



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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### I was tested; 2-year anniversary; socio-economic disparities

I was tested today for COVID - not because I am sick. I had to be tested to go to Israel/Palestinian Territories this coming Wednesday as part as part of [other work](#) of mine. I am still wearing masks and will continue to do so on the plane and throughout the time that I will be in Israel/Palestinian Territories. In terms of Covid patients, I primarily deal with long Covid – very few new COVID patients. I had a patient last week who is likely to be permanently on oxygen; when she was hospitalized with Covid she was unvaccinated. She is now.

We are coming up to the two year anniversary of COVID. A number of newspapers have had good series of articles. The bottom lines from these articles

- a. [From a NYT article](#): What if China had been open and honest in December 2019? What if the world had reacted as quickly and aggressively in January 2020 as Taiwan did? What if the United States had put appropriate protective measures in place in February 2020, as South Korea did? Taiwan has suffered 853 deaths. If the United States had suffered a similar death rate, we would have lost about 12,000 people, instead of nearly a million. Sadly, every other industrialized country has done better than the U.S.
- b. Covid socioeconomic disparities are worldwide; [this New Yorker story](#) recounts Covid's impact on Guayaquil, Ecuador over the past two years. Today, [Hong Kong](#) is suffering from a catastrophic surge with the poor suffering the most.
- c. We can fault Donald Trump, but we also need to work together to [build up trust in public health](#). We are already seeing [an increase](#) in Covid in Europe. Without strengthened public health we will face renewed Covid dangers and exacerbate other public health crises including overdoses and [sexually transmitted diseases](#). We will have challenges strengthening our public health system as public response to Covid is dependent on [where Americans get their news](#). In the unlikely possibility of a significant national public health reform, state action is key. I and many others are developing state level responses.
- d. We have made amazing progress developing therapies with many new meds and enhancing prevention against Covid using vaccines (here is yet [another article](#) documenting the safety of vaccines). Not surprisingly we still have a lot to learn. I continue to [wonder](#) (this article focuses on genetic research) why some of my patients never got Covid. Long Covid continues to bedevil us especially when it [impacts the nervous system](#). While many have appropriately emphasized

mental health challenges that Covid has brought on, [this article](#) emphasizes human resilience in the face of the Covid tragedy.

e. As [this Guardian article](#) emphasizes, there will be more surges. And there will be other pandemics. Our system has proved to be unprepared to deal with them. Investing in public health in every dimension is the only way forward.

While the Affordable Care Act has had a dramatic impact for my patients (I have one patient who recently told me that he was able to stop his opiate addiction because of insurance), there are holes. [According to a recent survey](#): 23 million people (nearly 1 in 10 adults) owe significant medical debt. People in the United States owe at least \$195 billion in medical debt; 16 million people (6% of adults) in the U.S. owe over \$1,000 in medical debt.

While the American Rescue Plan drove child poverty to the lowest rate on record, that rate has started to go up again. It is [unclear, at best](#), whether the tax credit and a whole host of policies that help parents with child and elder care programs will pass Congress. Same applies for control of pharmaceutical prices, Medicaid expansion or other health reform initiatives. Bottom line, these issues will be AND's focus for the 2022 election.

On a more positive note, we continue to have good information on common sense diet and exercise practices. A [recent large study](#) examined how the more physically fit one is, the less likely one develops Alzheimer. I went for a bike ride today!!

Norbert Goldfield, M.D.