science Behind Masking <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/how-misinformation-tries-discredit-science-behind-masking>

### 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 reduction 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.

**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 USA<sup>sm</sup> conference, Aug. 29, 2025. View Video of Presentation: <https://youtu.be/I2IOHqlfziA>



(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> g

(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/>

**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 USA's 2025 Conference. View Video: [https://youtu.be/bmg\\_G2tEOKU](https://youtu.be/bmg_G2tEOKU)

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

## **Learn How Communication Shapes Pandemic Preparedness—Health Watch USA 2025**

"Communication is the single most important tool in a pandemic. The lack of clarity damaged confidence: "We bollocksed up those lines of communication. And in a sense, that's really an issue that we still struggle with today, trying to get people clear about [masks]," Schaffner told ICT. "[The public] lost confidence, and you still hear, 'Well, you didn't tell us right about the masks. And so why should we believe you now?' This restoration of confidence and trust is something that's going to have to take us a long time, I'm afraid."

William Schaffner, MD, professor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, will deliver a keynote presentation on Communications and Pandemic Mitigation Strategies at the upcoming Health Watch USA Conference held on August 29, 2025, from 2:30 PM to 7:30 PM EDT. In a recent interview with Infection Control Today® (ICT®), he reflected on the lessons learned from COVID-19 and the critical role of clear, trustworthy communication in public health. Infection Control Today. Aug. 15, 2025.

To view Dr. Schaffner's full interview go to:

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/learn-how-communication-shapes-pandemic-preparedness-health-watch-usa-2025->



## Upcoming HW USA Meetings:

- Sept. 17, 2025. 7 pm ET.
- Oct. 15, 2025. 7 PM ET. Matthew J Campen PhD, MSPH regarding "Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains"

Space is limited. To attend future meetings, send an email to [kavanagh.ent@gmail.com](mailto:kavanagh.ent@gmail.com)

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



### CVS: COVID vaccines not available in 16 states following new RFK Jr. limits

"COVID vaccines are no longer available at CVS stores in three states and available only with an authorized prescriber's prescription in 14 states, CVS told Axios on Friday."

<https://www.axios.com/2025/08/29/cvs-covid-vaccines-kennedy-rfk>

### Elevated risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes among underweight patients in Japan: A national registry-based study

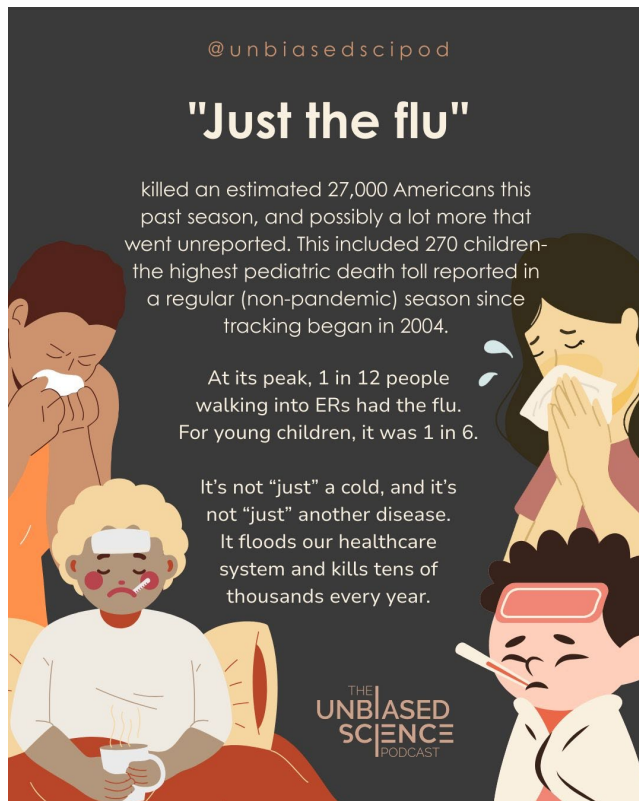
Study finds risks for Severe COVID-19 with being underweight (1.88 men, 1.59 women, times higher risk) is at high of a risk as being overweight (1.38 men, 1.59 women). The risk was even higher when the Omicron variant was predominant. <https://www.globalhealthmedicine.com/site/article.html?id=471>

*Below is a story which illustrates that COVID-19 has lasting effects and reinfections are a problem and a risk for increasing the damage from the first infection.*

**Mark Knopfler says three bouts of COVID have stunted his abilities – but he'll get over it**

“Mark Knopfler, the Northumberland, UK-born guitarist contracted COVID three times, which has impacted his health and also seen him ditch picks in favor of finger-picking. His latest sit-down with Guitarist magazine has shed more light on how those bouts of illness have affected his skill set on acoustic and electric guitars. “I probably wouldn’t be able to play them so well now,” he reckons. However, he isn’t simply accepting that his best playing days are behind him. “I’m hoping to put my head down and really get back into some proper playing in the near future,” he expands. “COVID slowed me down a lot.”

<https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/articles/mark-knopfler-says-three-bouts-150000626.html>



### **Eight states, including Mass., met this week in a step toward public health independence from the federal government**

“Massachusetts health officials had already discussed the possibility of coordinating vaccine recommendations with neighboring states, rather than relying on federal health agencies for guidance. But in the wake of the meeting in Providence, officials said, participating states also considered how they could work collectively to maintain effective disease tracking and emergency response services in the face of the Trump administration’s damaging funding cuts and changing health priorities...The other states participating in the Providence meetings were more circumspect about the event. A

spokesperson from the Rhode Island health department said the meeting was simply an opportunity to discuss coordination and information sharing.

Yet states are beginning to take steps toward more independence. While the Supreme Court ruled more than a century ago that states can establish their own vaccination policies, many states have the CDC’s guidelines baked into law. That must change if states want to rely on recommendations from medical societies instead.” <https://archive.is/JRX6g#selection-1495.0-1509.203>

### **Cardiorenal outcomes after herpes zoster reactivation in COVID-19 survivors from a global TriNetX study**

"HZ reactivation, driven by immune dysregulation following viral infections, has been increasingly observed among COVID-19 survivors" ... "Compared with controls, HZ patients had significantly higher risks of major adverse cardiovascular events (HR: 1.38), acute kidney injury

(HR: 1.67), and renal function decline defined by eGFR < 60 mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> (HR: 1.28). ... These findings suggest that Herpes Zoster reactivation after COVID-19 signals a vulnerable subgroup predisposed to cardiorenal complications. Targeted follow-up and risk-based interventions are warranted in this population." <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-025-16398-3>

### **COVID-19, Flu May Reawaken Dormant Cancer Cells**

"During the first year of the pandemic, Montgomery heard from medical colleagues that an unusual number of people were newly presenting with and subsequently dying of metastatic cancers, particularly of the breast and bowel. Although research has suggested that cancer-related mortality increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, this typically has been attributed to disruptions in screening and treatment. Believing there was more to it, Montgomery and his colleagues decided to research the possible effect of pulmonary viral infections on cancer outcomes using both mouse models and epidemiological data collected from cancer survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study, published recently in Nature, found that influenza and SARS-CoV-2 infections appeared to awaken dormant cancer cells and cause metastatic disease in mice, and that human cancer survivors with COVID-19 infections demonstrated a heightened risk of lung metastasis and cancer-related mortality."

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2838465>

### **Microplastics are now part of the human body, and they don't seem to be going anywhere anytime soon, scientists said.**

"We start thinking that maybe these plastics obstruct blood flow in capillaries," Matthew Campen, who led a study that found a growing accumulation of plastic in our brains, said in a statement shared by The Good Men Project. "There's the potential that these nanomaterials interfere with the connections between axons in the brain. They could also be a seed for aggregation of proteins involved in dementia. We just don't know."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/wellness/scientists-sound-alarm-after-uncovering-unexplained-substances-in-the-human-body-we-just-don-t-know/ar-AA1Cu5pY>

### **Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains**

<https://hsc.unm.edu/news/2025/ media/41591 2024 article 3453.pdf>

### **RFK, Jr., Demanded a Vaccine Study Be Retracted—The Journal Said No**

Scientific American: "In a rare move for a U.S. public official, Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., called for a paper that found no link between aluminum in vaccines and disease to be retracted. The journal rejected the request."

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/rfk-jr-demanded-study-on-vaccines-and-aluminum-be-retracted-the-journal-said/>

Andersson NW, Bech Svalgaard I, Hoffmann SS, Hviid A. Aluminum-Adsorbed Vaccines and Chronic Diseases in Childhood : A Nationwide Cohort Study. Ann Intern Med. 2025 Jul 15. doi: 10.7326/ANNALS-25-00997. Epub ahead of print. Erratum in: Ann Intern Med. 2025 Jul 17. doi:

10.7326/ANNALS-25-03233. PMID: 40658954.

<https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/ANNALS-25-00997>

## Active Continuing Education Courses



### 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](https://www.healthconference.org/healthconference.org-files/2024Conference_downloads/20240901-HWUSA_Brochure-AHEC.pdf)

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 USA<sup>sm</sup> – Combating Misinformation

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](#)

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

- 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>

## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> – 2023 & 2024 Conference Presentations

### 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](https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long_covid_s_impact_on_patients_workers_.50.aspx)

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## Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup> - Peer-Reviewed Publications



### Viewpoint: The Impending Pandemic of Resistant Organisms – A Paradigm Shift Towards Source Control is Needed

The United States needs a paradigm shift in its approach to control infectious diseases. Current recommendations are often made in a siloed feedback loop. This may be the driver for such actions as the abandonment of contact precautions in some settings, the allowance of nursing home residents who are carriers of known pathogens to mingle with others in their facility, and the determination of an intervention's feasibility based upon budgetary rather than health considerations for patients and staff.

Data from both the U.S. Veterans Health Administration and the U.K.'s National Health Service support the importance of carrier identification and source control. Both organizations observed marked decreases in methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

(MRSA), but not methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* infections with the implementation of MRSA admission screening measures.

Facilities are becoming over-reliant on horizontal prevention strategies, such as hand hygiene and chlorhexidine bathing. Hand hygiene is an essential practice, but the goal should be to minimize the risk of workers' hands becoming contaminated with defined pathogens, and there are conflicting data on the efficacy of chlorhexidine bathing in non-ICU settings.

Preemptive identification of dedicated pathogens and effective source control are needed. We propose that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should gather and publicly report the community incidence of dedicated pathogens. This will enable proactive rather than reactive strategies. In the future, determination of a patient's microbiome may become standard, but until then we propose that we should have knowledge of the main pathogens that they are carrying. *Medicine* Aug. 2, 2024. [https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long\\_covid\\_s\\_impact\\_on\\_patients\\_workers\\_.50.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/fulltext/2024/03220/long_covid_s_impact_on_patients_workers_.50.aspx)

[journal/fulltext/2024/08020/viewpoint\\_the\\_impending\\_pandemic\\_of\\_resistant.46.aspx](journal/fulltext/2024/08020/viewpoint_the_impending_pandemic_of_resistant.46.aspx)

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