

A Pause, for Now

When your blogger started this compendium in March 2020, he had no clue that the pandemic would still be going on twenty-seven months later. He had no idea that there would be over one hundred (actually 125) topics to cover. COVID has not ended quickly, and many of the impacts are decidedly long-term in nature.

Several items show the state of things in June 2022.

- YB's University is still requiring "Campus Daily Screeners" for entering and staying on campus. On-campus events are sparsely attended. At a recent retirement event, twenty percent of those who had promised to be there begged off because of COVID exposure.
- Even though the economy has come "roaring back", with low aggregate unemployment, and accompanying inflation, the roar has been selective. The restaurant, hospitality, and entertainment sectors have not roared back.
- Cities that depend on wage or income taxes from commuters from the suburbs are taking major hits in their revenue wallets. Analysts are creating new economic models to figure out the size (large) and the permanence (unknown) of the losses.

The long-term impacts are massive:

- Over one million deaths in the United States – This number would have been unthinkable in 2020. The economic losses have been in the trillions of dollars.
- Long COVID – No one knows how long the COVID vaccines will work, or whether the next variant will be only minor, or the worst one yet. No one knows what the long-term effects of COVID will be.
- Education – Almost every child from pre-K to Graduate School will have had his or her education impacted negatively by COVID. They will be at an economic disadvantage compared to those cohorts younger and older than themselves.
- Public health awareness – While vaccine skeptics were once relegated to the lunatic fringe, the questioning of public health interventions has been scary. One wonders whether campaigns to remove seatbelts from cars, or to increase cigarette smoking will be next.

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The amount of knowledge about COVID has been growing exponentially, and yet anything published today is almost instantly obsolete. Academic articles about COVID that appear now make little reference to the *delta* or *omicron* variants. A comprehensive study about short-, medium-, and long-term impacts is probably a decade down the road.

Your blogger has a major writing assignment ahead, a ninth edition of *The Economics of Health and Health Care*, with Shooshan Danagoulian and Miron Stano. It has been six years since the last one, and today's health economy has changed drastically from that of 2016. YB is working on the "pandemic economics" chapter, and sometime soon (for his sanity) he will have to stop reading new material, so he can write.

As a result, there will be fewer COVID blog posts, unless something really big (or really bad) comes to pass. This is a pause ... for now. Thank you for reading.

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