

# As Omicron BA.2 subvariant surges in the US, Biden administration deepens COVID-19 coverup

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The latest surge of COVID-19 is now well underway in the United States, driven by the highly infectious and immune-resistant Omicron BA.2 subvariant. The mass travel and large indoor congregations for the Easter holiday will fuel an already raging fire throughout much of the country.

According to the *New York Times* coronavirus tracker, the official seven-day average of daily new cases was 37,810 on Saturday, an increase of 38 percent over the past two weeks. According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, due to inadequate testing, the likely real number of daily new infections in the US is far higher at roughly 270,000 per day.

Thirty-two states, Puerto Rico, Washington D.C. and the Virgin Islands have all seen an increase in official daily new cases over the past two weeks. The Northeast has been hardest hit so far, as BA.2 first became dominant in that region of the country, with New York and other states now seeing a growth in COVID-19 hospitalizations.

The surge of BA.2 in the US takes place only four months after the Omicron BA.1 subvariant ripped through the country, killing over 185,000 Americans and driving the official death toll above 1 million, according to Worldometer. During the month of January, COVID-19 supplanted cancer and heart disease as the leading cause of death in the US. At present, it stands as the third leading cause of death, killing an average of 512 Americans every day, according to the *Times*.

During the BA.1 surge, the Biden administration effectively adopted the “herd immunity” strategy of the Trump administration, encouraging states to dismantle COVID-19 data reporting systems and lift all mitigation measures to slow the spread of the virus.

Starting in early February, nearly every state ended mask mandates that were still in place. To justify this policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new masking guidelines which weighted hospital capacity over infection figures, emphasizing “individual and

household-level prevention behaviors” over basic principles of public health.

Numerous states drastically curtailed COVID-19 testing sites, and testing is now at its lowest level since the summer of 2021. Federal pandemic funding began to evaporate in March, with the result that uninsured people now have to pay \$100 for more accurate PCR tests.

In February, the Biden administration urged states to reclassify what qualify as COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths by using the artificial distinction between those hospitalized “with COVID-19” and those hospitalized “from COVID-19,” a talking point of the far right since the start of the pandemic.

Despite the fact that at least a quarter of all COVID-19 deaths take place over 30 days after infection, in March, Massachusetts adopted a policy of discounting such deaths, retroactively deleting nearly 4,000 COVID-19 deaths from its records. In a still-unexplained change that took place amid a record surge in child hospitalizations and deaths from Omicron, on March 16 the CDC deleted 72,277 deaths from its Data Tracker website, including a quarter of all child deaths. Despite these data manipulations, these children and adults killed by COVID-19 are not coming back to life.

Outside of the *World Socialist Web Site*, one of the few sources closely monitoring these policy changes has been health care expert Gregory Travis, who tracks COVID-19 data reporting from all US states.

Travis has documented that since the start of the Omicron surge last December, at least a dozen states have stopped reporting COVID-19 data on a daily basis. Over the past week alone, Indiana, Kansas, Washington and North Carolina all “went dark,” meaning they now report data only twice per week, or even less frequently. This is effectively useless in terms of guiding public health measures. In total, over a third of all US states with a combined population of nearly 100 million people have now “gone dark.”

The cumulative impact of this massive data coverup means

that the severity of the BA.2 surge in the US will be more difficult to determine than any previous spike since the start of the pandemic.

In all likelihood, millions of Americans will be infected with BA.2 and tens of thousands will die. Based on the experience with BA.2 in Europe, both figures could reach an order of magnitude higher. In Germany and the UK, where the percentages of the population with two and three vaccine doses is far higher than the US, BA.2 has decimated society and caused worse levels of infection and hospitalization than during the BA.1 surge. In the UK, nearly 2,000 people were killed by COVID-19 in the past week alone.

Instead of alerting society to these dangers and the disastrous state of COVID-19 surveillance in the US, every effort is being made to conceal this reality from the American public.

Appearing on three of the Sunday morning talk shows, White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha downplayed the present dangers facing the public. On *Meet the Press*, Jha argued that “we’re in a much better place than we’ve been for the past two years, certainly way better than we were in January.” He only acknowledged that “cases are ticking up and we’re gonna want to watch this carefully.”

While remaining silent on the savage assault on public health in the United States, Europe and much of the rest of the world, over the past week the corporate media devoted ample column space and airtime to denouncing the public health measures being implemented in Shanghai and across China to try to stamp out the country’s worst outbreak of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

The most unhinged commentary was written by Li Yuan for the *New York Times*, absurdly comparing China’s Zero-COVID policy to the 1958 “zero sparrow” policy implemented under Mao Zedong, which in part contributed to the Great Chinese Famine. In fact, China’s Zero-COVID policy has repeatedly eliminated COVID-19 and saved millions of lives in the country.

In his *Fox News Sunday* interview, Dr. Jha explicitly opposed China’s use of lockdowns to slow the spread of COVID-19, saying: “I think it’s very difficult at this point with a highly contagious variant to be able to curtail this through lockdowns alone. And that’s why our strategy, which we have advocated, is, people should get vaccinated and boosted, we should make sure treatments are available. That is a much more effective, long-term, durable strategy for living with this virus.”

Left unstated in this “strategy for living with this virus,” but acknowledged in government reports and modeling, is the fact that untold thousands more Americans will die from COVID-19, and potentially millions more will suffer from

Long COVID.

One of the signs of political regimes in the process of disintegration is that they ignore crises, hide them, and lie about them. A major event that precipitated the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 was the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, which was directly caused by the Stalinist bureaucracy’s mismanagement, coverup and indifference to the safety of the Soviet population.

In a similar fashion, the American ruling class and all its political representatives have massively mishandled the pandemic, needlessly killing over 1 million Americans and debilitating potentially tens of millions more with Long COVID. With a social Chernobyl on its hands, the ruling class is incapable of speaking with any level of honesty to the public.

As with the pandemic, the ruling class is also withholding from the public the immense danger that the war in Ukraine could quickly spiral out of control. Amid increasingly open discussion about the potential use of “tactical” nuclear weapons, no officials or media talking heads have openly stated the fact that the use of such weapons would almost inevitably precipitate World War III between the world’s largest nuclear powers.

It is urgent that the American and international working class be alerted to the immense dangers posed by both the war and the pandemic, the interconnected crises at the center of the deepening crisis of world capitalism. Both the pandemic and the war have fueled a massive rise of inflation and global food shortages, which are impelling workers into struggle on every continent.

On May 1, the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) is hosting an International Online May Day Rally to tell the working class the truth and outline a fighting strategy to stop the pandemic and the drive to world war. All workers, young people and professionals throughout the world are encouraged to attend and build the event as widely as possible at your workplace and on every social media platform.



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