

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

January 2021-1



From the Editor: One full year after rumors emerged about a deadly pneumonia in China's Wuhan province, the COVID-19 global pandemic has taken more than 1.8 million lives worldwide, including 345,000 here in the U.S. As 2021 begins, this special edition of the **Three Minute Read™** features countries that excelled in protecting their residents from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. To access each article or video report, just click on the headline.



[Uruguay to close its borders over holidays due to COVID-19](#) by

Fabian Werner,
Hugh Bronstein,

Reuters. 12/17/20

TMR Topline™ - Uruguay has closed its borders from Dec. 21 to Jan. 10 except for cargo transportation. Lockdown measures largely held the virus at bay during the first months of the pandemic. *"The second wave to hit the world is our first wave,"* President Luis Lacalle Pou said. Rafael Radi, coordinator of the government's COVID-19 advisory group stated: *"We cannot compromise what has been achieved so far."*

TMR's Take – Sandwiched between Argentina and Brazil, Uruguay has recorded 174 deaths among its 3.5 million residents for a fatality rate of 5.03/100,000. Elected in March, Lacalle Pou quickly closed borders, instituted widespread testing and contact tracing and appealed for a *"responsible exercise of liberty."*



[With few resources, Senegal emerges as a leader in the fight against COVID-19](#), by Fred de Sam Lazaro, NPR, 12/18/20

TMR Topline™ - For much of the pandemic, New Zealand has often been praised for the effectiveness of its response. Despite few resources, the small African nation of Senegal has also become a leader in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic within its borders. This 5-minute video describes how Senegal protected its residents.

TMR's Take – Senegal applied the lessons learned during the Ebola outbreak to protect its 15.9 million residents. At year end its fatality rate was 2.54/100,000. On the African continent, that's behind only Liberia (1.72) and Rwanda (0.68). With a year-end fatality rate of 104.92, COVID-19 has been 50 times deadlier in America than in three of the world's poorest countries.



['There's a job to be done': New Zealand's leader explains success against Covid-19](#), by Associated Press, 12/16/20

TMR Topline™ - New Zealand is the only country to have successfully eliminated the coronavirus. Prime Minister Jacinta Ardern told the AP that the target grew from an early realization the nation's health system simply couldn't cope with a big outbreak. Flattening the curve would not suffice. Border closures and a strict lockdown in March got rid of the disease, and New Zealand went 102 days without any community spread.

An August outbreak in Auckland required a second, more localized lockdown. After winning reelection in an October landslide, Ardern said her job is to build good

relationships with every leader and looks forward to working with President-Elect Joe Biden to rebuild New Zealand's relationship with the US.



[The Country That Learned to Live With Covid-19](#), Bloomberg, 12/15/20

TMR Topline™ - As nations around the world still struggle to contain CCOVID-19, South Korea's early, focused, and perhaps controversial approach has kept loss of life and economic damage to a minimum. This 25-minute video provides illuminating insights into the country's success. Its robust contact tracing methods would run afoul of privacy concerns in the US but worked well for South Korea.

TMR's Take – With a population about the same as Italy's and a more densely populated capital city than New York, South Korea confirmed its first COVID-19 case the same day as the U.S. Its test, trace and treat regimen has produced a year-end fatality rate of 1.74/100,000.



[Which Countries Have Responded Best to Covid-19?](#), by Thomas Frieden MD, Wall Street Journal, 1/2/21

TMR Topline™ - The CDC Director from 2009-17 identifies the countries that, in his opinion, did the best job of responding to the pandemic in 2020:

- Best at early action: **Taiwan**
- Best at learning from recent epidemics: **Liberia** (honorable mention - Rwanda and Senegal)
- Best at crushing the curve: **New Zealand**
- Best at testing: **South Korea**
- Best at quarantining: **Hong Kong**
- Best economic protection: **Denmark** (honorable mention - India, Australia and the EU)
- Best at public communication: **Finland** (honorable mention - Germany and South Africa)
- Best location in the U.S.: **American Samoa** (0 deaths from COVID-19, same as 1918-19)

Dr. Frieden noted that many developed countries that did well initially faltered during subsequent surges as their governments and people grew tired of implementing effective strategies. Critical of the U.S. response, he

noted that "*Bad politics, quite simply, can trump good public health.*" **TMR** wholeheartedly agrees.

From the Editor: The Biden Administration has committed to continue on the path to universal healthcare for Americans by building on the progress made with the Affordable Care Act. "*Healing American Healthcare*" co-author and [Coalition](#) co-founder Ed Eichhorn begins 2021 with his opening thoughts on the challenging path ahead. His column will be a regular feature in future issues.



[Strategic Compromise – The Pathway to Universal Healthcare](#) The Healing American Healthcare Coalition Blog by Ed Eichhorn 1/3/21

TMR Topline™ - Healthcare in America should be a right and not just a privilege for those who can afford it. In the current political environment, universal healthcare appears to be unattainable, however we can achieve what every other democracy in the world has achieved by building a strategic compromise.

Over the last 110 years at least ten presidents have been expressed interest in expanding healthcare coverage. However only Presidents Johnson and Obama were successful in introducing major legislation that expanded health insurance coverage for large segments of the population. President Johnson succeeded in passing Medicare and Medicaid legislation in 1965 and President Obama was successful in passing the Affordable Care Act in 2009. Today these programs provide health insurance coverage for almost 140 million Americans.

What would a strategic compromise look like today? The progressive Democrats want universal healthcare, Historically Republicans prefer programs that reduce the deficit. If the United States would adapt the German System, all employers would have to provide health insurance for their employees. Prior to the pandemic, 16% of Medicaid beneficiaries were employed. If their employers provided them with health insurance, the federal expense for Medicaid would be reduced by more than \$200 billion per year.

This is the strategic compromise. The Democrats get universal healthcare for America, and the Republicans get reduced federal and state expenses for Medicaid. More importantly we would significantly improve healthcare outcomes for all Americans by making healthcare a right and not just a privilege.