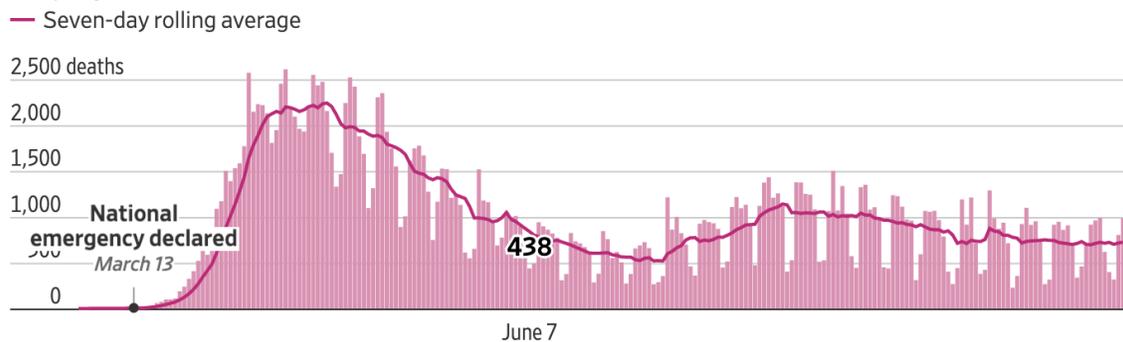


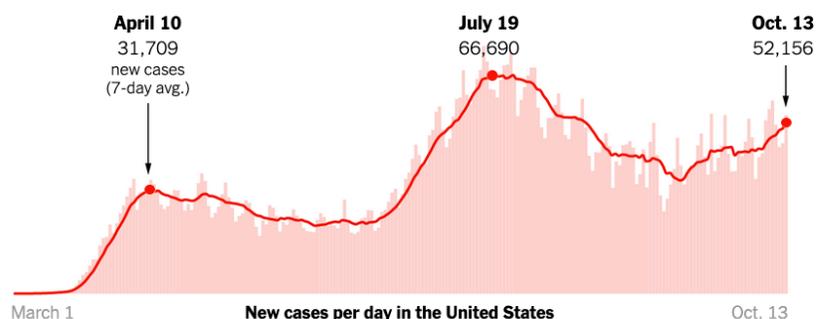
Over the last couple of weeks the news cycle continues to highlight the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. I know that ‘pandemic fatigue’ is real and may be setting in after we have all been dealing with this major disruption to our lives for many months. I would like to start with some good news illustrated by the following graphic showing the **US death rate continues to fall** as health care teams have learned much more about how best to manage both stable and critical patients. Also, many of the newly infected are young people who tend to have less serious effects. As evidenced by President Trump’s recovery, early intervention with supportive care, steroids, remdesivir and monoclonal antibody treatments significantly improves outcomes for many infected, even with other risk factors.

Daily reported Covid-19 deaths in the U.S.



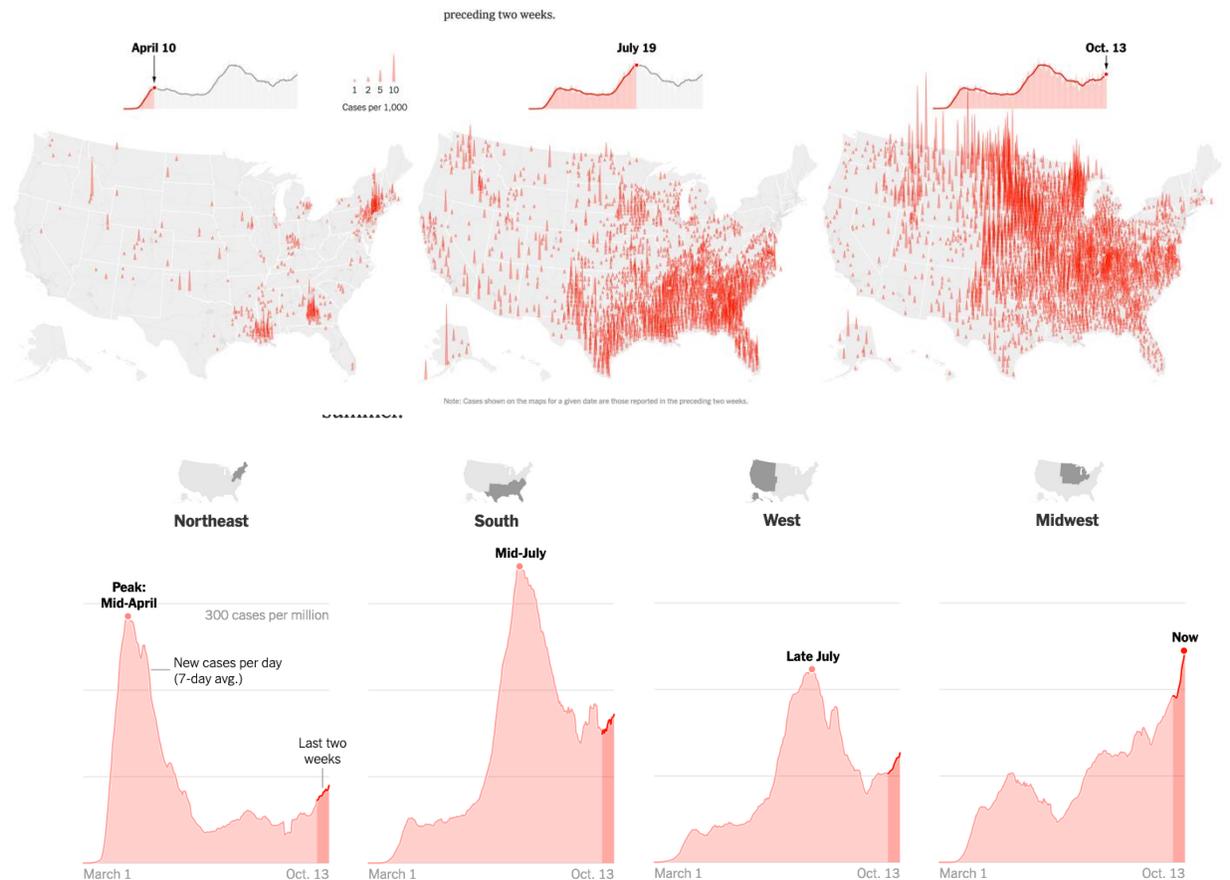
Notes: For all 50 states and D.C., U.S. territories and cruises. Last updated Oct. 15, at 8:51 a.m.
Source: Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering

Unfortunately, the bad news is that **case counts have now begun rising again**, which is exacerbated by the weather shifts that will accelerate more indoor exposures over the fall and winter.



U.S. Virus Cases Climb Toward a Third Peak

The third wave is concentrated in the **Midwest region** that was spared early on, and seems to be fueled by young people, school and college reopenings, and reduced restrictions on masking, distancing, and business and social gatherings.



In other positive developments, multiple vaccine trials continue to enroll participants for several candidates and **most experts predict at least one or several effective vaccines to be available for wide distribution in 2021**, with the hope that by summer the entire US population could be vaccinated. Of course, that continues to depend upon people getting vaccinated. A poll this week showed only 70% would agree to be vaccinated and of these, about 20% expressed serious reservations about safety issues. The FDA is working very diligently to ensure that the **vaccine approval process meets the highest thresholds for safety and efficacy** and I personally have no doubts about their policies. They are fully committed to public health and safety and will not be unduly influenced by politicians. I will be first in line when a vaccine is available!

Regarding our practices, I just want to reiterate how **important it is to remain highly vigilant and firmly committed to our safety protocols and procedures**. I previously shared the conclusions of an article published a couple months ago about how well Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston had done with its COVID-19 mitigation efforts by following strict protocols. Well, they recently had a serious cluster outbreak in two of their inpatient units that affected multiple patients and staff. The situation was traced back to an asymptomatic employee as well as some laxity in staff compliance with masks and hygiene in break rooms. It remains critical that we continue to self-police for symptoms and compliance with our

standards so as not to expose our teammates or patients. Hold each other accountable in a friendly way and ensure everyone's safety and the viability of our practices.

On a personal level, remember that the **highest risk events are indoor, crowded, heavy breathing/singing/talking and prolonged**. Bars, restaurants, fitness centers, religious gatherings and rallies/protests remain highly contagious. In fact, a gym in Canada followed every CDC safety protocol including that masks could only be removed while actively pedaling a cycle and they still created a 61 person COVID-19 cluster. In South Korea, a Starbucks that did not enforce masking produced another COVID-19 cluster in patrons, while every employee who was masked remained well and uninfected. Please keep wearing your masks, wash your hands and stay home if sick and we'll get through this together.

Remember to get your flu vaccine as well, which is another vital effort to ensure wellness and health for everyone. Please share any other ideas, suggestions or questions to health@qualderm.com and have a great and safe weekend.

Sincerely,

John G Albertini, MD

