

# The summer surge of COVID in the US and the implications of the anti-public health policy

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The US is in the midst of an accelerating summer COVID wave, the ninth such wave since March 2020. The current epicenters are located in the West (one in 37 infected) and the South (one in 43) of the country. Given the complete abandonment of all public health measures, including vaccination, this development is being driven more by waning population immunity coming off the winter peak and less by any unusual “seasonality” patterns to SARS-CoV-2.

It also underscores the important fact that we are not in any long-term, low-level endemic phase, a lie that has been perpetuated by every national and international public health official. The virus remains a pandemic pathogen. Its inherent viral characteristics indicate that it will continue to evolve and adapt, given the wide berth provided it by the political elites, whose primary concern is to do the bidding of the financial oligarchs.

COVID’s persistence is intimately tied to the nature of a beleaguered globalized capitalism that has placed the profits of a few thousand people over the lives of a working class population numbering in the billions.

According to two data websites that model COVID concentrations found in wastewater, those of JPWeiland and Professor Mike Hoerger, the rates of daily COVID infections have risen four-fold since the lows in mid-May. Currently, somewhere between 620,000 and 720,000 Americans are being infected each day, or one in 50 to 70 people.

This also means that somewhere between 36,000 and 144,000 people can expect to develop Long COVID. The surge in infections is being driven by the latest variants of SARS-CoV-2, the FliRT subvariants of Omicron, KP.3 and KP.2, which account for 61 percent of all strains, and the LB.1, which accounts for just over 10 percent.

One year ago at this time, the daily case rates were at 150,000 infections, indicating that we are not only seeing the summer wave peak earlier than before, but that the lows from one summer to the next are growing higher. And, leaving aside the Omicron peak in late 2021, the peak-to-peak incidence for each winter wave has also grown higher throughout the pandemic.

No principled public health figure has ever defined an

endemic state as a perpetual saturation of the population with a viral pathogen as is the current situation.

Professor Hoerger, the program director of health psychiatry at Tulane University, who runs the top public US COVID forecasting dashboard, warned:

Assume co-workers will be working sick or out sick, many people with new “allergies” and “summer colds,” camp closures, delays in auto repairs, sickness after medical and dental visits, flight delays, fender benders, longer wait times, covering other people’s work obligations, missed deadlines, errors and mistakes, sick politicians, increased geopolitical instability, angry outbursts, athletes dropping out of the Olympics and other sporting events, music concert cancellations, nonsensical email, more poorly managed weather events, last minute cancellations, brief small business closures, more conversations about specialty medical appointments, reliving conversations that have already happened but the person forgot, and more co-workers retiring early.

These observations are corroborated by the limited data that remains available on the dashboards of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the last six months, more than 25,000 people have succumbed to infections. The number of fatalities week to week is climbing again. However, these figures must be viewed as undercounts, given the changes in hospital reporting and dismantling of COVID trackers that have placed the country in a mandated blackout. The undercounting is corroborated by the rise in test positivity, emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

Given the dangers associated with chronic debility and the long-term health consequences even with asymptomatic infections, the insistence on a “forever COVID” policy is simply criminal and insane.

One example is a recent television interview by Dr. Ashish

Jha with Christopher Cuomo. Jha is the dean of the Brown University School of Public Health and a former White House COVID-19 coordinator in the Biden administration. Jha dismissed calls for people to continue to mask indoors as a “fringe” position of the “left” comparable to right-wing conspiracy theories about the pandemic and its origins. He said:

There are a lot of loud fringe voices from the left and the right. The left that is convinced that the pandemic is just as bad as ever and we all should still be masking indoors, and the right with, you know, all of its conspiracy theories as well.

He made no attempt to square this with data that show the pandemic remains virulent and that masking is an effective protective measure against infection. More than this, his comments run counter to alerts being issued by the CDC and public health agencies about the rise in COVID cases and the need to consider taking mitigation measures to avoid catching the virus.

By equating masking with conspiracy theories, Jha lends credence to efforts by governors, Democratic as well as Republican, to criminalize masking in public in response to legitimate protests by people who choose to protect themselves from infection, under conditions where, on average, every American has been infected at least three times in the course of the pandemic.

Nassau County on Long Island, New York may become the first jurisdiction in the tri-state region to ban face masks, with violators potentially facing fines of up to \$1,000 and possible jail time. The proposed bill, by legislator Mazi Pilip, could be voted into law as early as next month.

One must assume that Violet Affleck, who last week addressed the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors wearing an N95 respirator, could face judicial repercussions were she to repeat such an action if and when such bans are made law and enforced. Notably, despite the high rates of COVID infections in California, no one on the panel was wearing any face covering.

What she had to say to the board, including the excerpt cited below, was of immense importance. Assuming she was under a time constraint, she spoke quickly:

Hi, Violet Affleck, Los Angeles resident, first-time voter. I'm 18. I contracted a post-viral condition in 2019. I'm okay now, but I saw first-hand that medicine does not always have answers to the consequences of even minor viruses. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown [this] into sharp relief. One in 10 infections leads to Long COVID, which is a devastating

neurological, cardiovascular illness that can take away people's ability to work, move, see, and even think, and stands to exacerbate our homelessness crisis as well as the suffering of many people in our city.

It hits communities of color, disabled people, elderly people, trans people, women and anyone in a public-facing essential job the hardest. To confront the Long COVID crisis, I demand mask availability, air filtration, and far-UVC light in government facilities, including jails [and] detention centers, and mask mandates in county medical facilities. We must expand the availability of high-quality free tests and treatment.

And most importantly, the county must oppose mask bans for any reason. They do not keep us safer. They make them—vulnerable members of our community—less safe and make anyone less able to participate in Los Angeles together.

Even as the ruling class minimizes the ongoing and devastating impact of COVID-19, it spares no effort to use the pandemic as a political weapon to blame the Chinese authorities for the devastation wrought on the world's population. Efforts to legitimize the Wuhan lab leak conspiracy theory are being expanded in order to foment anti-Chinese sentiment and beat the war drums for a confrontation with China.

A report by the far-right Heritage Foundation, which propagates what is a real fringe conspiracy theory—the baseless claim that SARS-CoV-2 originated in the Wuhan Institute of Virology—has been promoted by politicians of both parties to blame China for the deaths of over 1.1 million Americans, as well as 28 million global excess deaths and more than \$18 trillion in economic losses.

The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic in recent hearings has made use of the report to witch-hunt scientists who reject the Wuhan Lab theory and oppose the “forever COVID” policy of the government and both capitalist parties. With the compliance of the Democrats and the Biden administration, the anti-China libel has become the semi-official pandemic narrative.

Thus, capitalism in its death agony normalizes mass death and world war.



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