

ADVERTORIAL

COVID-19 | STAY SAFE

Dr. George Rapier is founder of WellMed



Fellow Americans,

Communities across America are struggling with a difficult decision. Attempt to find some normalcy, as we knew it, or continue to stay safe at home. Before you venture out, let's take a look at the flu pandemic of 1918-1919 and what we learned from it.

The influenza outbreak of 1918-1919 was probably the worst epidemic in human history. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website tells the sobering story: About 500 million people were infected worldwide. That's a third of the global population at that time. Thirty to 50 million people died from it.

The pandemic lasted 18 months and spiked three separate times. It began in the spring of 1918. Health officials at the time thought they had it under control. Then, in the fall of that same year, infection rates peaked again. The virus crept into 1919 when a third wave hit that spring. All told, a full one-third of the U.S. population was infected. Nearly 700,000 Americans died.¹

How did the outbreak in the U.S. begin? Why did infection rates spike so many times? What did authorities do to finally stop the spread? The answers are critically important to our understanding of COVID-19 today.

The story reads as if it were 2020. The spread of influenza began with a huge parade in downtown Philadelphia. Several hundred thousand attended. A few weeks later, people started getting sick.

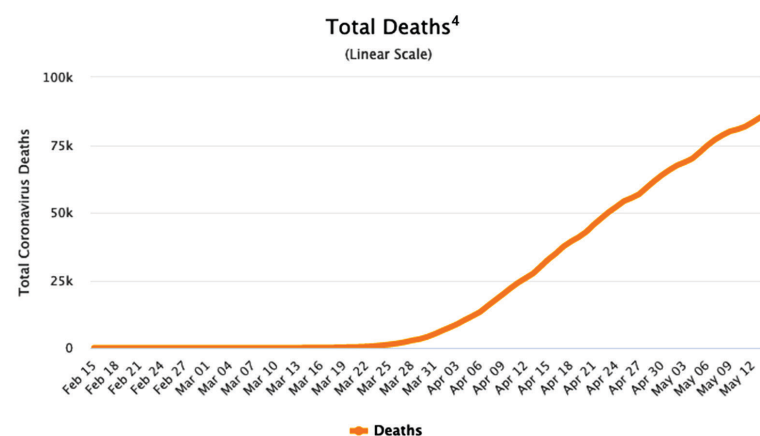
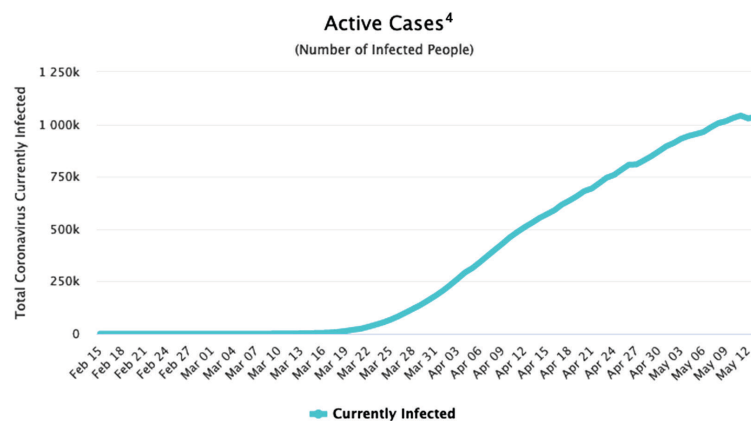
It spread nationwide. But according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, communities that adopted social distancing practices early and kept them in place the longest fared best.²

One hundred years later, we see the benefits of social distancing and staying at home playing out once again. In early March, Italy and Spain were front-page news as hospitals and morgues filled to capacity. Both countries took extreme measures. Residents were ordered to remain home. As a result, the World Health Organization says death rates have gradually fallen in those countries.³

In the U.S., some communities are returning to business as usual. But those at greatest risk should continue to social distance and stay at home. If you're over 60 and have a chronic condition — heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, etc. — you should take precautions and talk to your doctor. Do not return to normal activity until the death rate in your community has fallen to nearly zero. A good website to follow the statistics in your state is www.covidactnow.org. It shows what activities you should avoid state by state.

Taking care of yourself is a choice. You should make the right choice for you and your family. I also encourage you to continue to check on family, friends and neighbors. That's especially true for those living alone. It will take all of us looking out for one another to get through this crisis.

Take care. And remember, stay safe, stay home!



¹www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/1918-pandemic-history

²www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions

³ourworldindata.org/coronavirus

⁴www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/



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