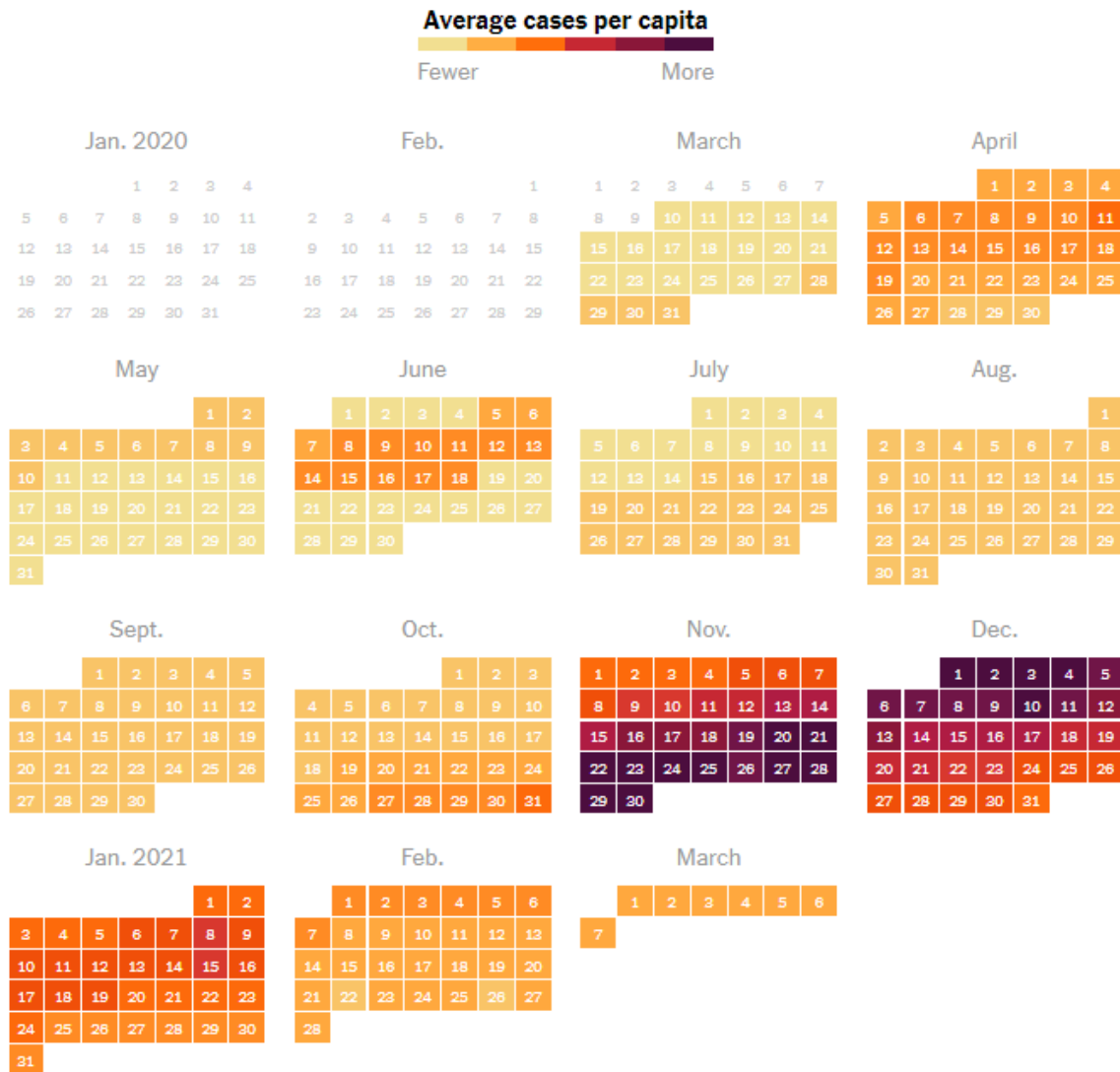


Time to Remain Patient

As approach the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19, it is insightful to look at where we have been. Your blogger lives in Oakland County, Michigan, about 15 miles north of downtown Detroit. Detroit was one of the first metropolitan areas to be decimated by COVID-19 in March and April 2020. Michigan started serious lockdown procedures early in the pandemic, and compliance in Oakland County has been good. Cases seemed to wane in May, a good part of June, and early July before starting an inexorable rise that led to the highest rates in November and December 2020. Back last spring, CDC experts worried about a “second wave”. Looking carefully at Oakland County, in the figure below, we saw a “first wave” in April, a “second wave” in June, and a “third wave” in November and December.



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/oakland-michigan-covid-cases.html>

By CDC standards, as of today, despite lockdowns, compliance, and about two months of vaccine, Oakland County remains at a “very high risk level”.

March 8, 2021

There is considerable agitation from the business community, education providers and users, and all parts of the entertainment sector, to re-open. Parts of Florida are now 100 percent open. Is this the right time to do so?

The data indicate otherwise. Well over 1,000 persons per day are still dying in the United States from COVID-19, a figure that would have been frightening until it became normal not very many months ago. The virus is still infecting and killing a large number of people. It spreads rapidly when people are together. This is a classic economic externality. One smoker in a stadium does not impact others – a thousand smokers certainly do.

We do not run cars in indoor garages, or use charcoal heaters indoors simply because we cannot see carbon monoxide (which is odorless, colorless, and very toxic). Our case numbers in Michigan are higher than they were in July, August, and September, before the start of the third wave. No one here wants to see a fourth wave.

Americans hate to be patient. It is time to remain patient.

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