

# Dr. Delgado COVID-19 Update 10-28-20

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## Mitigation

Without any current vaccine or significant therapeutic options, ceding continued mitigation efforts is ceding the most impactful recourse for control of the ongoing pandemic.

The fundamentals of science historically point to mitigation measures as not only the universal first line of defense against a pandemic, but clearly its most effective strategy long term if implemented accordingly.

Relinquishing a national, coherent and systematic approach to mitigation has been, without a doubt, our most critical failing and explains our current plight.

Covid-19 cases in many parts of the country have been surging once again, leaving hospitals struggling to cope. Over the past week, the country has averaged nearly 70,000 new cases a day, back to the dangerous levels last seen in late July. While more testing is occurring, the percentage of positive cases continues to rise with no sign of abatement in sight.

Each spike we start from a higher baseline of cases and we continue to climb from there. The U.S. is facing a

dangerous third spike in cases that is threatening to be worse than either of the first two waves that hit in the spring and summer. And while previous spikes have been regional, this current rise is more national in its scope and is occurring as we enter winter which allows the virus to become more efficient in its ability to spread. This portends for both higher and more sustainable accelerations of spread.

It is now apparent that “pandemic fatigue” not only describes our nation’s current lack of resolve for continued mitigation, but also to its indifference at the tragic escalation in hospitalizations and deaths (which have increased nationally by 12% over the last two weeks).

Add the mental, emotional and physical fatigue of our medical community, the continued short fall in resources for our providers, the lack of any rational testing and tracing strategy, the prolonged diversion of medical care from other elective, preventative or acute non-Covid medical needs, the long term economic ramifications for our country and lastly, the catastrophic toll for those who have lost loved ones to this modern plague and all that entails.

I remain incredulous that a vast swath of our country still refuses to accept the scope of the problem or that containment strategies are needed. This has posed an

almost insurmountable hurdle to slowing the spread.

“How can you persuade someone to do something if they don’t actually believe that there’s a problem?”

In a new study published last week in the journal Nature Medicine, University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation researchers predicted that if the more than 85% of people in the U.S. wear masks, it could be "sufficient to ameliorate the worst effects of epidemic resurgences in many states." They project that would likely diminish the number of deaths by over 95,000 by the end of February. As of Sept. 21, only 49% of people in the U.S. reported wearing masks, according to the paper.

Other countries have been successful at instituting and conveying early, clear and cogent measures that have proven to drastically curb transmission of Covid-19. The scientific data to this fact, irrespective of personal or political agendas, is clear and reproducible.

A virus cannot spread without available and most importantly susceptible hosts to acquire the virus and continue the chain of transmission. As I stated in my last missive, if every individual did everything today to reduce their exposure to this virus and reduce the chance that they may expose others to this virus, and if every individual did that through physical distance, through wearing masks, through ensuring they avoid crowded spaces and proper hand hygiene, then we would have significant and progressive success.

Any lockdown should not be necessary if the modality for transmission and its mitigation is uniformly addressed. It's that simplistic and clearly within our grasp. The risk and likely outcome is the further crippling of our health care system and an untold amount of suffering irrespective of your individual Covid status.

R. Delgado, MD & Staff