

## Restoring Public Health and Well-Being

### Supporting Individual Freedom and Evidence-Based Policymaking

Public health agencies lost the trust of the American public by imposing and advocating for onerous lockdowns and by failing to communicate accurate information in a timely manner. They were more often guided by groupthink and politics than by science and overestimated the need for government intervention by failing to account for individuals' responses to the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The next administration can restore trust by:

1. **Defending freedom instead of declaring mandates.** Lockdowns did not significantly improve health but negatively impacted the economy and education.<sup>2</sup> States such as Florida that quickly reversed COVID lockdown measures had no worse health outcomes and better economic and educational outcomes than those that did impose lockdowns.
2. **Trusting the American public** with unbiased information and allowing people and local officials to make health decisions instead of imposing harmful and ineffective mandates.

### Keeping Our Communities Safe and Prepared for Emergencies

Agencies such as the CDC were unprepared for the pandemic and, once it arrived, were not focused on their core mission of controlling and preventing communicable diseases.<sup>3</sup> To ensure these agencies are ready for future threats, the next administration should:

1. **Refocus the CDC on its core mission of combating infectious diseases** by removing off-mission priorities such as climate change, chronic diseases, social justice, and “woke” issues that duplicate other agencies' efforts.
2. **Ensure research funded by the NIH is in the public interest** by better targeting funding to ensure America does not fund unethical research or adversarial nations.

### For a Healthy America

To improve Americans' health, policy should foster innovation that provides new life-saving and life-enhancing treatments. The next administration should take actions that:

1. **Unleash American medical innovation** by removing unnecessary and counterproductive regulations and price controls.<sup>4</sup>
2. **Empower competition** by streamlining approval pathways for drugs and devices.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Zinberg, “Individual Choices, Not Lockdowns,” *City Journal*, Summer 2021, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/individual-choices-not-lockdowns>.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Zinberg et al., “Freedom Wins: States with Less Restrictive COVID Policies Outperformed States with More Restrictive COVID Policies,” Paragon Health Institute, February 2023, <https://paragoninstitute.org/freedom-wins-policy-paper/>.

<sup>3</sup> Joel Zinberg and Drew Keyes, “Unauthorized and Unprepared: Refocusing the CDC after COVID-19,” Paragon Health Institute and Competitive Enterprise Institute, July 2023, <https://paragoninstitute.org/research-paper-page-joel-zinberg-drew-keyes-cdc-reform-unauthorized-20230724/>.

<sup>4</sup> Joel Zinberg, “The Arrival of Medicare Drug Price Controls: No Cause for Celebration,” Paragon Health Institute, September 2023, [https://paragoninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/The-Arrival-of-Medicare-Drug-Price-Controls\\_FOR-RELEASE\\_V1.pdf](https://paragoninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/The-Arrival-of-Medicare-Drug-Price-Controls_FOR-RELEASE_V1.pdf)