A thread by Tom Inglesby

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It's terrible to see the President, First lady and other(s) in the White House staff sickened with COVID and I hope they recover quickly. It is important to consider and respond to the implications of their illnesses: 1/x

As with all people who get sick with COVID, it will take days or possibly weeks to know how it will affect any one individual in the White House who has become infected. 2/x

The fact that the President is going to Walter Reed may mean his symptoms are now concerning enough to his physician team for him to be hospitalized or that he is going to get a specific treatment, or that they just want him there to be closely monitored as a precaution. 3/x

Given this disease can be mild in nature or can be very serious, and that it is possible to move from one to the other quickly, it will be important for the public and Congress to be closely and transparently informed of how the President’s illness is evolving. 4/x

And given the importance of the White House operation to the functioning of the country, it will be critical to understand the size of the outbreak there and to contain it as quickly as possible. 5/x

In addition to being close to WH staff, the President, First Lady + team attended many events in days before their symptoms began. People are potentially quite contagious w/ COVID for as long as 2-3 days before onset of symptoms. It’s possible that many people were exposed. 6/x

People who had close interaction with the President, the First Lady and other team members who test positive will be considered “contacts” if they meet the definition of a contact as outlined by CDC. 7/x

If someone is found to be a "contact", even if they test negative at first, they could become positive later and so should be in quarantine for 2 weeks. 8/x

Hopefully the chain of transmission in the White House can be identified quickly and contained, but it is likely that there will be many people that will need to be in quarantine given their close interaction with the President and the First Lady. 9/x

If there are additional cases of disease found as this outbreak is investigated, then it will be very important to identify contacts of those cases as well, so that undetected spread doesn’t continue in the White House and beyond. 10/x
These very concerning developments show how critical it continues to be to practice physical distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, and avoiding large gatherings where transmission can happen, or superspreading events can occur. 11/x

Last week the CDC Director said that more than 90% of the country remains susceptible to this virus. We all need to continue to do what we can to lower the risks of transmission. /end