

CURRENT PANDEMIC

- 500,000 deaths in one year
- Preliminary data from first four months shows life expectancy has already dropped by 1.2 years. This is the largest drop since 1943.



1918-19 PANDEMIC

- Estimated deaths of 750,000 over two years
- Decreased life expectancy by more than 10 years

As internal medicine physicians, many of us were on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw the illness, the panic, and the pain that patients and families endured every day. If the local health authorities hadn't implemented orders to protect Missourians from themselves, **the illness and pain would have been much greater.**

If the Missouri legislator moves forward in removing local public health authority's ability to act expeditiously it **will hobble the critical authority needed to protect us from the next epidemic.** The increase in population size and residential encroachment on the territories of wild animals makes it only a matter of time until a new pandemic occurs. Recall that the current one was predicted years in advance. With resumption and increase in global travel, speed of dissemination will increase.

The rapid authoritative public health responses which were supported by effective governmental leadership were key to lessen the impact on many communities. Several of the same measures were used in St. Louis in 1918 to protect its residents. Studies have shown that cities similar in size to St. Louis had much higher rates of mortality due to few restrictions being in place.

A staggering number of public health officials have had their lives and families threatened during this pandemic while doing their jobs to protect Missourians, leading to many resignations.

THE FACTS:

- Allowing county commissioners to veto public health orders after only 15 days imposes political and economic considerations upon data-driven scientific ones.
- Such action can be predicted to result in the same recurrent waves of disease seen in states which refused public health mandated business closures and mandatory masking.
- Fifteen days is too short for an infectious disease ordinance.
- Many viruses have incubation periods of two weeks or longer and epidemiologists know that at least two incubation cycles are needed to see if an ordinance is effective.
- County governing bodies need at least 30 days to judge whether the ordinance is working as intended.

We urge you to support local public health and preserve their local authority and ability to protect Missourians. Response to a local outbreak should be driven by public health experts WORKING WITH local governments.

Vote no on Senate Bill 12 and House Bill 75.