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The Benefits of Vaccine Passports Far Outweigh the Costs

On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four Boeing jetliners and the resulting crashes left approximately 3,000 Americans dead. Shortly thereafter, the United States implemented a set of screening procedures which are still in effect. These procedures have cost billions of dollars in the hiring of Transportation Security Administration (TSA) guards, metal scanning devices, other computer software that we don't really know about, and millions of hours of additional consumer time in traveling through airports.

Have the benefits been worth the very high costs? Maybe. We have not seen another carnage like 9/11. The screening has prevented it. It has also made travel times longer, travel expenses costlier, and travel itself much, much, less enjoyable.

In a thoughtful March 22 *New York Times* article, Drs. Saskia Popescu and Alexandra Phelan argue that "[Vaccine Passports Won't Get Us Out of the Pandemic](#)." They argue that until coronavirus vaccines are distributed equitably and nations agree to immunization standards, vaccination passes will not end the spread of Covid-19. This is a very high bar. Sensible people cannot now go to restaurants, concerts, ball games, or weddings without the fear that someone at the next table, in the next seat, or dancing the hora with them is infectious. Shopping malls and cinemas, on life support before, are dying now.

Your blogger has mapped this out before. Put a bar code on the card, and install bar code readers at entrances to restaurants, campuses, hotels, airports, and stadiums. They have done this for years at Comerica Park, where the Detroit Tigers play. Swipe the card, and get in.

Is it costly? Most establishments have scanners that could be programmed to accept bar codes. In fact, most cell phones will accommodate such scanners. Will the poor be disadvantaged? No more so than being required to vaccinate children for school, or carry driver's licenses.

Personal liberties? If you believe that your rights are being trampled, stay out. It is hard to imagine how anyone who will accept being patted down at TSA checkpoints can object to carrying a vaccine passport.

If such vaccine cards are the first step to universal medical service cards, then so much the better. Close to 550,000 US residents have died from COVID-19. Compare that number, please, to the 3,000 that died on 9/11. We accept the inconvenience of airline screening. Vaccination passports will provide far greater benefits, at far lower costs.

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