



Long COVID's Impact on Patients, Workers and Society

November 1, 2023 - Health Watch USAsm Webinar

Conference Welcome & Overview: Kevin T. Kavanagh, MD, MS, Health Watch USAsm



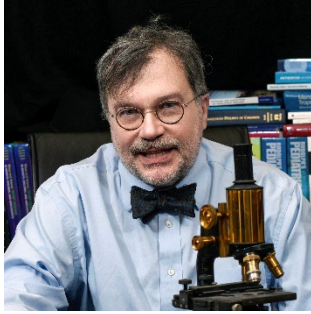
Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD. Deborah L. Birx, M.D., served the United States, as an Army Colonel and later, running some of the most high-profile and influential programs at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of State. Dr. Birx served as the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, using complex data integration to drive decision-making, as well as worked closely with state officials across the country to provide state-specific advice and guidance. Dr. Birx is a world-renowned medical expert and leader whose long career has focused on clinical and basic immunology, infectious disease, pandemic preparedness, vaccine research, and global health.

As the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator from 2014-2021, she oversaw the spending of the \$6 billion annual budget of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history, as well as all U.S. Government engagement with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Dr. Birx recently completed her first book entitled *Silent Invasion* published by HarperCollins; is a Bush Institute Senior Fellow and Independent Board Director at Innoviva. [Deborah L. Birx, M.D. - United States Department of State](#)



Pam Belluck. Pam Belluck is a New York Times staff writer whose honors include a Pulitzer Prize and the Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting. Her work has been chosen for *The Best American Science Writing*. Her book, "Island Practice," about an eccentric doctor on an island, is in development for a TV series. Belluck writes about a wide range of subjects, including the coronavirus pandemic, reproductive health, brain science, neurological disorders and mental health. Her work on Ebola with six colleagues won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting and other awards.

She contributed, along with many colleagues, to the Times's pandemic coverage, which earned the paper a 2021 Pulitzer for public service, and her reporting on the devastating effects of Covid was honored with a New York Press Club Award and a Newswomen's Club Front Page Award. Her project about surgery for women traumatized by genital cutting won a Nellie Bly Award for Best Front Page Story and other honors. Belluck, along with a photographer and translator, also won a New York Press Club award for reporting in Brazil on babies harmed by the Zika virus. Belluck won a Fulbright Scholarship and a Knight Journalism Fellowship and was selected to be a Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University. [Pam Belluck - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)



Peter Hotez, MD, PhD. Peter J. Hotez, M.D., Ph.D. is Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine where he is also the Co-director of the Texas Children’s Center for Vaccine Development (CVD) and Texas Children’s Hospital Endowed Chair of Tropical Pediatrics. He is also University Professor at Baylor University, Fellow in Disease and Poverty at the James A Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Senior Fellow at the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs at Texas A&M University, Faculty

Fellow with the Hagler Institute for Advanced Studies at Texas A&M University, and Health Policy Scholar in the Baylor Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy. Dr. Hotez is an internationally-recognized physician-scientist in neglected tropical diseases and vaccine development. As co-director of the Texas Children’s CVD, he leads a team and product development partnership for developing new vaccines for hookworm infection, schistosomiasis, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, and SARS/MERS/SARS-2 coronavirus, diseases affecting hundreds of millions of children and adults worldwide, while championing access to vaccines globally and in the United States. [Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD \(peterhotez.org\)](https://peterhotez.org)



Eleni Iasonidou, MD. Dr. Iasonidou is a well known advocate of Long Covid, known to the national press for her personal experiences and battles with Long Covid. She is an experienced pediatrician, founder of Long Covid Greece and a highly regarded member of Long Covid Europe. She is based in Thessaloniki, Greece and was one of the very first Greek representatives to join Long Covid Kids. <https://www.longcovidkids.org/el/team/dr-eleni-iasonidou> Dr Iasonidou is among the authors of the first study conducted in

Greece for 3long covid. The study reports the most frequent symptoms of long covid among participants and compares symptoms between hospitalised and non hospitalised patients <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35743774/>. Within the study an algorithm is proposed for patient evaluation with symptoms of Long Covid persisting for more than 3 months. The algorithm has already been adopted by the national organisation of public health of Greece (EODY) and Hellenic Thoracic society. Until now she continues to write articles and deliver speeches regarding Long Covid and try to advocate for this newly emerged disease. Her goal is the legitimatisation and recognition of post covid condition, so that sufferers have access to rehabilitation, treatment and working and educational rights, away from stigma and gaslighting. More research and resources are essential for all post viral diseases and studies conducted on female and minorities population.



Georgios Pappas, MD, PhD. Dr. Pappas is a physician and researcher, specializing on zoonotic infections (particularly brucellosis) and in epidemic/pandemic/ biodefense preparedness and public health response. He is the senior author of the two most cited articles on human brucellosis ([Brucellosis | NEJM](#), and [The new global map of human brucellosis - The Lancet Infectious Diseases](#)), and the coordinator of the expert guidelines on its treatment ([Perspectives for the Treatment of Brucellosis in the 21st](#)

[Century: The Ioannina Recommendations | PLOS Medicine](#)). His interest on epidemic preparedness focuses on the development of attack scenarios underlining responses to worst-case scenarios (representative publication: [Q fever in Logroño: an attack scenario - ScienceDirect](#)). His current research

on biosafety issues includes the 2022 description of the Lanzhou massive brucella leak ([Lanzhou Brucella Leak: The Largest Laboratory Accident in the History of Infectious Diseases? | Clinical Infectious Diseases | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)) that further evolved to an investigative Washington Post 2023 article ([China's struggles with lab safety carry risk of another pandemic - Washington Post](#)). He serves as head of the Institute of Continuing Medical Education of Ioannina, a non-profit educational platform for specialists and the public, aiming at countering dis/misinformation.



Brian T. Walitt, MD, MPH. Dr. Walitt received his Medical Doctorate from the State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse and subsequently completed his residency and a Masters in Public Health at George Washington University and his rheumatology fellowship at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Upon completion of his training, he practiced for over a decade at the Washington Hospital Center, serving as the Research Director and Associate Chairman of Rheumatology. He was recognized as an Associate Professor at Georgetown University for his fibromyalgia and rheumatoid arthritis research work. Since arriving at NIH in 2013, he has served as the Medical Officer of NINR, NIDCR, and the acting Clinical Director of NCCIH. He officially joined the NINDS Clinical Neurosciences Program as a Staff Clinician in 2021 heading the Interoceptive Disorders Unit. His research protocols focus on deeply phenotyping persons with disorders characterized by aversive symptoms that develop after exposures, such as infection. Currently, he is working with patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Gulf War Illness (GWI), and Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC). [Brian T. Walitt, M.D., M.P.H. | NINDS Division of Intramural Research \(nih.gov\)](#)



Jane Thomason, MSPH, CIH. Jane Thomason is a Certified Industrial Hygienist and the Health and Safety Coordinator with National Nurses United, the largest labor union and professional association for registered nurses in the U.S. Jane has developed expertise and conducts research on a wide range of issues faced by nurses, including workplace violence, ergonomics and patient handling, infectious diseases, and other hazardous exposures. Jane oversees the Health and Safety literature and policy review and teaches continuing education classes for NNU's 225,000 RN members. In her role with NNU, Jane has documented the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on nurses, including the impacts of long Covid. NNU collected unparalleled original data from RNs about their workplace protections on the frontlines of the pandemic, with surveys of over 80,000 RNs. NNU leads multiple national campaigns for workplace protections for nurses, including the fight for a permanent OSHA standard on Covid-19 that is essential to protecting nurses and other health care workers from long Covid.



Greg Vanichkachorn, MD, MPH. Dr. Vanichkachorn specializes in Public Health, Infectious Diseases and Occupational Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester Minnesota. Dr. Vanichkachorn has over a decade of experience helping injured workers manage their work related injuries along with the complicated psychosocial factors that can affect recovery and return to function. He uses cognitive behavioral therapy to better understand patient's concerns. [Greg Vanichkachorn, M.D., M.P.H. - Doctors and Medical Staff - Mayo Clinic](#)



Wilmore Webley, PhD. Dr. Webley is professor of Microbiology and Senior Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His research has focused on two parallel themes: (1) understanding chlamydial interaction with the infected host in an attempt to better characterize the diseases that this family of bacteria cause and (2) design and development of interventional and therapeutic strategies to prevent or treat chlamydial infections and associated sequelae. His research program uses molecular, cell biology, immunology and proteomics tools to study the lifestyle, disease pathologies and development of treatment/prevention strategies for the obligate intracellular bacterial pathogens, Chlamydia . Over the course of the pandemic, Dr. Webley made almost 200 [presentations](#) to [various groups](#) on the Coronavirus Pandemic, including [radio shows](#), [TV shows](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook live events](#). He has devoted significant amount of time to providing accurate information to counter myths and better explain the COVID-19 outbreak and vaccine safety and efficacy, since the spring of 2020. [Wilmore Webley | Department of Microbiology at UMass Amherst](#)



Kevin T Kavanagh, MD, MS Dr. Kevin Kavanagh retired from medical practice over twenty years ago from long-standing severe arthritis which was treated with multiple operations and the placement of bone morphogenic protein in his neck which caused long-term symptoms. Recently, he has undergone surgical treatment for prostatic cancer, a treatment which was successful, but delayed due to the hospital being overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. Dr. Kavanagh is currently Board Chairman of Health Watch USA, a Kentucky based patient advocacy and research organization. Health Watch USA is a member of the National Quality Forum and has been designated as a “Community Leader” for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Kavanagh is an Associate Editor for the Journal of Patient Safety. On Aug. 20, 2014, Dr. Kavanagh became a CDC & ATSDR Honor Award Nominee. He has served on the 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services’ Hospital-Acquired Condition Reduction Program Technical Expert Panel, along with on the AHRQ Standing Working Group for Quality Indicators for 2016 to 2017. He served on the AHRQ for Health Care Effectiveness and Outcomes Research (HEOR) Study Section from 2018 to 2022. Currently, he serves on the CMS Hospital Harm Technical Expert Panel. He has published 30 peer-reviewed manuscripts on healthcare policy and/or healthcare associated infections. In addition, he has published letters in peer-

reviewed journals including the Journal of the American Medical Association and New England Journal of Medicine. Dr. Kavanagh is also a frequent contributor to the Lexington Herald Leader and Courier Journal regarding Healthcare Issues and had been a weekly guest on the Jack Pattie Radio Show, discussing COVID-19 health policy issues for almost 3 years during the COVID-19 pandemic.