

One hundred million coronavirus cases in the US predicted for fall and winter surge

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9 May 2022

The Biden administration announced Friday that it expects the US to record 100 million new cases of COVID-19 during the coming fall and winter months. According to the *Washington Post* article that broke the story, the administration also warned of a “significant wave of deaths.”

The projections came from a currently unnamed White House official at a private press briefing, the details of which have yet to be made public. The most the *Post* states is that the administration made its estimate based on “outside models of the pandemic,” all of which assume that Omicron and its subvariants continue to remain dominant.

The projections become even more dire if new and more virulent variants emerge, as has happened repeatedly since the Alpha variant was first detected in the United Kingdom in late 2020.

The implications of such a level of mass infection are staggering. One hundred million new cases in just over six months compares to an estimated 200 million infections since the pandemic began in the US 26 months ago. One hundred million new cases suggests, based on a study published in April by the Oxford University Press, 43 million new cases of Long COVID. One hundred million new cases implies, using the accepted infection fatality rate from the virus of 0.5 percent, 500,000 additional deaths.

A report by ABC News on the projections, which included an interview with White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Ashish Jha, painted a dire picture. Jha confirmed to ABC’s David Muir that “between now and the fall and winter, [it is] very possible we’re going to see new variants” that will be more contagious. At the same time, he noted that when the new wave hits, “we’re not going to have vaccines ... we’re going to run out of treatments ... we’re not going

to have diagnostic testing.”

Jha, however, had nothing to propose aside from the White House mantra that vaccines are the panacea to end the pandemic. “If you’ve been vaccinated and boosted, you have a very high degree of protection against severe illness,” said Jha, making no mention of even basic mitigation measures such as masks.

Vaccines are one of the necessary tools to fight the pandemic. Vaccination rates in the US, however, have stalled out with only 67 percent of the population having gotten a full initial course and less than 31 percent having received a booster shot. Such low rates are only possible in an antiscientific social and cultural climate promoted by both the Republicans and Democrats. As a result, the Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker estimates that at least 234,000 people have died since June 2021 that would have otherwise lived if they had been fully vaccinated and boosted.

Moreover, the coronavirus variants have proven increasingly capable of evading immunity granted by the vaccines, especially the Omicron variants. In January and February, 42 and 40 percent, respectively, of all deaths from COVID-19 in the US were among fully vaccinated people, including 12 and 15 percent who were boosted with a third shot.

This means that if there are 500,000 deaths from COVID-19 this year, more than 200,000 will be among those who have had at least two shots of the vaccine. And with every passing month, the effectiveness of vaccines already administered diminishes.

There is also every possibility that the prediction by the Biden administration proves to be an underestimation of the coming waves of the pandemic. While the official case counts stand at an average of nearly 70,000 a day, the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington

estimates that there are currently more than 492,000 new infections each day, the vast majority of which go undetected amid the lack of testing and ongoing massive coverup of COVID-19 data.

At such a rate, there will be more than 115 million new infections by year's end, even without another surge. The threat posed by the pandemic continues to be so dire that even one of the leading representatives of capitalism, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, commented to the *Financial Times*, "We're still at risk of this pandemic generating a variant that would be even more transmissive and even more fatal." Gates continued, "It's way above a 5 per cent risk that this pandemic, we haven't even seen the worst of it."

The Biden administration now openly acknowledges that the coronavirus pandemic is not "over" or "endemic," as has been presented by ranking officials and the corporate media. Rather, it is developing into a tsunami of new cases and deaths that has the potential to exceed even the colossal scale produced by the Omicron wave in December, January and February.

The media, however, is treating this largely as a nonissue. The pandemic has been largely dropped from the television news and print media. The ABC News report was more notable for being the network's first significant report on the pandemic in months than for any new details presented on the looming public health disaster.

As for the White House, it has announced its projections but proposes no measures to stop it. It has not held a press conference to warn the American people of the looming danger or provide any guidance on what must be done to avert it. On the contrary, the Biden administration has overseen the elimination of virtually every even minimal mitigation measure to lower transmission, including mask mandates.

The policy of mass infection is alive and well under the Democrats, just as it was under the Republicans. One hundred million cases and the resultant hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of cases of Long COVID are seen as merely the cost of doing business to keep Wall Street coffers overflowing.

The White House briefing again makes clear that any level of death is acceptable to the American ruling elite so long as it does not impinge on its ability to extract surplus value from the working class. Various pandemic trackers continue to surpass an official death

count of 1 million and barely a mention has been made of such a colossal loss of life in the press. Now the federal government has admitted that deaths will rise to at least 1.5 million.

The response of the working class must be to fight against the imminent tidal wave of infection and death. This can only be done through a policy of global elimination, which entails the aggressive implementation of every public health measure, including the shutdown of nonessential production and schools, along with vaccination and other mitigation measures, to stop viral transmission.

Such a policy can only be enforced through a mass movement of the working class, which connects the fight against the pandemic with the growing struggles of workers throughout the world against inequality, exploitation, war and the soaring costs of consumer goods. A consciously revolutionary struggle must be developed to purge Earth of the underlying disease responsible for the catastrophic impact of the pandemic, the capitalist system.



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