

US faces resurgent COVID-19 catastrophe

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With daily new cases hitting levels unseen since the worst days of the pandemic in January, it is becoming clear that the United States is facing a catastrophic surge of COVID-19 for which the country is totally unprepared.

The United States recorded over 120,000 daily new COVID-19 cases Thursday, exceeding the peak of the first and second waves and rising at the highest rate ever. Cases have risen 10-fold in just the past six weeks, with experts warning that the darkest days of the pandemic lie ahead.

“Things are going to get worse,” National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director Dr. Anthony Fauci said over the weekend.

Hospitals in Florida, which leads the country in daily new cases, are “suspending elective surgeries and putting beds in conference rooms,” noted the Associated Press, while “Mississippi had just six open intensive care beds in the entire state.”

“We are seeing a surge like we’ve not seen before in terms of the patients coming,” Dr. Marc Napp, chief medical officer for Memorial Healthcare System in Hollywood, Florida, told the Associated Press. “It’s the sheer number coming in at the same time. There are only so many beds, so many doctors, only so many nurses.”

Deaths have likewise surged, with the daily death rate in Florida more than doubling.

In the midst of this developing disaster, Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ranted against vaccination and mask wearing, both of which are crucial to saving lives in the pandemic. “Florida is a free state, and we will empower our people. We will not allow Joe Biden and his bureaucratic flunkies to come in and commandeer the rights and freedoms of Floridians,” DeSantis declared.

DeSantis claimed that it was immigrants, not his anti-scientific policies, that were to blame for the surge in his state, while threatening to defund schools that require children to wear masks.

In recent days, it has become clear just how dangerous the Delta variant of COVID-19 is to children in particular.

On Tuesday, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that nearly 72,000 children and teens caught COVID-19 last week—five times as many as at the end of June.

“Let this sink in — 1 percent of all #COVID19 confirmed cases in kids lead to hospitalization,” noted epidemiologist Eric Feigl-Ding. “Is that really an ‘acceptable’ level of kids morbidity that we will allow in society?”

“I am as worried about our children today as I have ever been.” Dr. Mark Kline, physician-in-chief at Children's Hospital New Orleans said at a press conference on Monday. “This virus, the Delta variant of COVID, is every infectious disease specialist’s and epidemiologist’s worst nightmare. I don’t think as Americans in our lifetime we have ever seen an organism that possesses the dual characteristics of the contagiousness that this virus has together with the virulence – its ability to produce disease.”

Children now account for nearly 20 percent of COVID-19 new cases in the state of Louisiana, according to figures from local broadcaster WWL-TV.

Feigl-Ding warned Thursday about the threat of “brain damage and IQ declines” from COVID-19, demanding to know why the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was not raising the alarm. “We epidemiologists have known and highlighted this for 9 months,” he said, noting figures from the UK that show that COVID-19 patients who had been on ventilators had seen a seven-point drop in intelligence quotient.

For the past six months, the US government has focused its efforts on convincing the public that the pandemic was over, dismantling facilities for monitoring breakthrough infections, diverting funding for COVID-19 preparedness to fund the police, and enforcing the return to school.

The CDC discouraged mask wearing and social distancing for vaccinated people before reversing course last week in a backhanded acknowledgment of the incorrectness of its guidance.

As cases, deaths, and hospitalizations rise at a dizzying rate, crucial medical resources for monitoring the spread of the disease and treating the ill are in short supply. On Wednesday, the *Wall Street Journal* reported nationwide testing shortages, noting turnarounds in some areas as high as 3 to 5 days.

“It’s August 2021, where are the rapid antigen tests that should have been supplied for free for every household to

accurately screen for infectiousness—which is what really matters?” fumed Eric Topol, professor of molecular medicine at Scripps Research Institute. “The tests that were ready here in May 2020.”

The United States still has no centralized system of contact tracing, no program of mass testing, and no nationwide app for tracking cases, vaccinations status, and exposure.

“We’ve now exceeded hospitalizations in the 1st and 2nd waves, but an additional concern is their rate of rise in the 4th, Delta wave,” Topol tweeted. “That this has happened with a surfeit of vaccines reflects both how formidable this strain is and our big miss in not suppressing it far better.”

Fauci, in an interview with McClatchy, warned about “long COVID” among people with breakthrough infections, saying, “We already know that people who get breakthrough infections and don’t go on to get advanced disease requiring hospitalization, they too are susceptible to long COVID.” He added, “You’re not exempt from long COVID if you get a breakthrough infection.”

Most ominously, Fauci warned that COVID-19 is being given “ample” opportunity to mutate, warning, “The virus will continue to smolder through the fall into the winter, giving it ample chance to get a variant which, quite frankly, we’re very lucky that the vaccines that we have now do very well against the variants — particularly against severe illness,” Fauci said. “We’re very fortunate that that’s the case. There could be a variant that’s lingering out there that can push aside Delta.”

This was in line with warnings made earlier by Adm. Brett Giroir, formerly the COVID-19 testing czar in the Trump administration’s White House Coronavirus Task Force, who declared, “The next variant is just around the corner.”

In other words, the ongoing unmitigated community spread of COVID-19 is creating the circumstances for dangerous new variants of the disease to emerge, which even further negate the effectiveness of vaccines.

The US government’s response to the pandemic has already produced a catastrophe, leaving more than 630,000 people dead, and an even worse disaster is just around the corner.

The present surge has made one thing abundantly clear: The United States’ strategy in response to the pandemic has been a catastrophic failure. The policy of “herd immunity”—or “learning to live with the virus”—pursued by governments around the world has produced one of the most dangerous strains of infectious disease known to man, and the threat of an even deadlier variant soon emerging, with no strategy to contain it.

The only response to this disaster is a complete reversal of the present policy. COVID-19 must be eradicated. This means the emergency closure of all schools and non-

essential businesses, together with the surging of trillions of dollars for testing, contact tracing, quarantine facilities, hospitals, public health staff, with the aim for totally eradicating the disease so that new variants do not develop.

Fearful of the conclusion that will be drawn by millions of people, the *Wall Street Journal* published an op-ed Thursday entitled “Eradication of Covid Is a Dangerous and Expensive Fantasy,” arguing that the disease must be allowed to become endemic because the “costs of any eradication program are immense.”

The *Wall Street Journal* speaks for America’s billionaires, whose wealth has collectively surged 60 percent in the first year of the pandemic, and who see measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 as an obstacle to their further enrichment.

The fact is that, for America’s workers, millions of whom are threatened with death and debilitation by the pandemic, the eradication of COVID-19 is an inescapable necessity.

The danger cannot be overstated, the surge will only be compounded further once schools reopen in the fall. Workers must immediately begin to organize rank-and-file committees to protect their own safety, fighting for the end of in-person instruction, the closure of non-essential businesses, and the stringent public health measures to contain the disease.

There is no solution to this crisis on a national basis, and a globally-coordinated fight to eradicate the disease in every country is required.

In the final analysis, the pandemic has proven that capitalism—with its feuding nation states and inhuman focus on the extraction of surplus value from the working class—is incompatible with the needs of human civilization.



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