

“It can happen to you or someone you love”

## Long COVID survivor urges people to attend October 24 webinar

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*Katie Blair, a survivor of Long COVID and public advocate, spoke to the World Socialist Web Site to give an update on her condition and express her support for the upcoming October 24 webinar. She urges the widest possible attendance for Sunday, October 24 meeting, “How to End the Pandemic” to explain the case for the global elimination and potential eradication of COVID-19. Register here for Sunday’s event.*

*Katie initially spoke to the WSWs in late March after one year of Long Covid. You can read the first part of her interview here.*

At 33 years old, Katie was forced to abandon her life in New York City as a corporate recruiter and Broadway enthusiast after falling ill with COVID-19 in March of 2020. She eventually moved back in with her parents in Washington state and has been suffering serious medical ailments ever since. Her list of debilitating impairments include fatigue, headaches, brain fog, depression, anxiety, weight fluctuations and short-term memory loss.

The last time we spoke to Katie, she was pursuing the possibility of getting a hysterectomy. She told us this week that in June she ended up having the procedure to alleviate her painful menstrual cycles, a common ailment of women who suffer from Long Covid. She said it was a “hard decision, but the best decision I’ve made throughout this journey,” as it has assisted her pain management.

Katie described how many other women in her support group are grappling with such a life-altering decision. Many mothers complain of menstrual cramps that are on the pain level of childbirth. “I think most women aren’t willing to sacrifice the organ that creates life, even if it means helping their body, which is so

hard, I can’t even imagine being in that position,” she said.

Long COVID is defined as persistent symptoms lasting more than four weeks after infection. There is a laundry list of symptoms that include sleep disorders such as insomnia, heart palpitations, gastrointestinal issues, breathing difficulties, and muscle and joint pain as well as exhaustion, headaches and cognitive impairment, tics and neurological issues that resemble postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS).

Millions of people throughout the world have been stripped of their former selves and live in a world of debilitating chronic illness. According to the UK Office of National Statistics, an estimated 1.1 million people in the UK are living with Long COVID. Figures in the United States are more difficult to come by as the condition is not tracked. New data is showing that at least one in seven infected children and potentially one third of infected adults will suffer from Long COVID, according to a recent study in *PLOS Medicine*.

For Katie, after nearly 17 months of suffering from lingering symptoms, and despite progress in some areas, the neurological issues are worsening, including tics and speech impairment as well as “pin-prick” sensation in her hands and feet.

As the numbers of cases and deaths continue to climb in the United States and approach a million deaths, a policy of mass infection and indifference toward the infection of children has dominated the policies of the Trump and Biden administrations.

Data out of the United Kingdom shows that one in seven children infected with COVID-19 are suffering from Long COVID. If that ratio is extrapolated to the 6.4 million US children the American Academy of

Pediatrics reports have been infected as of October 14, then at least 860,000 children are suffering from Long COVID. At least 558 children have died in the US, according to the same report.

Long COVID advocacy groups continue to raise the alarm against mass infections of children bound up with school reopenings and warn against the lies that children are not affected by COVID-19.

Katie expressed great concern about the reopening of schools and mass infection of children, noting as well that the issue was particularly close to her since everyone in her immediate family was an educator. She even wears a mask at home with them because “they are going into the trenches.” As an athletic trainer at school, Katie’s father had told her that multiple football games have been canceled because so many players tested positive for COVID.

“We will be depriving them of their childhood and they may never get one. It breaks my heart,” Katie said, regarding the children who are suffering from Long COVID.

Katie also described how those who have been infected with COVID-19 can get reinfected, noting that her online support group for Long COVID survivors has now become a support group for the reinfected. She said her life now was like a “personal nightmare. I’m in this dream that I can’t wake up from. I can’t live my life. I’m no longer independent. I’m in pain every single day. I have new symptoms that pop up every day. It’s more like coping with life, rather than living life, and it’s not fair.”

Katie said Long COVID survivors have been “forgotten and let down by the government and the medical establishment.” She added “I no longer feel like I am a part of society, I’m just coping with my symptoms every day.”

Katie also expressed concerns that those suffering from Long COVID would never be able to get jobs and rejoin society, and that infected children would especially suffer. “Will they ever have a normal life?” she asked, “At least I know what it feels like to have a normal life, these kids won’t.”

She was eager for a program that rejects the ruling class’s line stating that society must “learn to live with the virus.” Katie expressed excitement and support for the upcoming October 24 online meeting hosted by the WSWs, saying “she was very interested to hearing

what the panel of speakers had to say.” When asked if Long COVID survivors should attend the meeting she said: “Absolutely. They need to shake up the system, because the system is ignoring them.”

Workers needed to attend the upcoming webinar to learn more about COVID-19 “because it can happen to you or someone you love, and at the rate it’s going, that’s very likely. ... The next wave is already coming, and it’s reportedly worse than Delta, it’s only a matter of time.”

*Register for the international online webinar “How to End the Pandemic” Sunday, October 24, at 1 p.m. US Eastern Time [here](#).*



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