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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