

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

October 2020-3



poor leadership in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To access each article, click on the headline.

From the Editor: This pandemic year, Halloween will have a blue moon for the first time since 1944. The articles summarized in this issue of **TMR** show evidence of America's



[The Swedish COVID-19 Response Is a Disaster. It Shouldn't Be a Model for the Rest of the World](#), by Kelly Bjorklund and

Andrew Ewing, TIME, 10/14/20

TMR Topline™ - Referring to a [study published](#) in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the authors argue that Sweden and the U.S. are unique in their failure to reduce coronavirus mortality rates as the pandemic progressed. The table shows fatality rates/100,000 for 7 of 19 high income countries (population > 5,000,000; per capita GDP > \$25,000) through 10/13, and from 6/7-10/13. While many countries were hit hard early, Sweden and the U.S. continued to have high fatality rates after 6/7. Sweden's leaders claim success in their efforts to combat the pandemic and deny that their strategy was to build "herd immunity." Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the Public Health Agency attribute Sweden's high COVID-19 death rate to deaths that occurred in nursing homes due to shortcomings in eldercare.

Fatality Rate/100,000 thru 10/13/2020

Country	Start-10/13	6/7-10/13
U.S.	60.3	27.2
Sweden	57.4	10.3
U.K.	62.6	5.0
Spain	65.0	4.6
Belgium	86.8	4.2
France	46.6	3.2
Italy	59.1	3.1

This thoroughly researched article documents Sweden's failed approach, including not mandating masks or implementing quarantine, even for those returning from travel abroad or family members of those who test positive for COVID-19.



[How the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally may have spread coronavirus across the Upper Midwest](#), by Brittany Shammass and Lena H. Sun, Washington Post, 10/17/20

TMR Topline™ - Despite the concerns expressed by health experts ahead of the event, the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally drew nearly 500,000 to the small South Dakota town from August 7-16. Rallygoers filled bars, restaurants, concert venues and tattoo parlors with many going unmasked. By mid-September, more than 330 cases and one death were causally linked to the rally the Dakotas, along with Wyoming, Minnesota and Montana, were leading the nation in new coronavirus infections per capita. Experts agree that the total number of cases will never be known since contact tracing doesn't always capture the source of the infection and asymptomatic spread goes unnoticed. Kaiser Family Foundation epidemiologist Josh Michaud said: "Holding a half-million-person rally in the midst of a pandemic is emblematic of a

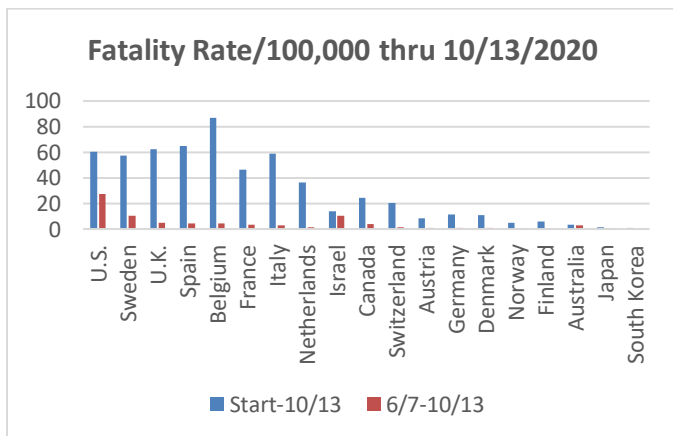
nation as a whole that maybe isn't taking [the novel coronavirus] as seriously as we should."



[A new study finds poor leadership is the reason for America's unrivaled coronavirus death toll](#), by Hilary Brueck, Business Insider,

10/21/20

TMR Topline™ - Citing data from the same [JAMA study](#) as the Swedes, Brueck makes the case that "The US did not ever sufficiently put its guard up against this virus at the federal level," and it now leads the world in pandemic death rates. Since June, no other large rich country has fared as poorly as the US (see chart, below). Even Belgium, that is highest in the OECD fatality rate resulted from its negligence of its care home population, crushed the curve. The US fatality rate since 6/7 is roughly five times France and four times Spain and Sweden. Only Mexico and Brazil have fatality rates on a par with the US. Study co-author Ezekiel Emanuel stated: "We lacked federal leadership and coordination that we needed."



Emanuel and other public health experts agree that until there are treatments and approved vaccines, defeating the pandemic virus requires a better coordinated public health response from state to state, and better nationwide disease surveillance.



TMR's Take – The song lyrics say it best: "Blue moon, you saw me standing alone." Once again, America is the disgrace of the developed world with the highest per capita fatality rate in the OECD.

The Editor's 2016 series of articles in [Garden State Focus](#) documented American healthcare as the worst

value in the developed world. Part 2 of his current series, "[The COVID-19 Pandemic – How is the U.S. Doing?](#)" was published earlier this month. Its opening line: "The short answer – not well."



[Overturing the ACA Would Increase Uninsurance among People of All Ages, Races and Ethnicities](#) by Linda J. Blumberg, The

Urban Institute, 10/20/20

TMR Topline™ - The Supreme Court will begin to hear arguments 11/10 on the constitutionality of the Accountable Care Act (ACA) in the case of California v. Texas. A group of Republican state attorneys general argue that passage of a 2017 tax law that eliminated the ACA's individual mandate penalties renders the entire ACA unconstitutional. The Trump administration supports their position. This case is being opposed by a group led by the California attorney general. The Urban Institute analyzed the potential impact if the Supreme Court overturns the ACA and found the following:

- 21.1 million Americans would be uninsured in 2022.
- 9.3 million people would lose their income related health insurance subsidies in 2022.
- Medicaid and CHIP coverage would decline by 15.5 million people in 2022
- Federal government spending on health care would decrease by \$152 billion per year.
- Health care coverage will fall for people of all races and ethnicities in every state.

The ACA's protection for preexisting conditions and coverage age limits for adult children also would be eliminated. Hospitals, physicians and pharmaceutical companies will experience large decreases in revenue. The positive aspects of increased coverage achieved under the ACA will be reversed. It is hard to quantify the total impact of the law being judged unconstitutional because almost all insurers, providers, and households would be affected by the elimination of the ACA's many provisions.

TMR's Take – If the ACA is overturned by the Supreme Court in California v. Texas, policymakers and the next Congress will have to find an acceptable way to replace this law to prevent an economic and healthcare crisis in 2022.