

The Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

September 2023-2 **ISSUE #100**



From the Editor: When Metro New York joined Milan and Madrid as the global epicenters of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, Ed Eichhorn suggested that we publish a two-page curated newsletter to help keep our overwhelmed colleagues updated on health policy developments. The pandemic is behind us, but Covid lingers on. This 100th issue focuses on the current state of Covid. Click on the headline to read the full article. If you enjoy **TMR**, please subscribe [here](#).



[Americans can now get an updated Covid-19 vaccine](#), by Mike Stobbe and Lauran Neergaard, AP, 9/13/23

TMR Topline – After the CDC’s panel of outside experts voted 13-1 to recommend the updated Covid-19 shots, the [FDA approved the updated shots](#) from Pfizer and Moderna for adults and children as young as 6 months. Novavax’s updated vaccine is still under review. The new vaccine will be available at pharmacies, health centers and some doctor offices. The updated shots target the XBB.1.5 omicron variant. Recent lab testing from vaccine makers and research groups suggest the updated shots will offer crossover protection. The CDC says there is no difference in effectiveness or side effects if people get the Covid-19 and flu vaccines simultaneously, but one in each arm might be more comfortable.



[Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Injects Presidential Politics Into the Covid Vaccine Debate](#), by Phil Galewitz and

Daniel Chang, KFF Health News, 9/18/23
TMR Topline –Last week, DeSantis convened a virtual roundtable featuring a panel of Covid vaccine skeptics. The panel - which included no vaccine or infectious disease experts - advised those younger than 65 [not to get vaccinated](#), suggesting without evidence that the shots could be harmful. The state’s surgeon general, Joseph Ladapo, said, “My judgment is that it’s not a good decision for young people and for people who are not at high risk at this point in the pandemic.” Ladapo has been [rebuked by federal health officials](#) for promoting misinformation about Covid and vaccines generally. DeSantis and Ladapo said they were troubled by the lack of human trials before the latest Covid vaccines were authorized. Annual flu vaccines also do not undergo clinical testing on humans, and the primary Covid vaccines went through clinical trials that proved their safety and effectiveness.

TMR’s Take: Ignore the misinformation and get both the flu shot and the Covid booster – if you have any doubts, consult your physician. Those over 65 also should consider the RSV vaccine. Florida’s performance during the pandemic was nothing to brag about. For the period ended 6/30/2022, its fatality rate ranked alongside those of seven former Soviet satellite states, last in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.



[Explainer: Do I need to worry about Covid again?](#)

by Deena Beasley and Julie Steenhuisen, Reuters, 9/7/23

TMR Topline – The highly mutated BA.2.86 Omicron subvariant, nicknamed “Pirola,” is being tracked by both the WHO and the CDC. Data from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech suggests that it is not as alarming as some experts had feared when it was first detected. BA.2.86 carries over 35 mutations in key portions of the virus compared to XBB.1.5, the dominant variant through most of 2023. Experiments testing versions of the virus in two independent laboratories at Boston’s Beth Israel Deaconess and at Columbia University tested lab-made versions of the virus in people who were vaccinated or

previously infected and found that antibodies against the variant were comparable to or slightly higher than those against current circulating variants. Teams in Sweden and China had similar findings.



[When hospitalizations for 'tripledeemic' viruses may peak](#), by Erica Carbajal, Becker's Hospital Review, 9/7/23

TMR Topline – New forecasting from Airfinity suggests US hospitalizations from Covid-19, flu and respiratory syncytial virus will peak at the end of January with 57,000 weekly admissions compared with 80,000 last year. The combined burden on hospitals is still predicted to be worse than pre-pandemic. Vaccines will be available for each of the illnesses this year, which experts are [hopeful](#) will limit severe disease and burden on hospitals.

TMR's Take: Australia had an early flu season again this year, so schedule your flu shots by the end of October.



[How Covid Affects the Heart](#), by Dana G. Smith, New York Times, 9/7/23

TMR Topline – The first two years of the pandemic had roughly 90,000 more US

deaths attributed to cardiovascular disease than projected. While most occurred in those over age 65, a recent study also found a dramatic increase in deaths of younger adults ages 25-44. Lead researcher Dr. Susan Cheng, chair of cardiovascular health at Cedars-Sinai, said *"There's a very unique connection between this virus and the cardiovascular system,"* including an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes up to a year after an infection. The study tracking medical records of 691,455 US patients a significantly higher risk of developing virtually all heart-related diseases in the year after a Covid infection, including 1.5 times more likely to have a stroke, nearly twice as likely to have a heart attack. Vaccinated people were 40% to 60% less likely to have a heart attack or stroke following a Covid infection than those who were unvaccinated, perhaps because they were less likely to contract a severe Covid infection.



[Unraveling long Covid: Here's what scientists who study the illness want to find out](#), by Will Stone, NPR, 9/9/23

TMR Topline – Clinicians who treat long Covid are acutely aware that there's still no validated treatment or diagnostic test specifically [for the condition](#). Researchers making progress in the field presented their recent findings in Santa Fe, sharing emerging evidence about the possible root cause of long Covid and implications for treatment. There's now [strong evidence](#) that protein and genetic material from SARS-CoV-2 persist in the blood and tissue of some long Covid patients well after their initial illness. Other leads have come from imaging technology that traces the activity of T cells. Those involved in research stress that they don't expect just one answer to long Covid. While males tend to do worse during an acute bout of Covid-19, studies show that long Covid appears to be [more prevalent](#) among females. Doctors and patients are trying all kinds of therapies — from antivirals to drugs approved for [treating addiction](#) to develop a roadmap for treating long Covid.

TMR's Take: Not only were the mRNA vaccines safe and effective, recent research indicates that they may have helped to prevent many post-Covid complications. 2020's Operation Warp Speed produced the medical miracle of the 21st century, saving millions of lives worldwide!



From the Publisher: [Two years ago](#), the number of Americans dying from Covid exceeded the death toll of the 1918-19 "Spanish flu" pandemic. John Dalton and I then co-authored *"Lessons from the Pandemic"* to unanimous five-star reviews. Some of

those lessons have been learned while others remain works-in-progress. *"Lessons from the Pandemic"* is available in both soft-cover and eBook versions and provides a comprehensive view of the first 18 months of the pandemic. Click [here](#) to buy it at a discounted price with coupon Printbook or ebook at checkout.

