

COVID-19 surges across the US despite official cover-up

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Over the past six weeks, transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has more than doubled across the United States, according to the latest wastewater data released Monday by Biobot Analytics. Amid complete silence from the Biden administration and the corporate media, the American population is being subjected to its eighth wave of mass infection with a deadly virus capable of damaging every organ system and causing myriad long-term debilitating symptoms.

Modeling the latest wastewater data, oncologist Dr. Mike Hoerger of Tulane University estimates that at present roughly 1.2 million Americans are catching COVID each day, while 8.6 million people are now actively infectious. By New Year's Day, there will likely be 1.8 million daily new infections and 12.9 million infectious people. This would be the second-highest level of daily infections of the entire pandemic, surpassed only during the initial wave of the Omicron variant in the fall-winter of 2021-22.

The Biden administration is doing everything possible to keep the public from knowing the immense dangers it confronts, in order to facilitate a policy of deliberate mass infection that will cause older Americans and disabled people to “fall by the wayside,” as expressed by Dr. Anthony Fauci earlier this year. To the extent that the surging pandemic kills vulnerable people, this is, in the words of former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director Rochelle Walensky, an “encouraging” sign.

The fourth winter wave of the pandemic in the US is now concentrated in the colder Midwest and Northeast regions, with the Midwest experiencing its worst level of infections since January 2022, during the first wave of the Omicron variant. Wastewater levels of SARS-CoV-2 are also rising in the South and West, and expected to surge in the weeks ahead.

COVID-19 hospitalizations are rising rapidly in the Midwest, particularly in Illinois, Michigan and Indiana, and deaths will soon climb as well, although both official figures are significant undercounts due to the scrapping of COVID testing.

Until now, the wave in the US has been fueled primarily by the Omicron EG.5 and HV.1 subvariants. The JN.1 subvariant, a descendant of the highly-mutated BA.2.86 subvariant (nicknamed “Pirola”), is rapidly becoming dominant and is expected to supplant all other variants globally in the weeks

ahead. Only after this variant is dominant will it be possible to tell whether it is more pathogenic and likely to hospitalize or kill those infected.

The latest wastewater data entirely confirm the warnings made by the *World Socialist Web Site* two weeks ago that this year's record Thanksgiving travel would facilitate the spread of COVID-19, endangering millions of people across the country.

This is the first holiday season in the aftermath of the Biden administration and the World Health Organization (WHO) ending their respective COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) declarations, legitimizing Biden's lie that “the pandemic is over.” With the corporate media dutifully following suit, masses of people throughout the world have been led to believe this disinformation and have dropped their guard, with most family and other gatherings involving no mitigation measures whatsoever.

The ending of the PHEs put the final nail in the coffin of whatever semblance of public health remained in the US and globally. In every country, pandemic surveillance has been scrapped, including testing, contact tracing, and the regular reporting of official COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths, as part of a systematic effort by capitalist governments to cover up the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

Most recently, on November 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) quietly announced on its website that it will no longer provide data from COVID case reports submitted to it by the states, until now the most reliable and prompt method of reporting COVID-19 deaths.

The US and world population are now flying blind into what could be a catastrophic winter storm of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths. Coinciding with a surge of other respiratory pathogens, in particular, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), this could quickly become a repeat of last year's “triple-demic,” or even worse. There are already reports of children's hospitals being inundated in cities across North America and Europe, as well as in China.

A byproduct of the deepening cover-up of the very existence of the pandemic—fueled by heavily funded anti-vaccine disinformation campaigns—is the fact that booster vaccination rates have plummeted. Only 16 percent of American adults, and only 27 percent of the most vulnerable millions of elderly

Americans who live in nursing homes, have been vaccinated with the latest monovalent booster shot tailored to the Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant. Throughout much of the world, these life-saving boosters are not even available.

In a rare admission of the ongoing dangers of COVID-19, German Minister of Health Karl Lauterbach, a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), spoke on the devastating effects of Long COVID at a press conference Monday. Noting historical spikes in Parkinson's disease and dementia after the 1918-20 influenza pandemic, Lauterbach said that COVID-19 infection "affects how the immune system in the brain functions, as well as the brain's blood vessels, potentially increasing the long-term risk of these major neurodegenerative diseases."

Lauterbach stated, "We are seeing an increasing number of [Long COVID] cases as the waves of infection continue to affect us." He added, "COVID is not a cold—with a cold you don't usually see any long-term effects. You don't see any changes in the blood vessels. You don't usually see an autoimmune disease developing. You don't usually see neurological inflammation—these things that we all see with Long COVID... It can affect brain tissue and the vascular system."

Expressing concern that only 3.6 percent of the German population has received the latest booster shot, Lauterbach concluded, "Please protect yourself from Long COVID. Currently, the danger posed by COVID is indeed being underestimated."

Listening to this press conference, one could be forgiven for holding out hope that at least one official is taking the pandemic seriously. But the truth is that Lauterbach's comments were mere lip service to the immense suffering from Long COVID, meant to provide political cover for his own and the entire German government's criminal response to the pandemic.

Over the past two years, ignoring thousands of studies already published on Long COVID, Lauterbach has overseen the complete dismantling of all anti-COVID public health measures, creating the very conditions over which he now feigns concern. In April, Lauterbach echoed Biden's lie, tweeting, "We can say that the pandemic is also over for Germany."

He has also complied with the SPD-led government's gutting of the health budget, which has been cut by three-quarters over the past two years, from €64.4 billion to €16.2 billion. This includes the slashing of funding for research into Long COVID from €100 million to only €21 million, a drop in the bucket relative to the vast scale of this health crisis.

Furthermore, Lauterbach, like all other capitalist politicians, refuses to encourage masking or offer any other means to stop or even slow the spread of the pandemic. A global elimination strategy—based on cleaning indoor air in all public spaces, mass testing of the population to identify and cut off all chains of

transmission, and other public health measures—is beyond the pale for the capitalist profit system.

Such a strategy, however, is now more attainable than at any point in the pandemic. On the same day that Lauterbach spoke and Biobot updated its wastewater data, an article was published in *Vox* on the growing research showing the immense potential of far-UVC technology to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and all other airborne pathogens.

The article, titled, "Ultraviolet light can kill almost all the viruses in a room. Why isn't it everywhere?" covers much of the same ground as a two-part series published by the WSWS this year. Citing a report from the organizations Rethink Priorities and 1Day Sooner, it notes, "All told, the report estimates that a comprehensive plan to improve air quality, including far-UV, upper-room UV, and ventilation/filtration, in every single commercial building in the US would require a one-off investment of \$214 billion."

Instead of providing such funding, necessary for the health of society, the Biden administration is funneling unlimited sums to Israel to carry out a genocide of the Palestinian population and to Ukraine to perpetuate its proxy war against Russia. The annual military budget for American imperialism now stands at over \$1 trillion, enough to provide clean food, water and air for billions of people globally.

Despite a years-long propaganda campaign to condition the public to accept perpetual mass infection with COVID-19, there remains significant opposition to the capitalist "let it rip" policies among scientists, advocates for the disabled and older people, and advanced sections of the working class. As they enter into struggle against war, genocide and exploitation, workers and young people must renew the fight to end the COVID-19 pandemic through a scientifically grounded policy of global elimination.

The experience of the past four years of the pandemic—in which over 27 million lives have been sacrificed at the altar of private profit, and all governments have surrendered their populations to unending waves of disease, disability and death—proves unequivocally that capitalism has nothing progressive to offer humanity. It is a doomed social order which must be replaced with a world socialist society, based on the principles of economic planning and social equality.



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