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John Robbins 832-280-5815
Jun Gai 281-498-4310



Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Colin Powell, top U.S. soldier and diplomat, dies of COVID-19 complications



Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell salutes the audience as he takes the stage at the Washington Ideas Forum in Washington, September 30, 2015. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

WASHINGTON, Oct 18 (Reuters) - Colin Powell, the first Black U.S. secretary of state, a top military officer and a national security adviser, died on Monday at age 84 due to complications from COVID-19. He was fully vaccinated, his family said.

Powell had multiple myeloma, a blood cancer which was in remission, and early-stage Parkinson's disease, said a close friend who asked not to be named. The blood cancer reduces the body's ability to fight infection and puts people at higher risk for a severe case of the virus.

Powell served three Republican presidents in senior posts and ascended to leadership of the U.S. military as it was regaining its vigor after the trauma of the war in Vietnam, where he served two tours as an Army officer. [read more](#)

"We have lost a remarkable and loving husband, father, grandfather and a great American," his family said, thanking the staff of the military hospital near Washington who treated Powell but providing few details about his illness.

He was the top U.S. military officer when American-led forces drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1991 and the chief U.S. diplomat in 2003 when Washington relied on erroneous intelligence about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction to justify its invasion of Iraq.

The son of Jamaican immigrants who rose to the top of the national security establishment, Powell himself acknowledged that his presentation of that spurious U.S. intelli-

gence would stain his record.

In a brief statement on Facebook, the Powell family said he had died on Monday morning from COVID-19, had been fully vaccinated against the disease and thanked the medical staff at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center who treated him.

White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said hospitalization and death are "extremely rare" among the fully vaccinated and said Powell's death underscored that underlying health issues and other diseases can lead to greater risk from the virus.

"He had two very serious underlying conditions. And unfortunately, (vaccination) didn't work. God love him," President Joe Biden told reporters at a White House event on education. He again implored all Americans to get vaccinated.

Biden earlier praised Powell in a statement.

"Colin embodied the highest ideals of both warrior and diplomat," Biden, describing Powell as a "patriot of unmatched honor and dignity" and a man who "could drive his Corvette Stingray like nobody's business." George W. Bush, a Republican who named Powell as U.S. secretary of state, noted that "many presidents relied on General Powell's counsel and experience."

"He was such a favorite of presidents that he earned the Presidential Medal of Freedom - twice," Bush said, referring to a medal viewed as the U.S. government's highest civilian award.

IRAQ WARS

Powell served as U.S. national security adviser under Republican President Ronald Reagan from 1987 to 1989. As a four-star Army general, he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Republican President George H.W. Bush during the 1991 Gulf War in which U.S.-led forces expelled Iraqi troops from neighboring Kuwait.

The New York native considered running for president in 1996, but his wife Alma's worries about his safety helped him decide otherwise. In 2008, he broke with his party to endorse Democrat Barack Obama, who became the first Black person elected to the White House.

Illustrating his deep misgivings about the evolution of the Republican Party as it has moved to the right, Powell endorsed Democrats Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election and Biden last year against Donald Trump. Powell called Trump a liar who presented a danger to the United States.

Biden, who painted his 2020 presidential candidacy against Trump as a fight for the United States' soul, thanked Powell for bucking his Republican Party to back him.

"I am forever grateful for his support of my candidacy for president and for our shared battle for the soul of the nation," Biden said.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY 10/18/2021

Houston Consular Ball



Wea H. Lee
Wealee@scdaily.com

Chairman of International District Houston Texas
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee
 Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
 Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
 Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



We are so honored to have been invited by Houston's Mayor Sylvester Turner to attend the Houston Consular Ball. Almost one hundred of the country's Consuls General and Honorary Consuls General attended the beautiful party last Saturday at Houston's George Brown Convention Center.

In his message, the mayor he said that Houston was founded as a trading hub on the banks of Buffalo Bayou and is a city shaped by its natural environment with its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, to its 22 bayous and waterways, to its 366 parks and to its more than 125 miles of hike-and-bike trails. Houston is, and has always been, a city connected by its green spaces.

As the Energy Capital of the World we continue to evolve as we look forward to the future. Houston is the city that is leading the energy transition to reduce



emissions.

As one of the most diverse cities in America, it is through global partnerships that Houston has been able to move forward into the future. We are very proud that our International District is playing such an important role in the growth of this great city.

The Houston Consular Ball was not only to show the mayor that we greatly

appreciate our Consular Corp, but to also recognize the Consular Corp for all that they have contributed over the years to the growth of our city.

We firmly believe that this signature event will continue to uphold our unique history of diversity, innovation and honor as well as the friendships we share with the Consular Corps.

Mr. Mayor, we all thank you so much.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Chief Constable of Essex Police B. J. Harrington, Britain's Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Speaker of the House Sir Lindsay Hoyle and Home Secretary Priti Patel hold flowers as they arrive at the scene where British MP David Amess was stabbed to death during a meeting with constituents at the Belfairs Methodist Church, in Leigh-on-Sea,



A hot air balloon floats near birds during the 34th Brazilian hot-air balloon championships in Torres, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil. REUTERS/Diego Vara



Britain's Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, arrive at the Earthshot awards ceremony in London. REUTERS/Henry Nicholls



Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, accompanied by his wife, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, walks out of University of California Irvine Medical Center, in Orange, California. REUTERS/David Swanson



Members of a Haitian dance group wait to perform during the first of an annual community event since the coronavirus pandemic, outside the Basilica and Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton



A health worker stands near an ambulance carrying a COVID-19 patient, as they wait in the queue at a hospital for people infected with the coronavirus disease in Kyiv, Ukraine. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich

Can Vaccines Win The Race Against COVID-19 Variants? Yes, They Can.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Vaccines are delivered to Tanzania as part of the COVAX program. (Photo/ UNICEF/Msirikale.)

Key Points
COVID-19 Variants Threaten To Undermine Global Vaccine Programs Unless We Accelerate The Pace Of Delivery.

- Just over 1% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- In order to control the spread of COVID-19, we need a global effort to ensure no one is left behind in immunization campaigns.

A new wave of COVID-19 is engulfing many countries around the world primarily due to the increasingly prevalent and more transmissible Delta variant of the new coronavirus. With only a few regional exceptions, Delta is mounting a successful global attack. In Indonesia and other Asian countries, health systems are overwhelmed and running out of oxygen. Across Africa – from Tunisia in the north to South Africa – the virus is surging; recently, recorded deaths on the continent jumped 40% in one week alone. In Europe, plans to lift or relax lockdowns are being delayed or modified. And in countries like the US and the UK, a number of key COVID-19 metrics have started to increase after months of decline. The Delta variant (first discovered in India), and other variants of concern including Beta (South Africa) and Gamma (Brazil), are confirming the critical need to vaccinate billions of people around the world – fast. In the race between variants and vaccines, we are falling behind. Failure to pick up the pace now will enable this virus to multiply and mutate to the point where future variants could outsmart our vaccines.

In the quest to vaccinate every citizen of the world against COVID-19, speed and strategy are key.

It's essential to think smartly about the impressive armamentarium of vaccines at our disposal and ensure we don't squander any of these lifesaving assets. No single vaccine can conquer COVID-19 – we need many. Each vaccine should be deployed to the frontlines, targeted to where they can make the greatest impact so that no population is left behind. Above all, we need to follow through on vaccine delivery all the way from the supply depot to the last mile, turning every available vaccine dose into a vaccination in someone's arm.

At Johnson & Johnson, it was precisely this kind of pandemic scenario that informed our selection of a single-dose vaccine that could be easily transported without the need for ultra-cold refrigeration. Of course, no vaccine developer could have predicted how the original Wuhan strain of coronavirus would evolve, and whether their vaccines would hold up against emerging variants.

Recent research published in the New England Journal of Medicine, along with a large real-world study of health workers in South Africa, suggests that the vaccine generates strong immune responses against Delta and other variants of concern. We now await results on protective efficacy from our large-scale clinical studies.



While getting vaccine science right is never easy, vaccine deployment on a global scale – in the middle of a pandemic – presents other challenges. Underscoring this, only slightly more than 1% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This has to change, not just for reasons of global equity, but because if we don't get COVID-19 under control everywhere, we will not be able to end this pandemic anywhere.

How do we crack the challenge of global deployment?

- **Intensify international cooperation and cross-sector partnerships** between industry, governments, health systems and civil society. Turning COVID-19 vaccines into vaccinations involves executing countless legal agreements, establishing no-fault compensation coverage for vaccine recipients, streamlining regulatory

processes, overseeing technology transfers with production partners, setting up pharmacovigilance systems, and coordinating closely with many global partners. This complex, multistep process, which normally takes years to complete, must be compressed into weeks.

- **The global community needs to get behind COVAX**, the unprecedented initiative working to ensure that the world's pandemic response includes concrete plans to enable access for lower-income countries, and vulnerable populations including those in conflict and crisis environments. Governments with surplus vaccines should immediately ramp up their dose sharing via COVAX. Stockpiling vaccine supplies will only prolong the pandemic. An example to emulate is the United States government, which recently embarked on the largest vaccine donation programme undertaken by any country in history.



- It involves the deployment of three COVID-19 vaccines from different manufacturers, and we're proud to be part of it.

So far, nearly 30 million doses of our vaccine have been donated to more than 30 countries across four continents – many through COVAX. This is just a start: millions more doses to many more countries will follow.

- **Maintain the free flow of the global vaccine supply chain.** Many of today's vaccines (not just for COVID-19) take shape in a multistep process involving suppliers and manufacturers located across multiple countries and continents. From the raw materials (like bio-bags to make biologics), to large batches of vaccine drug substance, to the finished vials, we are working with world-class manufacturers from the US to Europe, India and South Africa to supply our vaccine to the global community. It is important for governments to resist protectionist policies such as export controls and restrictions, which ultimately only serve to delay vaccine shipments and other lifesaving medicines reaching their own citizens. We must work together to ensure equitable supply.



- **Build on decades of innovation and science.** When the coronavirus crisis started, Johnson & Johnson leveraged more than a decade of research and development investments in our vaccine platform technology. We leveraged this

platform to develop our COVID-19 vaccine in just one year. We stand by our proprietary technology and believe in leveraging it for the global good. Expanding and accelerating voluntary technology transfers between vaccine developers and manufacturers, as we have done in India, South Africa and elsewhere, is the way forward.

- Short term actions that undermine the value of intellectual property will only discourage the innovation we need to combat the next pandemic. Ultimately, what we do now in the race against the variants will help to define not just how quickly the global community conquers COVID-19, but whether we are adequately prepared for the next pandemic. The principles of multilateral partnership, global equity, and unfettered rapid response must be at the heart of any pandemic preparedness blueprint for the future.

Here's what global progress on COVID-19 vaccination looks like

Several COVID-19 vaccines have been approved or authorized, but rollout has been hindered.



A health worker and a military police officer carry the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine to an Indigenous hut in Manaus, Brazil, February 9, 2021.

(Photo/REUTERS/Bruno Kelly)

- The World Economic Forum has created a visualization tracking country-by-country progress made on vaccination to date.

Countries around the world are racing to vaccinate their populations against COVID-19. In order to reach herd immunity, it's estimated that at least 60% of a population (and as much as 90%) must become immune thanks either to prior infection or vaccination. But as of 10 February nearly 130 countries, with a collective population of 2.5 billion, had yet to administer a single vaccine dose.

While some 10 different COVID-19 vaccines have been approved or authorized for emergency or limited use, the practical business of administering jabs has been hindered by staffing and supply shortages, procurement hiccups, and geopolitics. Concerns have also been raised about equitable access for poorer countries and historically-marginalized communities.

But there have also been positive signs, including Israel's relatively swift rollout, an upwardly revised daily vaccination target in the US, and India's distribution of free doses to countries including Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The Convidecia vaccine developed in China may just require just one dose, for example, but the Pfizer-BioNTech version already approved for use in several countries and the Sputnik V vaccine developed in Russia are among those that call for two.



The second waypoint in the visualization provides a fuller picture of progress made so far, as each country with available data turns a darker shade of green as the percentage of people receiving all doses prescribed by a vaccination protocol increases over time.

The discovery of new, potentially more deadly coronavirus mutations has added a sense of urgency to efforts to contain the pandemic – while prompting the exploration of ways to redesign existing vaccines.

For more context, here are links to further reading from the World Economic Forum's Strategic Intelligence platform:

- China and India are using the inoculation drive against COVID-19 as part of diplomatic efforts to shore up global and regional ties, according to this analysis – which has led to a tussle playing out online and in the media. (Australian Strategic Policy Institute)

- In the US, tailored messaging efforts are underway encouraging people particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 to get vaccinated – from communities of colour to migrant farmworkers. Among the aims, according to this report: giving people an empowering sense that they're helping others. (Kaiser Health News)

- Is it safe to delay a second vaccine dose? According to this report, there's some evidence that short waits are safe, but partial immunization may help risky new coronavirus variants to develop. (Scientific American)



- A number of wealthy countries have purchased far more vaccines than necessary (the UK, for example, has ordered 219 million full vaccinations for 54 million adults). This analysis suggests a way for excess doses to be re-distributed to those in need. (The Conversation)

- Will your ability to travel depend on your vaccination status? According to this report, Israel and Greece have agreed on a tourism pact enabling people already vaccinated against COVID-19 to travel freely between the countries. (Courtesy weforum.org)

The Global Pandemic Has Made Mental Well-Being A Public Health Priority



US gymnast Simone Biles has put the spotlight on athletes' mental health at the Tokyo Olympics. (Photo: REUTERS/Lindsey Wass)

Key Points
With mental health symptoms surging during the pandemic, nurturing mental wellness has become a collective social responsibility.

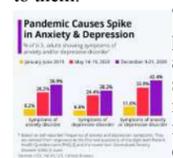
- **Early diagnosis and self-care can help manage the progression of mental illnesses and reduce healthcare costs.**
- **Great self-care means expanding the range of mental-health services available to the public.**

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

With the psychological impact of the pandemic likely to linger for years, self-care is not a luxury but a public health necessity. Focusing on mental wellness is a collective social responsibility. As third and fourth waves of COVID-19 surge in some parts of the world, highly vaccinated countries are cautiously reopening, breathing more freely, hopeful in early indications that inoculation will keep virus and variants under control. As we look ahead, we must also find solutions to supporting and improving mental health.

During the pandemic, nearly half of US adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, a figure that has been largely consistent, up from one in 10 who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019. In France, cases of depression doubled. We can see similar mental health

concerns growing worldwide. It's disproportionately affecting young adults, people of color and essential workers, even people without prior mental health disorders. Lockdowns have also limited access to mental health services, creating backlogs in care. Not to mention the remote working lifestyle we have been in for more than a year now, which often creates feeling of being disconnected from colleagues, even when connected technologically to them.



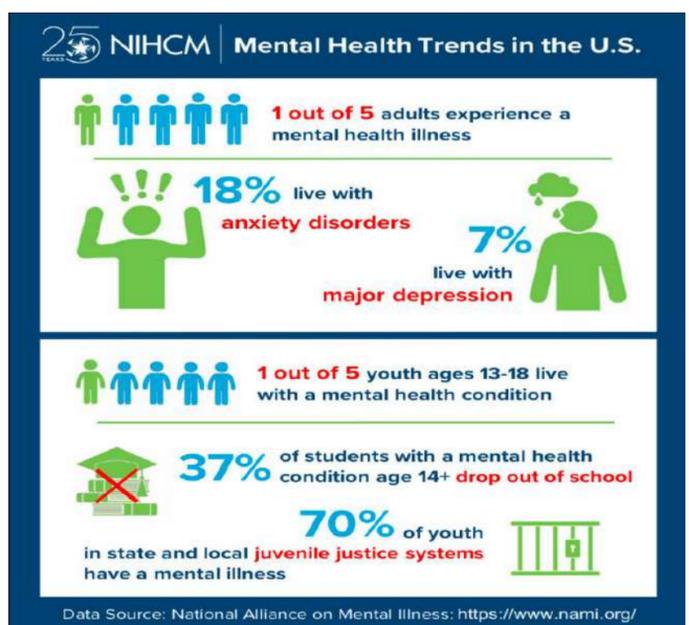
The pandemic has put mental health and wellness into sharp focus. It's reassuring to see many initiatives doubling down

on mental-health awareness now: the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the UK's Royal Family and the Global Self-Care Federation are just a few among many others that have championed it as a priority and have undertaken large-scale public service campaigns to destigmatize symptoms and raise awareness of available solutions. Taking care of mental health is good for individuals and good for public health systems in the future, as early intervention and prevention helps keep many people out of more burdensome clinical settings. Insomnia is one example that comes to mind, a condition that has grown upwards of an estimated 20% since the pandemic. By working closely with healthcare communities, we can help raise awareness of insomnia's repercussions on overall mental and physical wellness. Over-the-counter medicines can help support people in their management of early sleep issues.



Non-medicinal solutions also exist: for example, Music Care, a research and digital program for patient care through music, has been clinically proven to naturally reduce both alertness and the need for sedation among hospital patients, decreasing heart rate and respiratory rate, promoting relaxation and sleep.

There's much more we can do with the mental health community to support improved sleep as just one small part of the solution. The pandemic has spurred many people to pay better attention to their health with increased everyday physical activity for some, and for others, an improved diet with more home-cooked meals. Yet we know good habits are sometimes hard to keep up: According to one study, 70% of adults under 40 say they believe they are performing sufficient self-care, but just over half of their doctors and pharmacists say their patients aren't doing enough. We can close this gap with better preventive mental wellness efforts and more self-care, areas that had already begun to gain attention even before the pandemic.



Beyond raising awareness about mental health, it's about taking concrete action and correspondingly providing appropriate resourcing and building a supportive ecosystem. During the World Health Assembly in May, WHO officials called worsened mental health worldwide from COVID-19 a "mass trauma" and consequently adopted a decision endorsing an update to the WHO's Mental Health Action Plan: It will include forums on suicide prevention, workplace mental health, universal health coverage, mental health of children, mental health across the life course, and the involvement of people with lived experience of mental health conditions.

More self-care is also about improved access to health services for the broader population. Due to the accelerated digital transformation hastened by the pandemic, internet platforms have become key levers for empowered self-care. There, people can find out more about their health conditions, including mental wellness-related ones, seek support, assess options and get solutions. Incredibly accessible, putting information literally at your fingertips, these new channels provide people with the opportunity to manage their health – to self-care – in a more effective way, without taking away resources from the frontline. The development of teleconsultation in medicine, the evolution of click and collect and home delivery by e-pharmacies is

putting the pharmacist at the centre of population health, more and more playing the role of health counsellor.



Today, there is a need to extend these services to people experiencing mental health problems, especially when pharmacists are likely to be their first point of contact. Pharmacists have a significant role to play if we make mental health for all a global reality. That said, not all mental wellness can be managed with self-care alone; but multiple studies have shown that screening and early professional intervention will prevent more severe conditions from setting in following major trauma. Individuals can be their own strongest advocates, with governments, industry and patient groups each playing a role in strengthening true consumer literacy in this field. Not only is it important to recognize mental health risks, but we also need to stay in tune to identifying symptoms, take courageous steps to self-care, and engage with the right solutions. Together, we can solve the mental health challenges we'll still face even after COVID-19 is under control. (Courtesy weforum.org)