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Subject: Sep 16 2024 Joy Bunton's Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee Written Comment
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According to the CDC, Cook County's Covid wastewater trajectories at ALL 8 Treatment Plants went up. 7 out of 8 sites have virus levels over 50% compared to the highest ever tested since February 2022, 3 sites are over 60%. Illinois wastewater level is VERY HIGH. Walgreens shows Illinois' Covid positivity rate is 28.2%. When is the last time the Cook County Department of Public Health advised people to wear masks indoors? Vaccine information isn't enough.

The [CCDPH website](#) refers people to follow CDC's most recent, relaxed guidance, which doesn't follow science. The [People's CDC Covid Isolation Expert Sign On Letter](#) by medical, public health and scientific professionals agree that:

1. "The infectious period for COVID routinely extends beyond the recommended isolation period;
2. COVID continues to be a serious threat to health, through both acute infections and Long COVID;
3. Vaccination and antivirals for COVID are underutilized and do not provide complete protection from serious disease.
4. COVID spreads year-round, unlike influenza and RSV;
5. COVID is a systemic disease with harmful impacts (acute infections and Long COVID) that are greater than influenza and RSV; and
6. The isolation update was developed and implemented without appropriate public engagement and without input from a broad range of experts."

The consensus is that the guidance should return to “**a minimum isolation period of 7 to 10 days.**”

Masking for 5 days is also not based on science for the same reasons as 1-day isolation are insufficient. Even though Covid tests are no longer free, it is reckless and irresponsible not to at least recommend people get 2 consecutive negative tests within 48 hours before returning to school or work. At the very least, people shouldn't be advised to only mask for 5 days without testing negative. Getting the majority of funding from federal grants is no excuse for blindly repeating harmful advice.

CCDPH should be updating the general public of studies like the one which was publicized February 2024, which found that “[Even fully recovered survivors of mild COVID can lose IQ points.](#)” In a March 2024 article titled, “[COVID Linked to Lower IQ, Poor Memory and Other Negative Impacts on Brain Health](#),” clinical epidemiologist Ziyad Al-Aly said, “COVID-19 poses a serious risk to brain health, even in mild cases, and the effects are now being revealed at the population level.” A study publicized on August 6, 2024 indicated that “[long-term cognitive and psychiatric issues persist in COVID-19 patients two to three years post-infection.](#)”

Sticking our heads in the sand has been negatively impacting our economy. On August 19, 2024, a new study revealed that [Long Covid is taking a giant toll on our U.S. workforce](#). Among other statistics, it said that “as many as 2 million people may be out of work,” and that the average age of those affected is roughly 40. We need our City and County Departments of Public Health to consider the risks of all of us when people aren't fully informed of the risks taken by optional masking, not filtering and circulating air, etc.

Footnotes:

1 Aug 26-Sep 9 2024 Cook County Covid Wastewater Trajectories

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XPv9mO_TPybiknK6r7dH22zQRQBc-Je4/view?usp=drivesdk

2 Aug 26-Sep 9 2024 Cook County Covid Wastewater Treatment Plant Virus Levels

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WrDY4I0R1LiNv0ffP7ms05tvR_AmHk1P/view?usp=drivesdk

3 CDC Wastewater COVID-19 State and Territory Trends <https://www.cdc.gov/nwss/rv/COVID19-statetrend.html>

4 Walgreens Respiratory Index <https://www.walgreens.com/healthcare-solutions/covid-19-index>

5 April 10, 2024 "COVID Isolation Expert Sign On Letter,"

<https://peoplescdc.org/2024/04/10/covid-isolation-expert-sign-on-letter/>

6 Feb 2024 Even fully recovered survivors of mild COVID can lose IQ points, study suggests

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/even-fully-recovered-survivors-mild-covid-can-lose-iq-points-study-suggests>

7 Mar 24 2024 COVID Linked to Lower IQ, Poor Memory and Other Negative Impacts on Brain Health <https://people.com/covid-linked-lower-iq-poor-memory-other-negative-impacts-brain-health-8619254>

8 Aug 6 2024 Study finds long-term cognitive and psychiatric issues persist in COVID-19 patients two to three years post-infection <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20240806/Study-finds-long-term-cognitive-and-psychiatric-issues-persist-in-COVID-19-patients-two-to-three-years-post-infection.aspx>

9 Long COVID Is Taking Big Toll on U.S. Workforce <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-08-19/long-covid-is-taking-big-toll-on-u-s-workforce>

Sincerely,

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Chicago, Cook County Resident

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)