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As US hits new highs in national and state COVID cases, and rising hospitalizations, some leaders say we’re rounding the corner. Others offer fatalism that there’s nothing more to be done to control this US epidemic now that winter is coming. Both positions are just wrong. 1/x

US had 99,155 cases yesterday (559,124 cases over the course of the week) with about 800 people dying from it every day. There has been no turning the corner for the good. The trendlines are going in the wrong direction. 2/x

And compared to rest of the world, the US is not doing well. US has about 1 in every 5.5 new cases globally. More total cases and daily cases than any other country. And it’s in the bottom 5th of countries globally in terms of new cases and deaths per day per 100,000 people. 3/x

US hospitalizations from COVID are rising nationally, as are COVID pts on ventilators, with numbers this high last seen in second week of August. 4/x

The epidemic is most badly affecting states across Midwest and Mountain west, though many other states not doing well either, including TN, KY, RI, AK, AR, MS, AB. 5/x

These rapidly rising cases - particularly where there’s no new policy direction or strong communication w/ public - will lead to more people sick and dying from COVID, more hospitals filling, degrading their ability to care for COVID pts and others who get hospitalized. 6/x

If you hear governor’s say something along the lines of “there is nothing more that we can do to control this epidemic,” that’s wrong. 7/x

One example of this is in N. Dakota which has 122 new COVID cases per day per 100,000 people. Compare this to Louisiana which has about 12 new COVID cases per day per 100,000 people. 8/x

If N Dakota were a country, there is only one country in the world that has a higher daily incidence (Belgium). If you look at the incidence map for ND, its nearly all red. [https://nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/north-dakota-coronavirus-cases.html](https://nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/north-dakota-coronavirus-cases.html) 9/x

Despite all this, this week WH Coronavirus Task Force lead Dr. Birx, said she found Bismarck’s COVID-19 protocols to be the worst she had seen anywhere in the country. 10/x

And even now in North Dakota, there is no state wide mask mandate and wearing a mask remains a "matter of personal choice." 11/x
We don’t say its a personal choice for people to speed through neighborhoods with small children at 80 MPH. State policymakers put in place rules that help us all stay safe together, so that one person doesn’t threaten the safety and health of another. 12/x

Another example is South Dakota, which has a daily incidence of 118 new cases of COVID per day per 100,000 people. Also higher than any country in the world other than Belgium. 13/x

But Maggie Seidel, “senior adviser to Gov Noem, said the governor has no opinion on whether people should wear masks while in close proximity to others in public locations and ”.... 14/x

"...and that the governor’s response is a measured one to a virus that she said will spread with or without governmental restrictions.” 15/x

That kind of statement – that basically says that government restrictions will do nothing to slow the spread of COVID – is false. Governments around the world have used restrictions to help countries get control of COVID. 16/x

Countries around the world have seen that physical distancing, masking, limits to indoor gatherings have had major impact in controlling COVID. As have testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine. More ventilation in buildings will also help decrease risks. 17/x

If all leaders had been strongly promoting all of these interventions all along, many states would not be in the position they are in now. But now that they are, those are the kinds of actions that need to be taken around the country. 18/x

And in places where the epidemic is worsening despite those measures in place, governors should shut or reduce density of higher risk organizations, such as indoor bars, restaurants, entertainment, religious orgs, as well as place sharper limits on social gatherings. 19/x

We don’t see leaders of other high income countries saying there is nothing they can do to stop the spread. Or saying that they are rounding the corner even as their numbers break higher records nearly every day. 20/x

Some countries have had to put in place “lockdown” measures for 2nd time. When they say “lockdown” this time, its mostly closures of higher risk orgs and settings like restaurants and bars, as opposed to the more extensive restrictions from March through early spring. 21/x

In the US, it’s wrong for political leaders to portray the choices ahead as either doing nothing vs full lockdown. There are many valuable measures individuals should be taking that will decrease spread. As well as useful restrictions that are far short of "total lockdown". 22/x

Sadly, governors that are not willing to take practical evidence based restrictions to slow the spread are in fact imperiling the progress made in opening schools and the economic growth that had been returning. 23/x

Epidemics that spread out of control in 1 state can spill into others. So all gov’s should be encouraging each other to act in the interest of the whole country. We won’t need to act like this forever. Vaccine is likely coming and will help change things for the better. 24/x
Meantime, if the epidemic is brought under better control, not only will less people get sick and die, but economic activity will be better, schools will be safer, hospitals less likely in crisis, health care workers less at risk. Goals which we all are likely to share.