

Message

From: Birx, Deborah L. EOP/NSC [REDACTED]
Sent: 8/11/2020 10:59:26 AM
To: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAD) (E) [REDACTED]; Robert Redfield [REDACTED]; Hahn, Stephen
Subject: Oval yesterday
Attachments: 11August2020Data.pptx

A very dangerous meeting in the OVAL, yesterday. I had been excluded from all oval meetings since 22 April until a couple of weeks ago when the President began speaking to Tony and I [REDACTED]. Since then I am sometimes included in a brief meeting before his press briefing (approx. 2-3 times total). A couple of weeks ago a Dr Scott Atlas showed up at the WH with a very different take on the epidemic. Dr Atlas thoughts

1. No matter what we do if the outcome will be the same -- in other words in most places the virus has already run its course. There is enough herd immunity to protect the rest of the population if we protect the vulnerable
2. Schools can open and should open everywhere -- I countered that this would cause a new round of community spread and eventually lead to new hospitalizations and deaths -- but I had no impact
3. Children are not at any risk of infection and do not spread the virus in any manner -- they do not transmit the virus
4. HTN and associated co-morbidities are not that critical -- ie all BB, MLB, FB except for line backers that are overweight are at no risk as physical fitness overcomes the virus effects
5. Masks are over rated and not needed
6. Testing is very over rating -- thus the source of the President's call for new testing guidance
7. Case identification is bad for the President's reelection -- testing should only be of the sick

[REDACTED] (As was discussed by CHOP months ago and all models predicted outdoors (thus summer) would decrease R1 by 15-20% due to some increase in social distancing but this could immediately be overcome with decreased mitigation such as social distancing and etc and thus the situation we are in.) He noted that it was the task force that got us into this ditch by promoting testing and falsely increasing case counts compared to other countries.

The conclusion was Dr Atlas is brilliant and the President will be following his guidance now. I don't know what can be done at this point but I will make another run at this and will continue the state by state approach to try to contain the virus but doubt my abilities to change the President's mind concerning what needs to be done -- strict mask use, expansion of testing, strict social distancing and limiting access to all public venues where social distancing and masks cannot be used, limit school reopenings where there is uncontrolled community spread -- the red counties -- until the outbreak can be contained, limiting in yellow counties with strict social distancing and mask use.

Open to all thoughts but I don't think I can be very effective at this point. Deb