



Norbert Goldfield, MD  
*Founder, CEO*

**Ask Nurses & Doctors LLC**

72 Laurel Park  
Northampton MA 01060  
413-800-2680  
norbert@asknursesdoctors.com  
www.asknursesdoctors.com  
@asknursesdoctors.com

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### **My Patient is speaking! and “Unknown, Unknowns”**

Amazingly my extubated patient continues to improve. I spoke to him yesterday for the first time by phone! He will likely be discharged to a rehabilitation hospital in the very near future. While he is starting to speak, there are mental health challenges; long road ahead. Another characteristic of Covid, is the fact that he crashed in the second week of his illness at home.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/second-week-crash-is-time-of-peril-for-some-covid-19-patients/2020/04/29/3940fee2-8970-11ea-8ac1-bfb250876b7a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/second-week-crash-is-time-of-peril-for-some-covid-19-patients/2020/04/29/3940fee2-8970-11ea-8ac1-bfb250876b7a_story.html)

After 2 Covid deaths, my other surviving Covid patients are well. Am able to order tests. Our office parking lot is now a drive-thru testing operation but only for people with symptoms. There is not enough testing material to for example test an adult living in a group home exposed to someone who is hospitalized with Covid! And... no contact tracing yet. Long way to go!

We all know, as I've written, what we should be doing re this pandemic and the executive branch is not only not following through, it is consciously contributing to increased deaths. The WP had a good editorial on next steps restating my prior points.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-path-to-reopening-is-clear-our-national-strategy-is-not/2020/05/01/1ebad4f2-8bd3-11ea-ac8a-fe9b8088e101\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-path-to-reopening-is-clear-our-national-strategy-is-not/2020/05/01/1ebad4f2-8bd3-11ea-ac8a-fe9b8088e101_story.html).

Traditional (not revisionist) history will be unkind to this executive branch. The executive branch including in-house physicians never dealt systematically (see below) with this pandemic. The executive branch was, is and will be only interested in re-election/power not the pandemic.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/34-days-of-pandemic-inside-trumps-desperate-attempts-to-reopen-america/2020/05/02/e99911f4-8b54-11ea-9dfd-990f9dcc71fc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/34-days-of-pandemic-inside-trumps-desperate-attempts-to-reopen-america/2020/05/02/e99911f4-8b54-11ea-9dfd-990f9dcc71fc_story.html)

In this Covid note I would like to step back and summarize a very good article I read in the Times Literary Supplement (email me for a copy) entitled Models and Muddles. Put aside the fact that this administration will never ever examine issues from a scientific perspective. Let's look to the future. The author, Paul Collier starts out by specifying the concept of radical uncertainty which orients our thought to two fundamental questions: “how to face identifying known unknowns” and “how to face unknown unknowns”. Collier continues: The answers to the former are to build resilience while encouraging rival teams of experts. The answers to the latter are to learn from others while investing in finding out new information. Resilience is all about assigning responsibilities to the multiplicity of entities best equipped to understand how to build the capacity to withstand shocks. For example, after the mass terrorism atrocities in Paris years ago, the French authorities realized that the city's emergency health facilities could easily

be overwhelmed. Build more facilities? Perhaps but they also framed the question more broadly, which led them to ask the state rail company (SNCF) to prepare to evacuate victims to provincial hospitals. The SNCF put together a team that planned and practiced. That experience is now being used to transport critically ill patients to the spare capacity still available in Brittany. Facing many unknowns, the primary use of models should be to highlight those among the known unknowns that critically affect policy choices. These then become the ones most urgent to resolve whether by learning from others or collecting data. The value of using rival teams is that this method flushes out these known unknowns while discouraging exaggerated claims to knowledge. A NYT article summarizes many of the current Covid “known unknowns”. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/03/world/asia/coronavirus-spread-where-why.html?searchResultPosition=2>

So where does that leave us. A friend sent me this: **From a lead editorial of the Irish Times from Dublin: The world has loved, hated and envied the US. Now, for the first time, we pity it.** <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/fintan-o-toole-donald-trump-has-destroyed-the-country-he-promised-to-make-great-again-> . Yes, pity is the right word. In response, many if not all of us will do our part to try and elect new leadership in November. As you know, I am focused on swing states and tight Congressional races. Last week, I worked on 3 races in Michigan and several in NY; I organized statewide in Florida, and Pennsylvania. Looking forward to working with many of you in whichever way feels positive to you. As we work and think about the future, you might keep art in mind; see how many artists you can identify in this brief video. <https://files.mail-list.com/a/aedpdiscussionlist/VIDEO-2020-04-18-10-57-13-1.mp4>.

Norbert

Norbert Goldfield, M.D.