**FAMILY PRACTICE OF MIDDLETOWN**

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**9/11 Commission style investigation needed for US handling of Covid**

Other than the scientists who created the vaccines, the companies who manufactured them, the selfless front line care givers, and those citizens who volunteered to help others register for a vaccine or get needed food, the United States, as a nation, should be ashamed of our response to the Covid pandemic.

US has inexplicably high case numbers and death rate.

US public is very confused due to conflicting information sources.

These statistics point out there were limitations to our government’s response and our need to review the status of our country's Public Health System. We must learn from our mistakes and prepare for the next pandemic or other health crisis.

I understand there may be some resistance to this kind of deep dive, for fear of some inconvenient truths reflecting who may bear some responsibility, but we need to do a complete review as we owe it to those who suffered, those who died, their families, those who cared for the afflicted and for our future generations.

We need to ask why our true front-line workers, the outpatient primary care doctors, who are truly our canaries in the coal mine as well as our hospitals' best defense against being overwhelmed, were ignored on so many levels.

We need to know why non-hospital physicians were initially ranked for vaccination two priority groups behind "elected officials."

How were health care experts able to be muzzled by politicians?

What is the role of the Surgeon General, CDC, HSS, the military? Who coordinates our response?

How secure are our health care stockpiles? (raided by politicians as per Rick Bright)

Why was there no coordinated national plan, instead leaving decisions to individual states? Why was our response so fragmented? Causing states to be bidding against themselves and the Federal government for ventilators and other supplies.

Why did the government ignore and by pass the expedient choice of the already existing, local and free systems for vaccinating masses of people (primary care physicians) in favor of expensive, slow to establish, mass inoculation sites (aka possible super-spreader events)? Mass vaccination site should have augmented existing distribution networks, not replace them. This approach caused delays. How much does it cost to rent the Javits center or similar sites vs. free, existing sites in physician offices? Why were pharmacies and food chains favored over physician offices? Were these decisions motivated by public health concerns or tainted by politics?

Was the cold chain requirement of the vaccines over stated, causing delays in distribution? Pfizer box initially stable for 5 days and capable of lasting longer with a dry ice refill. Moderna’s vaccine is stable for 30 days in standard refrigerator once thawed. Even when practices purchased freezers they were ignored.

Why was the recording of vaccination administration so complicated? Is this an emergency vaccination plan or a data grab? What was the priority?

Who thinks we are doing well when a frail 85-year-old woman had to call upon a son-in-law's niece to get her an appointment for a vaccine because the niece works for the state government and could "find her a spot.”? On that day her family had to drive her an hour away to NY Giant's stadium. She faced traversing that enormous parking lot using her walker, only to then face a very long line. Thankfully, a caring National Guardsman spotter her and offered her a wheelchair escort to the front of the line.

Why was there no consolidation of vaccination signup systems instead of forcing millions to sit up all night monitoring multiple web sites hoping to stumble upon an available appointment? Were adequate provisions made for those without internet savvy?

We need to reevaluate emergency pop-up hospital capabilities. NJ pop up were little more than sheets hanging between patients, limited sanitary facilities, near absent medical supplies, those that were there were outdated out of neglect. Compare to popup hospitals seen in other countries (Rotterdam facility for example)

Why is there so little direct communication with physicians and local health departments? Pleas for information and help were repeatedly ignored.

We need to seriously review our country's response to Covid -19 so we can ensure a robust, nimble and effective Public Health System for the future. One that can be isolated from political interference. One that can better manage our next pandemic, cope with the possibilities of bio-terrorism or military aggression.

Sincerely,

Roger M. Thompson, MD, FAAFP