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## **Political party matters, Mother/son with mild COVID, June 29<sup>th</sup> AND Training Session**

I called a male patient in his 30s last week for a phone visit (symptoms were cough and sore throat) and asked the woman who answered if I could speak to him. “He is severely autistic, can’t speak, I am his mother and both of us are COVID positive”, she said. Their cases were mild. My oldest friend (from 5<sup>th</sup> grade!) came down with COVID over the weekend. He got it at the Special Olympics in Florida where he was officiating. Governor De Santis threatened Special Olympics officials with a multimillion dollar lawsuit if they required vaccines and/or masks.

I’ve written before about differences between Republican and Democratic voters on willingness to be vaccinated against COVID. Last week the British Medical Journal published [an article](#) with an accompanying editorial which concluded: The mortality gap between Republican voting counties and Democratic voting counties has grown over time, especially for white populations, and that gap began to widen after 2008. The study findings are worth quoting in detail:

Male and female residents of Democratic counties experienced both lower mortality rates and twice the relative decrease in mortality rates than did those in Republican counties. Black Americans experienced largely similar improvement in age adjusted mortality rates in both Democratic and Republican counties. However, the mortality difference between white residents in Democratic versus Republican counties increased fourfold. Rural Republican counties experienced the highest mortality rates and the least improvement. The greatest contributors to the rising mortality gap between Republican and Democratic counties were heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory tract diseases, unintentional injuries, and suicide

Yet there are many nuances and tragedies everywhere. According to the [Boston Globe](#): The Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s twice-yearly opioid report showed that opioid-related deaths surged by 9 percent in 2021, to an all-time high of 2,290 lives lost in one year. That is lower than the 15 percent increase seen nationally.

COVID-19 caused 62% of duty-related deaths of US police officers in the first year of the pandemic—a rate that rose to 77% to 82% among minority officers—according to a new [study](#) published in *Policing: An International Journal*.

