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Here comes the 'it's just like the flu' comments. And before they do...For everyone saying, "The flu kills so many more people annually, why are we so worried about coronavirus?" - here's my public health perspective. I'm by no means an expert, but I've attended multiple coronavirus trainings this week specific to healthcare professionals, (given by credentialed healthcare professionals and based on the latest research) I run a primary care clinic that serves over 3,500 patients annually, and I have a Masters in Public Health. My whole week has been taken over by coronavirus PPE supply ordering, coronavirus test ordering, coronavirus test training, coronavirus identification, and coronavirus process. My information is not coming from Buzzfeed.

This new coronavirus, COVID-19, has a higher death rate than the flu, very little research, no vaccine, no treatment, and is easily transmittable - so it needs to be CONTAINED. Whether you think so or not - it's dangerous and should be taken seriously. There's a reason State and City Departments of Health are planning and reacting. It's not because they think it's fun to shut down schools, cancel parades, or watch the economy tank. Believe me, they'd rather be spending their time on other things too. We have no other way of stopping it right now, and it's not slowing down any other way. Letting it spread would be catastrophic. Why?

1. It's estimated that Coronavirus has seven times the fatality rate for seasonal flu, which is estimated to kill between 290,000 and 650,000 people a year globally. Multiply that by seven.

2. Humans have built herd immunity to many strains of the flu - meaning that not everyone who comes in contact with the flu will catch or carry the flu. This strain of coronavirus is very new, we do not have built up herd immunity, so it's much more transmittable.

Scientists have also had a very long time to study the flu, so we know how it will act in terms of morbidity and mortality. We have no idea how a three-month-old virus will act.

3. We also have vaccines for the flu - and have had them since 1945. We have no vaccines for this coronavirus and it will take 12-18 months to develop one.

4. Additionally, we have antiviral treatments for the flu, four that are FDA approved, which can prevent pneumonia and more severe symptoms. We don't currently have an antiviral treatment for COVID-19.

5. We do not have an adequate amount of tests currently. Healthcare systems in our area have only been able to order a limited amount of tests through Quest and Labcorp, and all tests still need to be confirmed through the CDC. There are many people affected right now that have not been tested and/or quarantined.

6. Last, but certainly not least, the flu is a seasonal virus - it is weakened in warm weather. There is currently no evidence suggesting that this strain of coronavirus will weaken with the changing weather.

So yes, it's not that bad in the US right NOW. But if it's not contained, it will get worse, and there's no coronavirus vaccine, no antiviral treatment, and no docs that really understand yet how to keep the more severe symptoms from worsening in particularly vulnerable people. Maybe that doesn't directly affect you, but I'm sure you know someone over the age of 65 or someone who is immunocompromised that you'd like to remain safe.

I get that it's annoying that people are overstocking on items like toilet paper, or that an event you wanted to go to was canceled, or that you're tired of hearing about it in the news, but again, this is not the flu. Sometimes things are done for the public's protection, even when it's not always clear to the public as to why. So, listen to the

public health professionals, they're on your side."