

The latest wave of COVID-19 and Biden's destruction of public health

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On Friday, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its COVID-19 wastewater tracker, showing that the ninth wave of mass infection is continuing across the United States. The Midwest and South saw the largest growth in transmission, while the West declined slightly but still has the highest COVID-19 levels of any region.

Using these data, infectious disease modeler JP Weiland estimates that 760,000 Americans are now contracting COVID-19 each day. He warned that the rising new variant KP.3.1.1 will become dominant within two weeks and likely push transmission even higher, potentially creating the largest summer wave of infections of the entire pandemic.

Based on the conservative estimate that 5 percent of infections or reinfections lead to prolonged symptoms known as Long COVID, each day at least 38,000 Americans are put on a collision course with disability. COVID-19 hospitalizations are also on the rise across the US, while deaths are expected to climb in the weeks ahead.

The Economist's tracker shows that excess deaths above the pre-pandemic baseline continue to remain elevated in the US at 429 daily excess deaths, with the cumulative total now standing at 1.46 million. Globally, daily excess deaths have hovered around 10,000, and the cumulative total is now 27.3 million, with the overwhelming majority due to the myriad health impacts of COVID-19.

The CDC and the Biden administration have issued no public statements on the latest surge of the pandemic, which has also received scant coverage in the corporate media. Not a single public health official or politician has encouraged Americans to wear high quality N95 masks to protect themselves, covering up the fact that these masks prevent viral transmission.

The most prominent victim of the latest COVID-19 wave in the US is Joe Biden himself, who tested positive on July 17. This was Biden's third COVID-19 infection, after having tested positive and then suffering a case of "rebound" in July-August 2022.

Only four days after testing positive, Biden issued public

letters announcing his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential elections and endorsing Kamala Harris as the Democratic candidate. Among a series of delusional claims about his presidency, he absurdly wrote from his isolation quarters in Rehoboth Beach, "Together, we overcame a once-in-a-century pandemic."

While the media has ignored the role of Biden's latest infection in his withdrawal, it was clearly a major precipitating factor. Despite universal calls for him to withdraw after his disastrous debate performance, for weeks Biden refused to do so, telling George Stephanopoulos that only "the Lord Almighty" could convince him. Evidently, divine intervention came in the form of a reinfection with COVID-19.

In all likelihood, Biden's 2022 infections accelerated his mental decline, which was already apparent during the 2020 elections but has steadily worsened. Throughout the pandemic, numerous studies have found that even mild COVID-19 infections can cause or hasten neurological degeneration, with prominent neuroscientist Dr. Leslie M. Kay warning of "a wave of post-COVID dementia in the coming decades." A recent such study, published in February 2024, reaffirmed that COVID-19 can cause "pronounced cognitive slowing."

In the aftermath of Biden's withdrawal from his 2024 reelection campaign, the Democratic Party-aligned corporate media has issued gushing hosannas for the supposedly "historic" accomplishments of his administration. Perhaps the most fraudulent was an Op-Ed published Thursday in the *Washington Post* by columnist Leana Wen, titled, "Thank you, President Biden, for leading us through the pandemic."

Since Biden's inauguration, Wen has dutifully trumpeted every unscientific policy issued by the White House or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), justifying the steady clawback of all anti-COVID mitigation measures. Alongside her *New York Times* counterpart David Leonhardt, she is among the most notorious pandemic minimizers and is justly hated by all those who follow the

science of the ongoing pandemic.

Wen begins her piece by stating:

President Biden's stunning announcement that he will end his reelection bid has led many to laud his accomplishments. Chief among them should be how his administration handled the coronavirus pandemic and saved millions of American lives.

Wen characterizes Donald Trump's pandemic policy as a "surrender," which led COVID-19 to "become the nation's third-leading cause of death" at the time of Biden's inauguration. But she omits the fact that one year later, in response to the Omicron variant, Biden finished the abject surrender of the entire US political establishment to the pandemic, fully implementing the "herd immunity" policy of Trump. During the winter of 2021-22, COVID-19 was once again the third leading cause of death, as over 200,000 Americans succumbed to the virus, all at the hands of the Biden administration.

The chief architect of Biden's pandemic response was White House COVID Response Coordinator Jeff Zients, a multimillionaire Wall Street investor with no medical or public health background. On December 17, 2021, as over 1,000 Americans were dying from COVID-19 each day, Zients ghoulishly threatened the unvaccinated, "you're looking at a winter of severe illness and death for yourselves, your families, and the hospitals you may soon overwhelm." Throughout that winter and their time in office, Zients and Biden continuously opposed lockdowns and denigrated all other public health measures.

Ignoring these crimes, Wen devotes the bulk of her piece to glorifying Zients' rollout of the anti-COVID vaccines. She also tries to claim that Biden oversaw a vast expansion of public health measures, through "partnering with drug companies to develop and distribute antiviral treatments, scaling up at-home testing, improving disease surveillance and investing in long-covid research."

All of this is lies. Especially in the wake of Biden's ending of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration in May 2023, vaccine uptake has flatlined, pandemic surveillance has been dismantled, at-home testing and antivirals are nearly impossible for most Americans to access, and Long COVID research funding has evaporated, along with all other COVID-related funding. Over 24.5 million Americans have been disenrolled from Medicaid in the past year, thrown into the ranks of the uninsured.

Wen concludes, "I believe Biden's legacy will be that he was the president who got the United States out of the

pandemic as well as could be hoped for. For all his work to advance public health, I thank Joe Biden."

This is nothing but crude propaganda, designed to cover up Biden's crimes as well as her own complicity and that of the entire corporate media.

Biden's real legacy will be that he oversaw the COVID deaths of over 800,000 Americans, while millions more suffered debilitating Long COVID, for which the long-term generational impacts of annual reinfections will not be fully grasped for years or decades to come.

The truth is that Biden fell victim to his own policy of "Forever COVID," which represents the total repudiation of public health. His physical and political decline reveal the entirely unsustainable character of this policy, which is subjecting all of humanity to endless waves of mass reinfection with a virus known to be capable of damaging virtually every organ in the body.

While Biden was able to safely isolate at home, given immediate access to Paxlovid and advanced medical treatment, the reality for the vast bulk of the American population is the diametric opposite.

Told that "COVID is mild," uneducated on the risks of each reinfection, denied access to treatment, forced to work while sick or risk losing their jobs, and left to fend for themselves if disabled by Long COVID, the working class has been completely abandoned by the capitalist system and its backers in the trade union bureaucracies.

The response to the pandemic under both Trump and Biden signaled the 21st century descent into capitalist barbarism. The normalization of mass death from COVID-19 steeled the bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers to carry out their brutal war against Russia in Ukraine since 2022 and the genocide in Gaza since 2023, the antechamber to a developing Third World War which risks nuclear Armageddon.

The diseased social order which has produced these horrors must be overthrown and replaced with a planned world socialist economy that guarantees full funding for public health, universal access to high quality medical care, housing and education, and an end to poverty, disease and war.



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