



Government Policy Response to COVID 19

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**NWO Virtual
COVID-19
Roundtable Posting**





AGENDA

- **Moral Issues**

- Individual rights vs Community rights
 - Runs through all important public policy issues
 - Governments have had different approaches, before some finally ordering tight lockdowns for COVID 19
 - If tell people what to do, then you are morally bound to help them –eg small businesses ordered to close
 - Governments have only so much social control (moral suasion) before individuals stop listening. Then must resort to force. Not advisable or sustainable in a democracy, short of all out war.
- Who should decide life and death issues (eg rationing of ICU equipment) – doctors, politicians, (public opinion), individuals?
 - No one wants to take responsibility, least of all politicians. Produces decision paralysis.
 - Patients themselves should be asked to choose if going on ventilators.
- Old and vulnerable versus the young and fit
 - Protect the old/vulnerable at any cost?
 - Controversial. Personally, I think it depends on how much cost to the future of society



AGENDA

- **Is “flattening the curve” a sustainable health policy strategy?**
 - How long and how flat – 1 month, 4, 12, 18 months? Who decides?
 - The fog of war: Lack of good data on who has the disease and who already has immunity.
 - Likely to be multiple waves if allow workers to go back to work.
 - Under almost any scenario, 30 to 70% of the population could get the infection in any case.



AGENDA

- **Is our current fiscal and monetary policy strategy sustainable?**

- How long will it have to continue?
- Already a deep recession (even assuming the economy is back by June). Very likely to go on much longer.
- We're using a known policy playbook (fiscal deficits, quantitative easing, protection to financial system) but designed for recession/depression, not government mandated economic shutdown.
- Government income supports still NOT ENOUGH.
- Implications for our long term economy and population health?
 - Widespread PTSD from health *and* financial worries
 - Difficult to unwind government spending programs (Child Benefit, EI, etc.) once crisis is past
 - Huge debt burden for younger generation (and complications for future monetary policy)
 - Evidence from previous recessions is that it takes a long time for young people to recover from delayed entry into workforce.
 - Equity considerations (same as after Wall Street bailout – the rich get bailed out too)



AGENDA

- **My Proposal for pivoting strategies sooner rather than later:**
 - Target to minimize the death rate *not* the infection rate;
 - Implies we wait until the domestic supply chain of critical health resources beginning to function (ventilators, operators, *separate* COVID facilities);
 - Continued self isolation and enhanced protection for seniors and immune compromised.
 - Then remove forced economic shutdowns sooner rather than later. Maybe allow for staggered return.
 - “Moon shot” incentives for a long term medical fix to arrive as soon as possible.



AGENDA

- **Will COVID 19 fundamentally alter our future?**
- Big events of the 20th century (WWI, WW II, Great Depression) fundamentally changed society.
- Multiple social experiments on a massive scale now going on as result of COVID 19. Will we
 - Rethink globalization – mass travel, JIT inventory systems, insecure supply chains?
 - Rethink political institutions – for example European Union?
 - Rethink urbanization and increased population density?
 - Rethink mass events?
 - Will e-commerce, e-learning, telecommuting, e-health get permanently bigger market share?