

New COVID-19 variants surge as Kennedy escalates war on science

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The ruling class's declaration that "the pandemic is over" has been disproven yet again, as the 11th wave of mass COVID-19 infection is now sweeping across the US and other countries, driven by new highly transmissible variants. The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus has shown no signs of settling into a predictable "endemic" state falsely promised by official scientists and COVID contrarians alike.

The current surge is being propelled by two dominant variants: NB.1.8.1, dubbed "Nimbus," and XFG, known as "Stratus," which together represent a new phase of viral evolution. NB.1.8.1 now accounts for 43 percent of US cases, while XFG has rapidly spread worldwide and comprises the third most prevalent strain nationally.

According to the Pandemic Mitigation Collaborative (PMC) from Tulane University, the most consistent public dashboard available in the US, new daily infections reached 347,000 by July 21, with forecasts suggesting this number will nearly double by next month.

Extrapolating from these data, the PMC estimates that over the coming month there will be between 6,700 and 11,200 excess deaths due to COVID-19, while up to 3.76 million Americans will join the tens of millions more already suffering from Long COVID. Strikingly, they estimate that the average American has now been infected 3.85 times, meaning more than 1 billion COVID-19 infections have occurred in the US since the pandemic began.

Separate data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that official deaths in the US continue to remain elevated at 10.6 percent above pre-pandemic levels, underscoring the ongoing mortality burden caused by the pandemic.

The current crisis represents the culmination of a bipartisan war on public health, which began not with Trump's return to power but with the Biden administration's systematic dismantling of COVID-19

protections. Biden's September 2022 declaration that "the pandemic is over" set the stage for today's wholesale dismantling of all public health measures under the diktats of the anti-vaccine quack Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Since taking control of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Kennedy has unleashed an unprecedented assault on federal health agencies. HHS employment has been slashed from 82,000 to 62,000 workers through mass firings, buyouts and early retirements. The agency's 28 divisions are being consolidated to just 15, with numerous offices entirely shuttered.

Under the proposed fiscal year 2026 budget, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) faces a staggering \$18 billion cut—a 40 percent reduction that would devastate medical research. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would lose \$3.6 billion, more than half its budget, with critical programs for chronic disease prevention, HIV surveillance and global health monitoring eliminated entirely.

These coincide with a calculated undermining of the scientific method itself. Kennedy has fired vaccine experts, rescinded evidence-based flu shot recommendations, and on Friday announced plans to fire all 16 members of the US Preventive Services Task Force, which determines what cancer screenings and preventive health services insurers must cover. The administration has canceled more than \$11 billion in funding to state and local health departments, severing the connections between federal agencies and frontline public health workers.

The timing of this assault on public health is particularly sinister. As new COVID-19 variants drive hospitalizations higher and Long COVID cases mount, the administration is systematically destroying the capacity to monitor, respond to and mitigate all disease outbreaks.

Furthermore, these deepening attacks on public health

take place as scientific evidence provides deeper insight into one of the pandemic's most devastating long-term consequences: widespread neurological damage that will burden the working class for generations. Two landmark studies published in *Nature Communications* and *Science Advances* provide forensic evidence of COVID-19's assault on brain health, exposing the criminal negligence of all those who falsely declared the pandemic "over."

The *Nature Communications* study found that simply living through the pandemic—even without infection—accelerated brain aging equivalent to 5.5 extra months, with the greatest impacts on older adults, men and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. For those confirmed to have been infected with COVID-19, this brain aging was linked to measurable cognitive decline.

More alarming still, the *Science Advances* research demonstrated that SARS-CoV-2 can directly trigger the formation of amyloid- β plaques—the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease. Using lab-grown human retinal models and postmortem tissue from COVID-19 patients, researchers found viral proteins embedded within these plaques, suggesting COVID-19 may initiate or accelerate neurodegeneration through direct biological mechanisms.

Neuroscientist Leslie M. Kay's prophetic 2022 warning of "a looming wave of dementia" now appears grimly prescient. The persistent loss of smell and taste affecting millions of COVID-19 survivors may signal early stages of neurodegenerative diseases, as the virus inflames the olfactory bulb, an area crucial for memory and emotion. Critically, this damage occurs even in mild cases, meaning the neurological toll extends far beyond those who were hospitalized.

These policies amount to what Friedrich Engels termed "social murder"—the systematic creation of conditions that shorten working class lives. The \$156 billion in Social Security savings from COVID-19 excess deaths is not incidental but rather is built into the strategy. By gutting the public health system, the Trump administration is engineering a rise in death rates to reduce liabilities to Medicare and Social Security, freeing up funds for militarism and tax cuts for the rich.

The recent gruesome and preventable workplace deaths of Ronald Adams Sr. and Brayan Neftali Otoniel Canu Joj underscore this reality. They are among the over 140,000 workers who die each year from hazardous working conditions in America's industrial slaughterhouse, including over 5,000 from traumatic injuries.

Adams, a 63-year-old machine repairman at Stellantis' Dundee Engine Plant, was crushed to death in April when an overhead gantry suddenly activated while he was performing maintenance. Brayan, a 19-year-old immigrant worker from Guatemala, was killed while cleaning an industrial meat grinder at the Tina's Burritos plant in Vernon, California.

The wholesale attack on science, public health and workplace safety serves multiple functions for the ruling elite. It eliminates inconvenient evidence of ongoing health crises, dismantles the limited institutions ostensibly overseeing workplace safety like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and normalizes mass death as an acceptable cost of maintaining profits. The firing of public health experts and the defunding of disease surveillance ensure that future outbreaks will be met with ignorance rather than science-based responses.

Workers must recognize that these interconnected policies represent class warfare from above. The pandemic exposed capitalism's fundamental inability to protect human life when it conflicts with profit-making. Now, as the virus continues to evolve and spread, the ruling class is deliberately blinding the population to the consequences rather than implementing the public health measures necessary to end the pandemic.

The working class must organize to reclaim public health and healthcare as fundamental social rights, grounded in science, international cooperation and the principle that no death is acceptable when the tools exist to prevent it. Only through the socialist transformation of society will human lives be prioritized over private profit and the pandemic ended once and for all.



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