

When I heard of the new virus, I thought back to a recent program I watched where Bill Gates said America would not be ready for another pandemic due to its lack of resources and proper protocols. It would not be until COVID-19 arrived in America would I realize how right he was.

I was sitting in Fletcher Library when I first heard of the COVID-19 outbreaks in China and Europe. I never thought it would reach America, stop school, nor that it would lead to a month-long quarantine. The only thing I knew about it at the time was that it was highly contagious and caused noxious symptoms. I remember it caused a huge panic where people flocked to grocery stores and hoarded groceries and toilet paper (which was really annoying). There were people preaching about the end of the world, spouting conspiracy theories, and all sorts of other crazy things. Amidst all of that, I never thought to learn about the anatomy and pathology of the virus because I was preoccupied with maintaining social distance regulations and washing my hands. Looking back, the virus's effect was not as bad as the media had made it out to be. At least that was not the case for younger people. However, I do understand why we had the lockdown, continued to social distance and wear masks after everything reopened. Older people were more at risk if they contracted the virus. I never understood the carelessness of people who did not wear their masks or social distance. That is one of the primary reasons COVID-19 cases are as high as they are. I think that this would not have happened if people were more educated on public health. This is something I will focus on as a citizen and future physician.