Number of children diagnosed with COVID-19 in the US surpasses one million

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A new report by the American Academy of Pediatrics found 1.04 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 among children as of November 12, accounting for 11.5 percent of all infections in the United States. Of these cases, 112,000 infections came in the week before the report was published, the highest amount in a week for the entire pandemic.

The rapid rise in the number of cases among children is directly related to the campaign to keep schools open and tethered to in-person learning.

On August 20, around the time that many K-12 schools were returning for classes, child cases totaled 442,785—9.3 percent of the 4.76 million total cases for all ages. By November 12, the number of total cases had risen by 87.5 percent to over 9 million. Child cases, in turn, had risen by 135 percent to 1.04 million.

This explosive growth in confirmed cases among children can chiefly be explained by the reopening of schools at time in which the virus was still spreading widely throughout the country and the refusal of school administrations and governments to switch to remote learning once cases in schools and their surrounding communities began to rise.

While the Democratic and Republican parties have used the low death rate among young people as a justification for exposing them to the virus, the disastrous effects of the push to resume in-person learning are becoming clear.

An increasing number of children who have been infected with COVID-19 are being diagnosed with multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a condition that causes severe inflammation in human organs like the kidney, lungs, brains, skin and, most commonly, the heart.

So far, nearly 1,200 children have been diagnosed with MIS-C and 20 have died.

Of these cases around 50 percent experienced shock or very low blood pressure, and 40-50 percent experienced decreased heart function, also called “squeeze of the heart.” This severe loss in heart function has occurred in roughly half of all MIS-C cases related to COVID-19 hospitalizations, where the average length of stay is five days.

With infections continuing to rise among children, the number of children affected and hospitalized due to MIS-C is expected to double in the coming weeks, according to Dr. Jason Lake, a pediatric infectious disease specialist.

While there are effective treatments for MIS-C, the state of the medical system in the United States poses a dire threat to the lives of these children. MIS-C is a serious disease that requires medical treatment in a hospital, but this cannot be done if hospital beds are overrun with coronavirus patients. Just as the overwhelming of hospitals will lead to more COVID-19 deaths, it will also result in more deaths among children from MIS-C.

Additionally, MIS-C takes about four weeks after the infection of COVID-19 to develop, meaning that the effects of recent mass infections are still to be seen. Given the current rate of children who are becoming infected, it is possible that thousands of children with MIS-C will require treatment throughout the winter if nothing is done to stop the spread of the virus.

This is a serious health risk to millions of children who could suffer long-term health damage. Children who suffer from MIS-C can face permanent scarring of the heart, which can lead to serious health complications like arrhythmic heartbeat.

Potential long-term health effects of COVID-19 in children are still unknown. Several diseases, such as West Nile poliomyelitis and Shingles, are the result of a

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viral infection that produces an illness years into the future. By keeping schools open at the demand of Wall Street, the Republican and Democratic politicians are gambling with the future health of millions of people.

What is required to fight the pandemic is a scientific approach to public health that takes the health and lives of workers and youth seriously. Neither corporate party can do this because they serve the financial interests that are demanding workers remain on the job creating profits for the banks and major corporations, which can only be done if schools are in session.

There is no greater admission of this than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) quietly removing from its website the guidelines that the agency had pushed to justify the reopening of schools over the summer. The documents, which had been created with the influence and pressure of the Trump administration, falsely claimed that children were not likely to transmit or contract the disease.

Now the CDC guidelines state that "the body of evidence is growing that children of all ages are susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 infection and contrary to early reports might play a role in transmission." The official reason for this change in policy is that evidence has changed, but there was never any evidence to support the initial claim to begin with.

The CDC has effectively admitted that government officials lied about the danger to schoolchildren in order to support its drive to reopen schools and the economy.

While some Democratic Party-run cities have closed their schools, including New York City yesterday, this is the result of the demands of teachers and the undeniable surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths.

Democratic- and Republican-run states alike are seeing explosions of COVID-19, yet they refuse to move to remote learning and support teachers and workers. Pennsylvania and Illinois are two states with especially concerning COVID-19 outbreaks where their Democratic-led governments have so far refused to take any significant steps. In Michigan, where Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer has implemented new restrictions in the face of a record surge of infections, elementary and grade schools remain open despite the closure of high schools and colleges of in-person learning.

Educators, students, staff and community members who want to protect health and lives must break from the Democrats and Republicans and form independent rank-and-file committees that will organize educators and workers around the country to oppose their deadly policies and take measures to suppress the pandemic.

Anyone who wishes to take up the fight against the pandemic and the political forces that are allowing it to run rampant should sign up to join the national Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee today.

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