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This Weeks Patient Highlights COVID Challenges; Millions More Uninsured in 2020

On Yom Kippur, just after I reflected on the life and death of my parents – via Zoom – one of my patients called on my cell. I took the call as I know him and realized something significant must be up. He told me that he and his whole family all tested positive for COVID-19. His wife was exposed to a positive person. I know that the local health department is doing tests. But I have no way of confirming that as there is no communication between the health department and the “traditional” health system (where I work). There is no contact tracing. And therein lies our challenge. Once this pandemic is under control another one will appear. [With others I wrote 6 months ago](#) about the once in a century opportunity (and the challenge) to link the public health and traditional doctor-patient health care system. Others are coming out with other [well thought through proposals](#). I and [others state](#) that while drug prices get lots of attention, controlling hospital and outpatient care prices remain key.

When I speak to my patients about the flu vaccine, they start by saying – I do not want the COVID vaccine – period. I reassure them that I [and many others](#) will be evaluating vaccine safety. This pandemic, always very personal and up close, is about to become even more so. It is clear that the executive branch has already [told the FDA to change vaccine guidance](#).

Despite all the chaos in school openings, some did very well. There is [no secret to their success](#). Yet, there is not only no national COVID policy, but, in fact, different executive branch health professionals are [fighting with each other](#) all aided and abetted by others in the executive branch. We’ve passed the grim, avoidable number of 200,000 deaths. Accompanying this unfathomable tragedy are [ongoing PPE shortages](#), ongoing challenges with the release of testing supplies to states, and [many thousands](#) at campaign rallies without PPE. In contrast, Biden has been very clear on what [his COVID policy would be](#).

Wonder about Herd Immunity? An [excellent summary of the facts](#). [This article](#) summarizes why we still don’t have an accurate COVID mortality rate. And then the CDC posted and then retracted about airborne spread of the virus; [this article summarizes that issue](#).

Congressional or executive branch Republicans will not cover pre-existing conditions or lower drug costs. Or as the [Post asserted](#): “Coronavirus could be considered a preexisting condition if Obamacare is struck down”. The [number of uninsured increased](#) by 1 million in 2019. [Many estimates](#) point to 15 million more losing their health insurance in 2020. [More to the point](#), “reducing protections for patients with greater health needs isn’t a bug in the GOP plans; it’s a key feature”. Or as [Dylan Scott starkly summarized](#): 20 million more will lose their insurance under Trump, 25 million gain under Biden.

So, in my last month of electoral work, AND is focused on several Congressional races; helping Biden win in FL, MI, PA via, e.g., 45 second videos (fun and take no more than 10 mins). Would love your ideas and engagement. Feel free to write me on how we can work together. But most important please vote!

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