“The emergency is over,” declares Colorado Governor, as hospital system nears total collapse

Alex Findijs
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“The emergency is over,” declared Democratic Colorado Governor Jared Polis, during an interview with Colorado Public Radio last Thursday about the continuing pandemic. Polis stated emphatically that there will not be any statewide mask mandates or any other public health measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, and declared that COVID-19 infections were a matter of personal responsibility.

Polis’ comments were brief but revealing, reflecting the current position of capitalist governments around the world that no new public health measures will be implemented to save lives.

“Our top goal is always to follow the science, and there was a time when there was no vaccine, and masks were all we had and we needed to wear them. The truth is we now have highly effective vaccines that work far better than masks,” said Polis.

“If you wear a mask, it does decrease your risk of getting COVID, and that’s a good thing to do indoors around others, but if you get COVID and you are still unvaccinated, the case is just as bad as if you were not wearing a mask.”

This statement by Polis is pure and utter nonsense. Masks have nothing to do with the severity of illness, but with impeding the ability of the virus to spread between people.

Polis continued his idiotic tirade against public health measures by arguing that it was not the place of the state government to impose a statewide mask mandate, echoing the reactionary positions of the fascistic Republican Governor of Florida Ron DeSantis.

“You know, public health [officials] don’t get to tell people what to wear; that’s just not their job,” he declared. “Public health [officials] would say to always wear a mask because it decreases flu and decreases [other airborne illnesses]. But that’s not something that you require; you don’t tell people what to wear.”

“You don’t tell people to wear a jacket when they go out in winter and force them to [wear it]. If they get frostbite, it’s their own darn fault. If you haven’t been vaccinated, that’s your choice. I respect that. But it’s your fault when you’re in the hospital with COVID.”

Polis’ comments sound like the ravings of a moron of the highest order. But Polis is no fool. He knows exactly what he is saying and what the implications of his decisions will be.

He is deliberately attempting to confuse the science on public health measures and obscure the fact that masks, in conjunction with broader health measures such as the closure of schools and nonessential workplaces, are crucial in impeding the spread of viral infection and saving countless lives.

But Polis has no concern for those infected. If thousands of people become severely ill then so be it, as far as he is concerned. At least businesses will remain open without the minor inconvenience of mask wearing and social distancing.

At the heart of Polis’ comments is pure disregard for the lives of working-class people. His declaration that contracting COVID-19 is “your own darn fault” was a consistent theme throughout the interview.

Within a minute of the interview Polis claimed that “Everybody had more than enough opportunity to get vaccinated…At this point, if you haven’t been vaccinated, it’s really your own darn fault.”

Just a few minutes later he again stated that “Frankly, people who want to be protected [have gotten vaccinated]. Those who get sick, it’s almost entirely their own darn fault.”

The illusion that the pandemic is over for the vaccinated was smashed by the Omicron variant just a few weeks ago, which has proven to exhibit strong resistance to existing vaccines and is several times more transmissible than Delta. Polis’ decision to pretend that vaccinated people are completely safe will have deadly consequences.

Only two-thirds of adult Coloradans have been fully vaccinated, and as of December 7, just over 40 percent had

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received a booster shot. This leaves a significant portion of the population open to infection, illness and death.

Polis' refusal to implement public health measures is homicidal. He has effectively signed the death sentence for thousands of Coloradans, and his implicit declaration that the unvaccinated deserve to die is a sickening exposure of the disregard for human life within the ruling class. There is no regard for immunocompromised people who cannot be vaccinated, nor for those who are partially vaccinated, nor for the hundreds of thousands of children who have not yet been fully vaccinated.

This interview and policy decision will have massive consequences across the country as well. Polis' comments are being seized upon as justification for the full reopening of the economy and the lifting of any remaining public health measures.

The *New York Post*, a voice for the most reactionary layers of New York's ruling elite, has embraced Polis—a former member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus—with open arms, championing him as a hero of the "endemic" stage of the pandemic. In other words, accepting perpetual infection for the working class.

The *Post ' s* Editorial Board used Polis' interview to call upon New York's Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul to end all public health restrictions.

It argued that, "[Politicians] need to let people make their own COVID decisions, right or wrong—especially since the unvaxxed are no longer much of a health threat to the rest of us."

This is a murderous myth that will cost countless lives. The ruling class, spearheaded by President Joe Biden and now Jared Polis, has promoted an extreme hyper-individualism throughout the pandemic. It has attempted to present the pandemic as a purely individual phenomenon in which infections and deaths are but a metric of personal risk.

Polis' frostbite analogy is especially pernicious. A person who suffers from frostbite does not risk passing it on to anyone else, but a person with COVID-19 may infect many others, putting their lives at risk. Such a comparison is not only nonsensical but a dangerous lie that will endanger countless people, especially now that the Omicron variant has arrived in Colorado.

Just two days before Polis' interview, Boulder County health officials announced that they had detected the Omicron variant in the municipal wastewater. Based on that information, officials believe that there are already low levels of community transmission of the variant in the city of Boulder.

Additionally, in Denver, fewer cases are being recorded but testing from the Englewood-Littleton sewage plant has found "high signs of COVID-19 prevalence in the south Denver metro populace," according to the *Colorado Sun.* The rising concentrations of COVID-19 in wastewater indicates that vaccinated people may be catching the virus but are not feeling sick enough to get tested, and presages a surge in reported cases.

The next two months will be disastrous for Colorado, as the Omicron variant spreads and hospitals overflow. For the past two months Colorado hospitals have suffered from a shortage of staff and hospital beds. The situation has been so bad that the National Guard and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been called upon to provide support to the collapsing hospital system.

Currently, 94 percent of acute care hospital beds are occupied in Colorado. If Omicron were to spread rapidly during the holiday season, then the hospital system would undoubtedly pass beyond its tipping point.

Polis and all other politicians who have embraced the policy of "vaccines only" and "herd immunity" must be held responsible for the consequences of their malign neglect of the population.

Expressing this sentiment, Trish Zornio, a scientist and lecturer at the University of Colorado Denver, wrote a column in the *Colorado Sun* calling out Polis' disastrous decision.

"Even a more mild strain of the virus could produce more hospitalizations by reaching an overall greater share of the population more quickly," she warned.

"Polis' gamble to declare the medical emergency over and continue to refute precautionary measures has already caused significant struggles for Coloradans," she added. "Yet in the face of the omicron variant, it's downright irresponsible. While hoping for the best outcome, should hospitals collapse in the coming months due to Polis' miscalculation, he should be held accountable for these mistakes."

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