

Declaring COVID-19 “endemic,” Biden administration oversees policy of forced mass infection

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The United States is currently mired in its ninth wave of mass infection since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the population now completely abandoned by the powers that be. A policy of forced infection has emerged, in which all public health measures have been scrapped and the most basic protection of mask-wearing is being criminalized in a growing number of counties and states.

Wastewater data show that over 1.2 million Americans are being infected with COVID-19 every day. Hospitalizations are climbing, in particular among children and the elderly, while official deaths are approaching 1,000 per week. Excess deaths, a more accurate measure of the real death toll attributable to COVID-19, stand at over 500 per day, with the cumulative death toll in the US nearing 1.5 million. Long COVID, an array of symptoms which are often debilitating, now affects over 20 million Americans and over 400 million people globally.

According to wastewater modeler Dr. Mike Hoerger, there have been over 1.1 billion cumulative COVID-19 infections in the United States alone, with the average American infected three or four times. With multiple studies showing that each reinfection compounds one's risk of Long COVID and other adverse health events such as strokes or heart attacks, the current trajectory of the “forever COVID” policy is towards ever-broadening mass debilitation and death on a world scale.

Under these conditions, on August 23 top officials from America's leading public health agencies held an extraordinary press conference, which very explicitly outlined the Biden administration's criminal “forever COVID” policy.

Leading the event was Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Mandy Cohen, who bluntly declared that COVID-19 “is endemic, it is here with us.” This is the first time a top public health official has proclaimed COVID-19 to be “endemic,” after Drs. Anthony Fauci, Rochelle Walensky and Ashish Jha repeatedly and falsely said that the virus was “in the process” of becoming endemic since the emergence of the Omicron variant in late 2021.

An endemic disease is one which is largely contained, predictable and not disruptive to the basic functioning of society. None of this applies to COVID-19, which is spreading like wildfire almost year-round and causing widespread damage to the health of the population, as well as mass absenteeism and economic disruption to the tune of over \$1 trillion annually.

After claiming that COVID-19 is “endemic,” Cohen hastened to add, “We need to protect ourselves. And we have the tools to do it, we just need to use them.”

The reality is that the public health “tools” necessary to mitigate the dangers of COVID-19, let alone stop the pandemic, have been systematically stigmatized, denied and even criminalized by the entire political establishment. The capitalist state, beholden to the profit interests of Wall Street and corporate America, has dismantled all pandemic surveillance and left the population to fend for themselves. Those who remain vigilant and seek to avoid infection are increasingly isolated and unable to protect themselves amid a sea of viral transmission.

Over the course of the press conference, it became abundantly clear that the only “tool” advocated by the Biden administration are new vaccines designed for the

KP.2 variant, which are currently being rolled out. The officials present covered up the fact that these vaccines are too little, too late, given that the KP.3.1.1 variant is now dominant, with KP.2 accounting for just 3.2 percent of cases nationally, and that the current wave appears to be just peaking.

Furthermore, in the course of the press conference it became clear that the latest vaccines will not be guaranteed to everyone, with Cohen stating that uninsured Americans (over 26 million people) will have to try to navigate their local or county public health bureaucracy or pay upwards of \$120 for the shot. No speaker seriously addressed the fact that vaccine uptake is abysmally low, the product of bipartisan anti-vaccine disinformation and propaganda portraying the pandemic as over.

Not once in the course of the press conference was the word “mask” even mentioned, despite the fact that numerous studies have proven that well-fitting N95 respirators can block the transmission of COVID-19 and all other airborne pathogens.

In fact, just two days after the CDC press conference, police arrested an 18-year-old in Nassau County, New York for wearing a ski mask after a county-wide mask ban was put in place earlier this month. Those arrested for wearing masks can face a fine of up to \$1,000, up to a year in jail or both. A similar mask ban is now in effect in North Carolina, while cities, including Los Angeles, have floated the idea of such bans.

Another “tool” increasingly unavailable or impossible for average Americans to access is Paxlovid, one of the only effective treatments for COVID-19. In her remarks, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) official Dawn O’Connell noted that starting in 2025, Pfizer will entirely control the distribution of Paxlovid. The pharmaceutical giant will undoubtedly charge the full price for the drug, which costs upwards of \$1,500.

When asked by a reporter about the latest science on the risks of reinfection with COVID-19, Cohen downplayed the dangers and reiterated the vaccine-only strategy of the Biden administration, saying nothing about the need to wear masks to prevent transmission. The reality is that multiple studies have shown that each reinfection heightens one’s risk of developing Long COVID, which is only slightly mitigated by vaccination.

The response of the Biden administration to the latest wave of mass infection reaffirms that capitalism is descending into barbarism, with centuries of advances in science and public health trampled upon and discarded. Mass infection with a preventable illness is no longer to be prevented, but rather encouraged.

While the Democrats and Republicans bear primary responsibility for this policy of death, they are joined by the pseudo-left presidential campaigns of the Green Party’s Jill Stein and independent candidate Cornel West. Both have tailored their rhetoric to the far-right anti-vaccine constituency cultivated by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who himself has endorsed the “herd immunity” pioneer Donald Trump.

The only political party fighting for public health and science is the Socialist Equality Party and its candidates Joseph Kishore and Jerry White. Throughout their campaign, they have educated workers on the science of the pandemic, including the viability and necessity of a global elimination strategy towards COVID-19 and other pathogens. They have called for a vast infusion of resources to fund research into Long COVID and next-generation vaccines, as well as the renovation of all public spaces to ensure access to clean indoor air, to be paid for through the gargantuan military budget and the wealth of the financial oligarchy.

The policy of “forever COVID,” in which a virus known to damage every organ of the body is given free rein to cause perpetual reinfections in the entire global population, is not sustainable. No amount of rhetoric about COVID-19 becoming “endemic” will conceal the objective reality of declining health and well-being for masses of workers.

The essential task is to educate the international working class on the ongoing health dangers it confronts, which now coincide with the growing threat of nuclear war and fascist dictatorship, and to build a revolutionary socialist movement to put an end to the source of these scourges: the capitalist profit system.



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