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**October 11, 2021:**

## **Death Rates Decline; Facebook; Vaccine Marvels, Hesitancy and Mandates**

The Facebook whistleblower testified to Congress on the same day that I received my COVID booster and three patients declined the vaccine. "When we realized tobacco companies were hiding the harms it caused, the government took action ... When we figured out cars were safer with seat belts, the government took action. And today, the government is taking action against companies that hid evidence on opioids. I implore you to do the same here." — Frances Haugen, about Facebook's knowledge of the [mental health harms](#) Instagram poses to youth. [Research](#) has also demonstrated how one can use social media to engage and convince people to get the vaccine.

The COVID vaccines are truly a marvel of [modern science](#). The [consequences](#) of not getting the vaccine are unfathomable. Despite [data challenges](#), achieving a 75% vaccination rate would have averted in Florida 600,000 cases, 60,000 hospitalizations and 16,000 deaths. This [graphic](#) demonstrates COVID's impact on rich countries. Vaccination continues to be key and mandates [work](#) but [take effort](#). To reemphasize people who are fully vaccinated do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms.

Florida also has not expanded the ACA resulting in high rates of uninsured. [During the pandemic](#), states with higher rates of uninsured populations saw [worse outcomes](#) and uninsured Americans [are half as likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine](#) even though it's free. In 2020, [30 million Americans](#) were without health insurance entirely, and Black, Latino or Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaska Native people are more likely to be uninsured. Living without health insurance was a [cause of a great deal of stress](#) for many Americans even before the pandemic. [137 million adults](#) experienced difficulty paying medical bills. The Congressional reconciliation bill could address many of these issues; [lobbyists knives are out](#) against insurance expansion and Federal price negotiations with Pharma (thus allowing for Medicare benefits such as Dental). It is hard for AND and [others](#) to grapple with the idea that Facebook is the same as tobacco but I

confront that reality every day. While most of my patients have willingly accepted the vaccine not all have; mandates work but these [only apply](#) to specific employer situations. In contrast, in my birthplace Italy while to be sure there is [opposition](#), one needs a “Green Pass” to do virtually anything. Why is Italy so different? We have a major political party in the U.S. (as opposed to fringe parties in Europe) that is [essentially opposed](#) to the COVID vaccine and [embraces conspiracy theories](#) – thus explaining Republican voter refusal (political party is a [greater predictor](#) than race!) to be vaccinated. Public health requires public trust.

All ideas are welcome but for now AND’s tactic is to fight for the health care portions of the pending reconciliation bill, against vaccine hesitancy, and [in favor of universal vaccine](#). On the latter, a demonstration is being planned for October 28th in Washington DC. Please contact me for more information and/or know of interested people in Washington.