

## **Absence of Leadership Is Why COVID-19 Is Destroying The USA**

Two articles arrived at my desk discussing the ongoing tragedy of COVID-19. One is written in *the New England Journal of Medicine* by Dr. Eric Schneider. Dr Schneider sees the ability to test someone quickly and reliably as the only way out of the pandemic and back to some degree of normal life without there being mass casualties and deaths. He is appalled that foreign nations with far less developed scientific communities have developed testing and contact tracing so that they can limit the spread of the disease while safely opening those societies again.

He cites the failure of the Trump administration to heed warnings, prepare for the arrival of the virus and more importantly to produce, distribute and test the public while collecting and organizing the data as the only reason we are now left with “non pharmacological interventions (NPIs)” Shutting down society and staying at home is our only successful NPI option to date. He goes on to criticize the administration for looking for that magic cure with a medication or a quick vaccine which the scientists working on them insist will take longer than the President claims it will. While Dr. Schneider believes that NPI’s have been successful, they carry their own price of economic ruin, social isolation and a restless population now demonstrating loudly to resume commerce and normal activities even though the infection rate and death rate will be so much higher.

An editorial in the revered British Journal *The Lancet* today discusses the need to revive the CDC. The editorial highlights the history of the Center for Disease Control and its role as a world leader in public health and safety. It then goes on to illustrate how the Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush administrations, and now the Trump administration, have destroyed its funding and marginalized its role.

*The Lancet* editorial board first criticizes those administrations for reducing funding when the CDC was leading the fight against HIV disease worldwide. The current administration has eliminated funding and support even further.

The CDC always kept pandemic surveillance personnel in China since Asia has always been a birthplace of new serious viral illnesses such as SARS, Bird Flu and MERS. Funding elimination resulted in the last CDC surveillance officer leaving China in July of 2019.

When the current CDC Director Nancy Meisssonier, MD warned the world about the COVID-19 pandemic on February 25, 2020; she was removed from White House briefings and public appearances because of her prophetic statement. “The CDC needs a director who can provide leadership without the threat of being silenced and who has the technical capacity to lead today’s complicated effort. Americans must put a president in the White House come January 2021, who will understand that public health should not be guided by partisan politics.”