



July 2, 2020

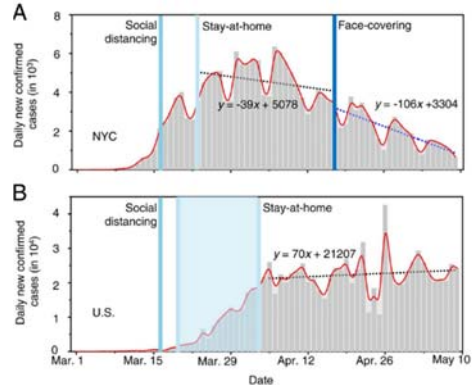
To: Distribution

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: Airborne Study ~ California Hits Brakes ~ Trade Shows ~ A Riddle**

Airborne as Dominant Route. In a study published on June 11 and updated on June 30 by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, based upon examining pandemic trends and suppression measures in China, Italy, New York and the US from January 23 to May 9, researchers observed that the mandatory requirement of face coverings represents the primary determinant in shaping trends of the pandemic. Further, they found that this one protective measure significantly reduces the number of infections, while social distancing measures alone are insufficient in protecting the public.

As a preliminary consideration, researchers noted that, from the start, China rigorously implemented distancing measures, mask requirements and tracking/quarantine and flattened the curve from the outset. By contrast, both Italy and New York began in March with distancing measures, experienced sharp infection increases and on April 6 and April 17, respectively, mandated use of face coverings. After that point, the pandemic curve dropped in both places. See the PNAS table which shows how (top table) the curve in New York took a modest downturn after social distancing and stay-at-home measures were implemented, but dropped sharply after face coverings were required – and this was the only material change in pandemic measures in that region. In the lower table, we see the pandemic curve for the same period in the US excluding NY; note how the rest of the country was on the rise, while New York was heading toward greater control. Researchers went on further to observe that, while coronavirus contagion is not fully understood, mandated face coverings appear to prevent airborne transmission by both blocking exhalation and inhalation of viral particles. They concluded that wearing of face coverings “corresponds to the most effective means to prevent interhuman transmission and that this inexpensive practice, in conjunction with testing, tracking, quarantine, and contact tracking, poses the most probable fighting opportunity to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to the development of a vaccine.”



California Hits the Brakes. As reported by the LATimes yesterday, California Governor Gavin Newsom redoubled pandemic suppression efforts within the state for at least three weeks, requiring 19 counties (including Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside) to discontinue indoor dining

at restaurants, wineries and tasting rooms as well as halting visits to entertainment centers, movie theaters, zoos, museums and card rooms. In a press conference, the governor also recommended cancellation of fireworks shows in the affected counties and urged Californians to rethink large get-togethers over the Fourth of July weekend. Among other things, Newsom noted that the positivity rate had risen to 6% over the past 14 days, up from 4.6% two weeks ago. Under state reopening standards, a county is placed on the governor's "watch list" if it reports a two-week average of more than 100 cases per 100,000, a daily case number of more than 25 cases per 100,000 and a weekly average positivity rate of 8%. According to NBCLosAngeles.com, Orange County (which reported a record high 779 new cases last Tuesday) had a case rate of 109 per 100,000 and a positivity rate of 9.3%; thus, they dropped into the state's watch list.

What About Trade Shows? My curiosity was piqued a few weeks ago, when a colleague casually mentioned that a number of our folks were planning to go to the Farm Progress Show (FPS). He was not raising the subject for discussion, but more as a fait accompli. So, I took a swing through the FPS website, which, as many of you now know, reports that the 2020 show was recently cancelled. According to Matt Jungmann, FPS's Event Manager, "Within days of our commitment to hold both farm shows, more than half the United States saw a significant spike in new cases of COVID-19. We have a multi-generational audience that travels from all across the country and around the world to attend the shows and based on that we felt it better to reconsider the traditional show for 2020 to prioritize the safety of all. Our community's safety is our priority, always." YPS's decision to take the event off-calendar, while difficult, is understandable. If YPS finds it too risky to hold a trade show – even one with enhanced COVID protocols – then we should take their example to heart and steer clear of attending any in-person trade show until the pandemic improves considerably.

A Riddle. What do Frodo Baggins (the four-foot-tall protagonist from the Lord of the Rings) and the NBA have in common? Answer: the ring. Admittedly, the analogy is not perfect, as Frodo was bearing Sauron's ring, which was potentially destined to enslave mankind for eternity, in order to destroy it in the cracks of Mount Doom. By contrast, during their abbreviated season amidst the pandemic, certain NBA players will bear the \$300 "Oura" ring, which, while not pertinent to the fate of humankind, may serve to keep ballplayers healthy and enable their season to carry on. As reported by Sports Illustrated, the NBA has ordered more than 2,000 such rings which monitor one's heart rate, heart rate variability, respiratory rate and temperature to generate a "risk score," in order to mitigate the silent spread of COVID-19 by flagging potential onset symptoms. Here is a picture of the Oura ring from the maker's website. Unlike Frodo's ring, the Oura bears no inscription in the ancient tongue of Mordor. Nor do you turn invisible when you wear it. However, given the price, I doubt that anyone will be throwing it into Mount Doom any time soon. Enjoy your weekend. – TD



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