A thread by **Tom Inglesby**

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US now has daily average of 71,000 cases, all time high for the pandemic. And trends are pointing higher. Nearly 1 in 6 new daily diagnosed cases in the world is in the US, even though we have only 1/24th of the global population.


People have asked this week whether we are now at the peak of this new COVID surge because we are now higher than the summer surge. The answer is that there is no pre-defined peak. There is no plateau. No set upper limit the epidemic will hit and turn around.

The rise of COVID will only stop when individuals and leaders take actions together to slow it down.

Einstein said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and hoping for a different result. Many states where the surge is greatest, have leaders saying the same words, and taking few if any steps to change the course of their state COVID epidemics.

Until state leaders take steps to slow the spread, or until the public in those places decide to change directions and substantially increase actions like mask use, physical distancing, avoiding gatherings, staying in quarantine after exposure, COVID will continue to rise.

Hospital across the Midwest and Mountain west are sounding alarms. Other places too - e.g. El Paso TX. Health care workers in many of these states are exhausted, and ICUS beds are in short supply in hospitals across a wide number of states.

As per COVID tracking project, the number of people hospitalized in US is now 44,212.

https://covidtracking.com/data/national/hospitalization

It was 28,600 on September 20 and has been rising ever since. The # of COVID pts on ventilators has risen 54% over that time.

Unlike March, or even unlike the summer time in the Southern states, many governors seem to be reacting by doing little or nothing new. They're in a version of Phase 3, nearly or completely open w/ few restrictions. Many of worst affected states have no state mask mandates.

Continued confusion being promulgated about how this surge is simply ‘because more testing is going on.’ Yes some level of more testing is going on as compared to the summer. But no that doesn’t explain what is happening.

The sharp rise in hospitalizations and the numbers of people on ventilators makes it crystal clear that this is a new real and serious surge in severe COVID.
State and national leaders who continue to say this spike is just more testing are either confused themselves or are misleading people. 11/x

What we need now is for clear communication from state and federal leaders on what is actually happening. And on what needs to be done to bring the epidemic under much better control. 12/x

There is highly compelling evidence that masking slows this epidemic down. But many governors won’t put mandates in place. Masks would slow the epidemic down and not get in the way of economic activity. It is something everyone can do for the good of their communities. 13/x

Ironically, those governors who are doing the least to control this epidemic will be at highest risk of situation getting so bad that they will be forced to take more drastic measures to slow the epidemic down. 14/x

If those governors were willing to ask their public to take evidence-based actions – mask mandates, physical distancing, suspend indoor gatherings, close high risk venues, testing, tracing, quarantine, better indoor ventilation – they may be able to avoid more serious action. 15/x

Taking no new control steps in places w/ rapidly growing epidemics means higher risk of big school outbreaks, w/ more risk to teachers. Seems like getting schools to open safely is a goal that all Americans share. Letting an epidemic rise out of control puts that in jeopardy. 16/x

Doing little or nothing new in places with rapidly worsening epidemics means putting more doctors, nurses and hospital staff at risk of getting COVID themselves. 17/x

As of a month ago, more than 1700 health care workers had died from COVID, and that likely underestimates many different kinds of workers within the health care system that are harder to count. 18/x

In Israel, things got so out of hand last month that the whole country needed to go into lockdown. https://twitter.com/segal_eran/status/1318614894657286146?s=20 19/x

No one in US wants to go back to an indiscriminate lockdown, so its time for governors in the hardest hit states to take sensible steps that could slow the epidemic down and prevent rising crisis. 20/x

And it’s time for national leaders to act responsibly, stop scheduling large in person gatherings, and be direct with the public about what is necessary to contain this epidemic. 21/x