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News, Research and Events

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How can the Covid-19 experience help the U.S. improve health, not just health care?

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread, weaknesses and flaws in the U.S. health infrastructure are becoming more obvious. At a recent webinar, [Elena Marks](#), nonresident fellow in health policy and president and CEO of the Episcopal Health Foundation, was joined by the Honorable [Linnet F. Deily](#), the executive chair of the Episcopal Health Foundation and a member of the Baker Institute Board of Advisors, to discuss the vulnerabilities of the system and to imagine what a reformed system might look like. [Vivian Ho](#), the James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics, served as the moderator.

Deily discussed the advantages of a community-focused approach to health that encourages looking at all of the factors — including environmental and social elements — that can lead to good or bad health. By taking this comprehensive approach, Deily believes that communities, especially those that are underserved, can achieve better health outcomes with a more holistic approach.

Similarly, Marks observed that greater investment in social services could mitigate health risks. In fact, in most cases, non-medical issues like housing, employment, income and food security are the factors that have exacerbated the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although the pandemic has highlighted some of the vulnerabilities of our health care system — including the lack of affordable health care for all individuals, regardless of income or employment — the silver lining is an opportunity to rebuild it. According to Marks, a reformed health care system will require changing the idea that medical care is the only mechanism to promote a healthy population. To do so requires reallocating funds to support more public health initiatives and accelerating payment reform to pay for health outcomes rather than medical care delivery. She emphasized the importance of primary care as the centerpiece of the reformed health system as well as ensuring that everyone has access to affordable health options.

These reforms will require a national conversation about the role of government, businesses and individuals in paying for health and setting up an improved system for delivery of health services. The Covid-19 pandemic may be the very thing that creates the momentum needed for this conversation. Many viewers followed up on this issue during a Q&A session moderated by Ho, asking how such reforms could be realistically implemented. If you missed the webinar, you can hear their responses, and view the full presentation on the [event page](#).

This webinar is part of the Baker Institute's larger response to the unprecedented crisis facing the world. Each week, experts at the Baker Institute are offering free webinars to share their insights and knowledge on critical policy issues, ranging from [the effects of the pandemic on the North American supply chain](#) to the [implications for global humanitarian aid](#), and much more. For a full list of webinars scheduled to date, please see our [events page](#).

“It is our collective responsibility as Americans to take on the momentous challenge of Covid-19 by actively guiding and influencing our leaders toward wisdom and resilience.”

Edward P. Djerejian, Director, Baker Institute for Public Policy,
in a [Houston Chronicle op-ed](#)



Reducing U.S. dependence on China-dominated supply chains

The United States must reduce its dependence on China-dominated supply chains for critical goods, according to a new report by experts in the Center for Energy Studies at the Baker Institute for Public Policy and at the U.S. Naval War College's China Maritime Studies Institute.

[“Economic Statecraft: Options for Reducing U.S. Overdependence on Chinese-supplied Materials and Medications”](#) offers foundational building blocks for the formulation and implementation of a larger strategy to reduce American vulnerabilities to China. It was co-authored by [Gabriel Collins](#), the Baker Botts Fellow in Energy and Environmental Regulatory Affairs at the Baker Institute, and [Andrew Erickson](#), professor of strategy at the Naval War College.

“From the outset, we want to be crystal clear about a core premise of our thinking: the United States will — and decidedly should — remain closely connected to the global economy,” the researchers wrote. “But the corporate quest over the past 25 years to cut supplier costs, with insufficient concern for resilience, has saddled the nation with gaping strategic vulnerabilities in the supply chains for certain critical materials, medications and technology inputs. Our analysis describes what it will take to begin reclaiming U.S. security and strategic autonomy in those areas.”

Read the [full report here](#).

Tune in on [Friday, May 8, at 3 pm CT for a webinar](#) on the energy dimensions of the U.S.-China relationship featuring Collins, Erickson and [Steven W. Lewis](#), the C.V. Starr Transnational China Fellow. The webinar is free, but [registration](#) is required through Zoom.

Covid-19 updates from the Baker Institute Blog

[The value of a life in a time of Covid-19 — a moral and economic dilemma](#). How does a society balance the need for social restrictions and precautions, in order to save as many lives as possible, against the risk of long-term or permanent damage to the economy? [Hagop Kantarjian](#), M.D., nonresident fellow in health policy, analyzes the dilemma.

[As states reopen, experts study promising vaccines, how the virus spreads](#). In this blog series, [Vivian Ho](#), Ph.D., the James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics; [Kirstin R.W. Matthews](#), Ph.D., fellow in science and technology policy; and [Heidi Russell](#), M.D., Ph.D., associate professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, look at the factors associated with the spread of the coronavirus, which will play a role in how states fare in the coming months. They also offer updates on rapidly evolving developments in drug and vaccine discovery.

Browse the Baker Institute [research library](#) and the [Baker Institute Blog](#) to keep up with the latest research and news on the coronavirus pandemic.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Energy dimensions of the evolving U.S.-China strategic relationship. Tensions between the United States and the People's Republic of China stand to profoundly influence global energy markets throughout the coming decade. [Gabriel Collins](#), J.D., the Baker Botts Fellow in Energy & Environmental Regulatory Affairs; [Steven W. Lewis](#), Ph.D., the C.V. Starr Transnational China Fellow; and guest speaker [Andrew Erickson](#), Ph.D., from the U.S. Naval War Colleges discuss key energy sector uncertainties. **May 8 | 3:00 pm**

Webinar: The impact of Covid-19 on the health status and economies of the Middle East. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing instabilities in the Middle East, leading to new questions about the region's future. Fellows from the [Center for the Middle East](#) analyze the challenges facing the region and answer questions from viewers. **May 12 | 1:00 pm**

Visit our [events page](#) for a complete list.

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