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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.” Michael Jordan

NO VACCINE YET, BUT

But, we are seeing more and more ways to circumvent (run around/ avoid Covid- 19). The most obvious one, getting heightened statistical support, is the use of face masks. “When an infected person and another person are both masked, the chance of transmission decreases between 40 and 80%.” And, “even when masking does not prevent people from becoming infected, it decreases by roughly 10 fold the amount of virus to which they are exposed, and that in turn may limit the

likelihood that they will develop a severe case of Covid- 19” (CV).

Further, the use of inexpensive paper strip tests to detect the virus, although less accurate than the current standard nasal swab, can return a positive result for a tiny bit of virus, and they have a fast turn around time. “If deployed widely, they could be an effective first-detection tool.”

Less encouraging news on the Remdesivir front, which shortened the hospital stays of patients by about four days and the steroid, dexamethasone, which showed a slight decrease in mortality. These are typically used with very ill patients, and “studies suggest that only one in every twenty people who received these treatments would be saved from dying.” Source- Joshua Schiffer- division of allergy and infectious diseases at University of Washington.

HEY, WE WANT OURS TOO:

So we fast forward to the president’s recent bout with the CV. Rather than wait until his case was severe, his doctors jumped in at the

start and gave him Remdesivir, dexamethasone and a virtually unproven polyclonal, two antibody cocktail, from Regeneron. If we can believe his doctor's reports, and caution is urged, as Dr Conley is prone to being overly optimistic, the president has done very well. It is acknowledged that the president has a way to go, but given his risk profile, his recovery thus far has been very good, perhaps making a case for earlier use Remdesivir and dexamethasone in treatment of the illness.

Then, the surprising thing, at least to me. As part of his regimen, the president has been taking vitamin D and Zinc. It would appear, therefore, that these two over the counter items are being used as therapeutics, not just prophylactics. If you're not already taking vitamin D and Zinc (cold eze and Airborne good sources) you might want to consider it.

Of all the foregoing, the easiest and, irrefutably, excellent protection is the constant use of masks.

A VACCINE IN YOUR CHRISTMAS STOCKING?

We now have better insight as to why many are nervous about assurances for the efficacy of an approved vaccine (four are in stage three final trials). There is obviously a political push to get a vaccine approved before the election and the big fight today pits the Administration against the FDA.

Governor Cuomo has been so alarmed that the FDA might be pressured into a premature approval of a vaccine that he has said he won't accept the seal of approval from the Federal Government and will, instead rely on the NY State Department of Health. This, from the same man who, in March, mandated that NY nursing homes take in CV patients. Fragile targets to begin with, NY nursing homes account for 26% of the 32,827 CV deaths to date.

NY State Department of Health as the approving agency for a new vaccine? What a joke. "It has no expertise in evaluating clinical trials to assess the safety and efficacy of new products, whereas the FDA has been doing so for 60 years."

As a result of Cuomo's posturing, there is more skepticism than ever about the public's willingness to take an FDA approved vaccine.

A Pew Research Center poll, published recently concludes that only 51% of Americans would either probably or definitely take a vaccine shot, down from 72% in May.

So, where is the big conflict between the FDA and the Administration? – essentially, one issue. Currently, the FDA's recommendation (not immutable stance) is that, "Those who have participated in vaccine clinical trials be followed for a median of two months after the final dose to identify possible side effects and to ensure that a vaccine's protection was not short lived."

The bottom line is, that unless the FDA can become comfortable with a shorter than two month waiting period, there is no way a vaccine could be approved before election day. Whatever the final agreement, I cannot envision any scenario where the FDA would put the American public at risk because of

pressure by the Administration. I would, instead, expect to see mass resignations from the FDA.

Lastly, I'm neither a politician nor a pollster, but even if a vaccine were approved before election day, would that change many votes? I don't think so.

WELCOME TO FALL:

Bars opening, restaurants opening, illegal fraternity parties flourishing on campuses, Dr. Fauci is worried in the extreme. The U.S. can't seem to get new cases under 40,000 a day – a bad omen for the greater inside life we will be living in future months.

We are being faced with a repeat or worse of what happened this past summer. During the summer beach and party time, from June through August the incidence of virus was highest among young adults ages 20-29. In essence the country went through a three step progression in increased infections. In states like Alabama, Florida and Georgia, the increase in young adult cases was followed

nine days later by a sharp uptick in cases among those 40 to 59 and then, 15 days later another rise in cases among people 60 and older.

With the advent of colder weather and students coming home (many from Thanksgiving through the end of the year) and a high starting daily infection rate, the country may be in for a bad second surge.

POVERTY, DO WE UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS?

Caught a brief glimpse of Mr. Biden the other night on TV making a campaign pledge saying that under his administration, no one would have to work two jobs to stay above the poverty line – a nice sounding idea, but wouldn't that be akin to Andrew Yang's \$1,000 a month for every American thanks to the Federal Government? I remember nothing from Econ. 101, but can only conjure up mega numbers to support such an idea.

Are you aware that 34 million people in the U.S. are living at or below the poverty level,

10.5% of the population (actually down from 14.8% in 2014) What is poverty?

In yearly income, for a family of one, \$12,760; Family of two, \$17,240; family of three, \$21,720; family of four, \$26,200; family of five, \$30,680. The homeless, who earn virtually zero, are now estimated to be 560,000 in number.

Apply any of the above numbers to your own life and you get an idea of how terrible poverty is. What are people making in the real world? Let's look at the low paying end. McDonalds pays \$8/ hour to \$15.50 per hour. For a five day 50 week a year job, that's a range of \$14,000 to \$31,000.

Therefore, at the lowest level, an unmarried worker is barely above the poverty level and a married person with three children is right at the poverty level. The question becomes, where are the 30 something million people below these wage levels and what are they doing? I don't have the slightest idea, but USA we have a mega problem that desperately needs to be addressed. Revolutions come from less than this.

Your faithful scribe, PB