

Dear Montgomery County Council,

Several county officials made statements during the January 18th forum that need to be addressed.

Dr. Stoddard provided a very flawed CDC data point, the number of positive cases, as his supporting evidence for why he believes vaccines limit the spread of Covid. Everyone who keeps up with Covid policies knows that the more tests you perform, the more positive cases you find.

If you perform more tests on the unvaccinated population than the vaccinated, you will find more positive cases in that community, which is exactly what has been going on. Many businesses and localities have rules that require unvaccinated individuals to test to participate, but do not have this requirement of the vaccinated, under the incorrect assumption that vaccinated individuals do not catch or spread Covid. This dichotomy of restrictions has created the illusion that vaccinated individuals are more likely to catch Covid, simply by forcing more unvaccinated individuals to take the test.

To prove Dr. Stoddard's hypothesis, he would need to conduct a scientific study where 100% of the population is tested. As it happens, there are several studies that have done just this. One of these studies tested the entire population of a prison following an outbreak, finding "About 70% of fully vaccinated people in a Texas prison caught COVID-19 in an outbreak, the CDC said."

[\[https://www.yahoo.com/news/70-fully-vaccinated-prisoners-caught-120458867.html\]](https://www.yahoo.com/news/70-fully-vaccinated-prisoners-caught-120458867.html)

There was another study done on the participants of a party with a large outbreak where "about three-fourths of the 469 infections were among vaccinated people."

[\[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-21/science-can-t-keep-up-with-virus-creating-worry-for-vaccinated\]](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-21/science-can-t-keep-up-with-virus-creating-worry-for-vaccinated)

Provincetown had a rather large outbreak, and while they probably didn't test every single person in the town, they tested enough to find "69% of affected individuals reported to be fully vaccinated."

[\[https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/nearly-200-more-covid-cases-reported-in-provincetown-outbreak/2440384/?amp\]](https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/nearly-200-more-covid-cases-reported-in-provincetown-outbreak/2440384/?amp)

I find Dr. Stoddard's assertion that unvaccinated people are significantly more likely to test positive for Covid to be completely unsupported by the data, and this has been proven out in many scientific studies.

Councilmember Rice made an equally flawed assertion that vaccinated individuals breathe out fewer viral particles than unvaccinated individuals when infected. He cited a UCLA study that backed up his claim as the lone reason why he would not accept the scientific studies that countered his statement.

However, this particular UCLA study was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, which means that it did not include the Delta variant. The Delta variant spreads in a different way from the original strain of Covid, which allows it to bypass the protection offered by vaccines.

Below, I am including links to more recent scientific articles that explain why Councilmember Rice's statements are out of date and should not be used to make policies in 2022.

The outdated UCLA study. -

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/vaccinated-workers-shed-less-covid-virus>

An article explaining why Delta can evade the vaccines in ways that the original variant couldn't. - <https://api.nationalgeographic.com/distribution/public/amp/science/article/evidence-mounts-that-people-with-breakthrough-infections-can-spread-delta-easily>

A study showing that vaccinated people transmit Covid just as much as unvaccinated. "Individuals who have had two vaccine doses can be just as infectious as those who have not been jabbed." - <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-59077036>

"CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said recent studies had shown that those vaccinated individuals who do become infected with Covid have just as much viral load as the unvaccinated, making it possible for them to spread the virus to others." - <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-administration-recommend-vaccinated-wear-masks-areas-low-vaccination-rates-n1275012>

Below I am including the recommendations I previously submitted for the January 18 hearing:

If you are serious about making the Covid situation better, please consider the following actions:

1. Do like New York state and start reporting hospitalizations and death "because of Covid" separately from those simply "with Covid". Without this differentiation, we cannot tell how much Covid is actually affecting our lives, versus simply being a nuisance like a cold. In New York's case they found that only about half of the people in the hospital were there "because of Covid". Everyone else just happened to be "with Covid", but were not suffering any symptoms from it.
2. Update Covid dashboard to include the total number of ICU beds in use, not just the percent used. Without the total, we cannot assess what the real situation is, because the number of ICU beds changes based on need. Please make sure to include total numbers for every statistic that is only represented as a percent.

Sincerely,

Eric Finch