

Fall is a few short weeks away. They are prepared. Are you?

Most Albertans are soaking up summer, enjoying life seemingly free of COVID mandates. But for the more discerning and distrustful, we aren't fooled. Spend a few hours in a care home or hospital and the signs of past, present and future measures "for your safety" are everywhere. Masks which are discretionary except for in an outbreak at the moment, WILL become mandatory in an instant especially when respiratory season arrives. The signage, sanitation, testing, masking and vaccination protocols are all still there to be enforced as and when the powers that be see fit. We are now governed by abusers who allow their victims a brief reprieve but have every plan in place to impose more horrors in the future.

It took a trip to emergency by a vaccinated family friend this week for his advocate to realize that COVID protocols are very much still in effect for everyone in hospitals. The patient was admitted by ambulance with a heart attack and breathing difficulties. His bacterial pneumonia, treated for just five days a week earlier, had returned putting too much strain on his heart. On admission, he was subjected to COVID testing. Despite a negative result and recent history, he was told his respiratory infection was viral. The doctors had no evidence to support this statement. In fact, all the evidence they had contradicted their finding. He was placed on isolation and required to mask if he left the room. A battery of tests were at least ordered for his heart and more. His advocate had to insist he was treated with a further antibiotic course. After considerable pushback, the patient was finally given two antibiotics (ceftriaxone and azithromycin) to address what his doctor finally acknowledged was an unresolved bacterial infection. The mandatory five days of isolation later, despite being still symptomatic, he was taken off isolation. Why? Because he is vaccinated. This is NOT about anyone's safety! It is about checking boxes. The patient's advocate was a qualified nurse, well versed in navigating the system. She ensured that he received the necessary care for his best chance of recovery. What happens to those who are not so fortunate? I know from first-hand experience that many fall foul of the protocols and are not appropriately treated. Even after this patient's isolation period, a much-needed lung function test was delayed because he was assumed neutropenic (which means at risk of infection) and he was told that removing his mask for the test would put him in danger. His advocate was also told that she could not visit until 10am each day AFTER doctor's rounds even though the patient who suffers from extreme anxiety needed her in person support. To solve this, the patient would call his advocate so she could help him make informed decisions for his wellbeing. I cannot stress enough how important it is for anyone who goes into hospital to always have an advocate there in person or at least available by phone. In a health crisis, none of us should be left alone to navigate tests and treatments without the support of someone they trust to be there for oversight. Three years on and care is still very much being controlled and compromised by COVID protocols.

This week in my mum's care home, there was a "Street Dance" for residents, family and friends. On the surface, it seems the care centre is finally free of mandates after over three years of limited human contact. It was pure joy to see residents greeted with a hug, holding hands and

dancing, surrounded by smiling faces and freely socializing with others. Never again should “safety” behind the "mask" of care be used to deny these vulnerable souls what they need most to feel truly alive. When quantity of life is limited, remember that quality time with loved ones is what really matters. As I danced with my mum, I wondered how many people there realized how bittersweet the moment was we were all so enjoying. This freedom is nothing more than a stay of execution based on what we see them preparing for in the centre already... a stainless-steel sanitizer station which looks more like a urinal is now mounted to the wall at the entrance, custom designed so you know they will be everywhere and permanent fixtures soon. There are new mask notices on the front doors. Everything is in place for further isolations with just two "symptomatic cases" in a 7-day period. Our mum is a living testament to what should have been done to mitigate suffering and death. We can but hope that families push back when the insanity is doubled down on come fall. Pay attention to every detail. I was thanked this week by a unit manager for pressing them to act for a gentleman who has spent months on a feeding tube post-surgery. He was looking at weeks more waiting for a repeat swallow test. I have reported deficits every time I have visited him - lack of oral care, dry lips and a desperate need for a repeat swallow test which would mean this man could at least drink and talk normally. My insistence paid off. His test was prioritized, and a report has been made to his doctor. His situation should change for the better soon. But only because someone, in this case not even family, chose to act.

Our family made the ultimate stand against COVID measures. Our mother has never been tested, masked or vaccinated for COVID. We have never allowed her to be isolated. She turns 80 this year. She has not only survived but has thrived with relentless advocacy and staff at Dickinsfield who have respected and supported our choices. Please don't be afraid to question any medical treatment for yourself and especially for someone who depends on you for their care. The last three years should have taught us all that no expert has all the answers. Quality healthcare must always be a dialogue between patient and provider - not a dictate. Where fully informed consent, not coercion or a mandate, is the basis for our health decisions. Where we can trust that those who have our lives in their hands will, to the best of their knowledge and ability, do no harm. But remember that a system that was limping along pre COVID is now on life support – by design.

Those responsible for the insanity of the last three years are prepared for winter. The FDA has approved a 'new', completely untested vaccine targeted at a strain that won't exist in the fall... this shot is aimed at children who escaped the first rollout. Canada is adding a flu shot, the bait to administer both, a shot in each arm, on the same day. How many parents will fail to do their homework on these shots after three years of adverse events acknowledged by government as off the charts? How many more children will become a statistic as injuries and deaths by design continue to climb? How many parents will fall at this next hurdle and fail to protect those they love, acting out of fear and ignorance?

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