

US COVID-19 death toll reaches 1 million

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By this evening, the official COVID-19 death toll in the United States will surpass 1 million, according to the Worldometers tracker. Due to the absence of uniform data, the exact death toll from COVID-19 and the moment it will pass 1 million on other data trackers is unknown, but by the end of April every tracker will likely surpass this horrific milestone. Estimates of excess deaths caused directly or indirectly by the pandemic place the true US death toll at over 1.2 million.

The catastrophic loss of life and broader societal impacts of the pandemic are unprecedented in American history. Entire families have been wiped out. One out of every 100 people above 65 years old has been killed by COVID-19. Over 200,000 children have lost a parent or primary caregiver to the disease.

In the span of two years, more Americans have died from COVID-19 than the cumulative death toll of every war fought by the United States in the 20th century. On average, 2,735 Americans have died from this preventable disease every two days over the past two years, close to the total of 2,977 people killed in the September 11 terror attacks.

In the first year of the pandemic alone, life expectancy in the US dropped by an astounding 1.8 years, the largest decrease since World War II. At this point, the cumulative total decline in life expectancy is likely approaching five years.

Lost among the statistics of mass deaths are countless individual tragedies. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, sons, daughters, the elderly, people in the prime of life, youth who had hardly even begun to live, have all been struck down by COVID-19.

In response to this monumental social catastrophe and the approaching milestone of 1 million deaths, everywhere there is massive official indifference.

One would imagine that a series of solemn memorials, tributes and serious discussions on the pandemic would be held in the days and weeks leading up to this milestone. Nothing of the sort. The pandemic is now all but ignored by the entire political establishment and the corporate

media, as a potential new surge of the more infectious, vaccine-resistant and virulent Omicron BA.2 subvariant looms in the background and all federal pandemic funding has completely dried up.

While the 1 million needless deaths are the most tragic element of the pandemic, millions and possibly tens of millions more Americans now suffer from Long COVID as a result of their illness. These include a myriad of symptoms that can affect nearly every organ in the body, including the lungs, brain, heart, kidneys and immune system.

Seroprevalence studies indicate that likely upwards of 200 million Americans have been infected with COVID-19. Studies on Long COVID estimate that at least 10 percent of infections lead to long-term symptoms, with comparable rates among breakthrough infections in vaccinated people, meaning that upwards of 20 million Americans are likely experiencing some form of long-term ramifications.

Further, there is a growing body of evidence proving that those infected with COVID-19 face increased risk of brain damage, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes and more. The overall long-term societal impact is incalculable.

The overwhelming majority of COVID-19 infections and deaths have befallen the working class and lower-middle class. Comprising the bottom 90 percent of income earners, they have been compelled to return to unsafe workplaces and send their children into unsafe schools, which have been the primary centers of viral transmission.

By September 2021, according to CDC estimates, roughly 25.8 million children had already been infected with COVID-19 in the US. The full reopening of schools since that time likely pushed the figure above 40 million, with millions infected or reinfected with Omicron.

For the capitalist ruling class, the pandemic has been an unprecedented bonanza. This Sunday will mark two years since the CARES Act was signed into law by Donald Trump after passing with near-unanimous bipartisan

support. This initiated the greatest transfer of wealth in US history, with US billionaires amassing a staggering \$2.1 trillion through October 2021.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who violated California state law and forced his employees back to work in May 2020, went unpunished by state Democrats and has amassed over \$200 billion in the past two years. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who has overseen mass COVID-19 infections and numerous deaths at his workplaces, has garnered \$75 billion since March 2020.

Under both the Trump and Biden administrations, as well as Republican and Democratic state and local governments, public health has been continuously subordinated to the economic, social and political interests of the corporations and financial oligarchy. The pretense of Biden and the Democrats that they would “follow the science” and maintain efforts to stop the pandemic was exploded during the surge of the Omicron variant.

On December 15, 2021, as Omicron infections started to skyrocket, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients (net worth over \$90 million) stated, “We know how to keep our kids in school and our businesses open, and we’re not going to shut down our economy in any way.” This set the tone for the subsequent three months, which became the second worst wave of the pandemic, as over 170,000 Americans died from COVID-19.

During the Omicron surge, the Democrats embraced the “herd immunity” strategy pioneered by Trump, based on the lie that COVID-19 is now “endemic” and a “new normal” has been reached. The same process unfolded in Canada, across Europe and internationally, with almost every world government outside of China abandoning all public health measures to slow the spread of the virus.

Worldwide, the official death toll now stands at over 6.1 million, while excess deaths are estimated to be roughly 20.2 million. This will only intensify in the coming weeks and months as the Omicron BA.2 subvariant continues to spread uncontrolled throughout the world and as new variants evolve.

More so than any other event, the pandemic has made clear that the capitalist ruling elites are willing to accept any level of death in the population. The Biden administration is not concerned with how lives can be saved from COVID-19. Quite the opposite. He has flown off to Europe to partake in war councils with the other NATO powers and stoke up the conflict with Russia over Ukraine. Rather than call on the world to unify in the fight

against COVID-19, Biden aims to unify NATO to oppose Russia.

Were the US-NATO imperialist powers to engage in a direct confrontation with Russia, this could quickly spiral out of control and unleash a nuclear war that could permanently destroy human civilization.

All the belligerents in the war, including Russia, Ukraine, the United States and all the NATO powers, have in common that their countries have all experienced a massive loss of life from the pandemic. But if one contrasts the resources that exist to what has been done to stop the spread of COVID-19, America leads the way for sheer indifference to its population.

The acceptance and even promotion of mass sickness and death from COVID-19 indicate that a certain psychological barrier has been crossed in ruling circles in relationship to the use of nuclear war. If they are willing to sacrifice the lives of 1 million Americans, what qualms do they have about the deaths of millions abroad?

The US pandemic policies implemented over the past two years, as with those throughout much of the world, amount to a series of monumental social crimes. The Global Workers’ Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic, initiated by the *World Socialist Web Site*, is uncovering the impacts of the pandemic and identifying all those responsible for this needless suffering and death.

The Inquest aims to provide the international working class with a political and historical understanding of the pandemic, while arming workers with a scientific understanding of the Zero-COVID strategy that must be implemented worldwide to stop the pandemic and save millions of lives. Even now, a change in policy could bring the pandemic to an end.

The intersecting crises of world capitalism, above all the pandemic and the growing danger of World War III, can be resolved only through the building of a powerful mass movement of the international working class aimed at the socialist reconstruction of society.



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