

# **The Effect of COVID-19 on the Disability Community Timeline**

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# Significance

- On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, almost three years ago, COVID-19 became a pandemic that would change the way the world works for better and for worse. Many marginalized communities were unfairly and adversely effected by this pandemic, namely the disabled community. This project aims to be a resource to enlighten people about the struggles faced during the pandemic through the lens of disability. The description of the articles in the following timeline is an attempt at plain speech in order to be able to reach a broad audience.

# Purpose/ Why I was interested

- Reading the assigned readings about the pandemic enlightened me to a new type of struggle I had never really thought about
- Personal interest: because of the isolation from the pandemic, I watched my brother who is disabled struggle with loneliness and social decline. I did not think to connect it to his disability until further research
- To make the CDC important timeline data more readable by putting it in simple language
- Giving synopses of problems brought up by supporters of the disabilities movement
- Showcasing the difficulties brought to a head by this pandemic

**December 12, 2019**

A cluster of patients in China's Hubei Province start to experience symptoms of a respiratory illness that does not respond well to standard treatments.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



**January 7, 2020**

Public health officials in China announces the virus as the "Novel Corona Virus" i.e. Covid-19<sup>1</sup> is the cause of the unknown illness

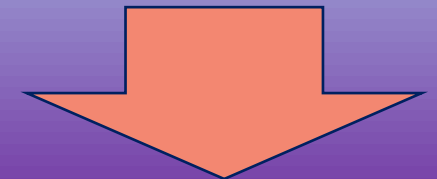
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



**January 7, 2020**

First report of the virus spreading between 2 Americans that had not traveled outside the U.S.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



### March 11, 2020

After more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries and 4,291 deaths, the WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)

### March 19, 2020

First [article](#) published about Covid & Disabilities: Lindsay Lee (WHO technical officer) and Catalina Devandas Aguilar (UN Special Rapportuer for human rights) speak during a Q&A the UN health agency hosted about 'feeling left behind', supportive measures, and accessibility of public health

### March 19, 2020 <sup>2</sup>

["My Life Is More 'Disposable' During This Pandemic"](#) is published by Elliot Kukla a rabi who is disabled. He speaks of how Italy has written off both elderly and disabled people as less worthy of saving during this pandemic.

**April 2, 2020**

[“Confronting Disability Discrimination During the Pandemic”](#) written by Katie Savin and Laura Guidry-Grimes talks about the tragedies faced when there is crisis in medicine, specifically, faced with choosing who is ‘worth’ saving using the limited resources during the Covid-19 Pandemic.



**April 4, 2020**

[Article by Alice Wong](#) written about the lack of ventilators and how there are people who need ventilators to survive their everyday life. Disabled people are discriminated against, will they have their ventilators given away



**May 1, 2020**

CDC makes a “PPE Burn Calculator to help optimize the use of PPE in medical settings  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



**May 8, 2020**

FDA approves the first COVID-19 test with an at-home test option

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)

**May 9, 2020**

“The unemployment rate in the U.S. is 14.7%— the highest since the Great Depression. ” -CDC Covid Timeline

This affects people with lower incomes, racial and ethnic minority workers disproportionately as well as the disability community

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)

**May 13-20, 2020 <sup>2</sup>**

Critical Design Lab releases podcast episodes on “Solidarity Chats” channel focusing on the pandemics with respect to mutual aid, disabilities, and eugenics.

[Chat 1](#) with Dr Arrianna Planey

[Chat 2](#) with Alice Wong

[Chat 3](#) with Dr Jay Dolmage

**May 26, 2020**

Navajo officials make a series of mitigation efforts. Younger generations of Navajo launch social media platforms like “Protect the Sacred” to provide health information. The Navajo become a model for implementing a unified pandemic response.  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)

**June 11, 2020**

A [Medical Article](#) was published detailing the current process for medical crisis for people with disabilities, the effects of disabled essential workers then showed possible solutions and suggests legislature and policy measures to have people with disabilities included in the planning of future pandemic-related efforts.  
\*CW heavy material

**July 22, 2020**

The Department of Defense and Pfizer agree to roll out the vaccine in December 2020 if the vaccine is safe.  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)





**July 27, 2020**

[Medical Article](#) analyzed COVID-19 positive patients that identified as “Intellectually and/or Developmentally Disabled” “This study reports higher rates of death among those with IDD at younger ages—ages 0–17 years, IDD 1.6%, without IDD <0.01%; ages 18–74 years, IDD 4.5%, without IDD 2.7%—but similar rates of death at older ages: 75 years and older, IDD 21.1%, without IDD, 20.7%”



**August 28, 2020**

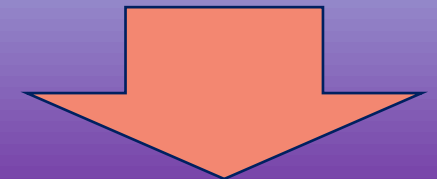
First found [major news article by CNN](#) about the disparities the about people living with disabilities. This article talks about how the isolation of the pandemic caused a dip in support. People who needed care had to rely on themselves or people they lived with rather than a medical authority.



**September 3, 2020**

[Medical article](#) questioning the triage and right to dignity that people with disabilities currently have in medical care systems. Talks about the use of ‘medical rationing’ and how medical authorities were using DNR and health directives prematurely on patients with disabilities.

\*CW heavy material but a very important read



### **September 11, 2020**

First mention of disabilities by the CDC:

Data in a *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* says “Unpaid caregivers for adults, people with underlying medical conditions, Black adults, non-White Hispanic adults, young adults, and people with disabilities are the most affected.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



### **OCT 10, 2020**

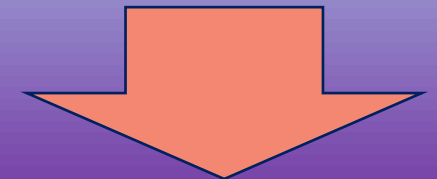
[Indian Journal of Psychiatry](#) sent a letter to an unknown government official about the need for a reassessment of at home learning for children with disabilities and virtual learning setbacks such as the lack of subtitles, or inclusive learning for children with attention deficit disorders.



### **November 20, 2020**

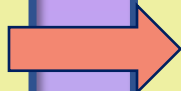
As COVID-19 case numbers in the U.S. surge past 11 million, CDC recommends that Americans stay home for Thanksgiving and avoid contact with all people not living in their household for the last 14 days.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



**November 23, 2020**

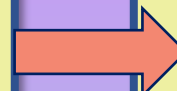
This [article](#) discussed about how to better education for kids with disabilities accounts children and the struggles of medical care with a child who is disabled and the pandemic related issues of virtual learning



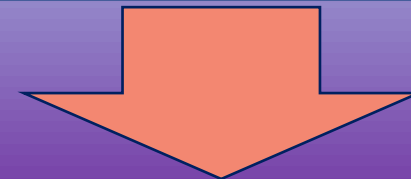
**December 14, 2020**

Sandra Lindsay, a nurse in New York, becomes the first American outside of clinical trials to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



**Now Going into 2021**



### **January 16, 2021**

The [article](#) explained that the UK government's pandemic response was to put the burden of shielding themselves from the contagion upon the disabled individuals. This led to insufficient resources for protection in disability living centers.



### **February 8, 2021**

This [study](#) found that in Spain the lockdown surrounding Covid had negative impacts on the emotional wellbeing of individuals with IDD<sup>3</sup>. The worst effects were found in those under the age of 21.



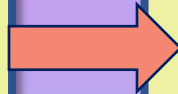
### **March 11, 2021**

One year since the WHO declared COVID to be an international pandemic.  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



### April 2021

This [article](#) discussed the risk of contracting Covid-19 has led to a decrease in the ability of individuals with disabilities to access quality healthcare. Governments were slow to allocate resources to the issue.



### May 25, 2021

This [study](#) found that children with disabilities regressed in skills and behaviors.



### June 2021

This [article](#) found the pandemic was causing negative impacts on the mental and physical health of disabled individuals. These individuals were unable to receive the necessary medical care they require. These individuals were often less active leading to physical health issues. The study also found that disabled individuals had a higher risk of reduced employment during lockdown.



### **July 2021** <sup>4</sup>

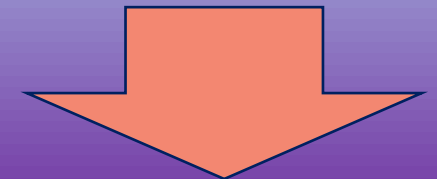
The HHS releases an [article](#) about long COVID and under the ADA, declares it a disability. It also list symptoms of long covid and describe the physical and mental impairments that are caused by long COVID with federal resources.

### **July 12, 2021**

In this [article](#) the NADSN found that as lockdown restrictions were lifted employees with disabilities would be faced with pressures to return to their workplace where they may face higher risks. Many disabled employees were being refused the option to work remotely due to their conditions not being eligible.

### **September 1, 2021**

“CDC releases a digital toolkit for individuals IDD<sup>4</sup> and their caregivers to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, with communication resources like videos, stories, posters, and interactive activities about getting tested, vaccinated, masking, and social distancing. To date, CDC has also released more than 40 videos and 25 web resources in American Sign Language (ASL) on COVID-19.”  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



### **October 2021**

A [study](#) done in the UK found that people with IDD and/or people who having visual impairments were lonelier and declined in social skills during the isolation of the pandemic.



### **November 19, 2021**

A new variant called Omicron is spreading at higher rates, so CDC starts to more strongly urges people who have received any type of vaccine to get the booster shot  
[CDC COVID TIMELINE](#)



### **December 2021**

This [study](#) found that 58% of the deaths from Covid-19 in the UK were among disabled individuals.

# Impact

Let it be known that even though this timeline stops at the end of 2021, the pandemic is still an ongoing problem within the United States. There are many people who have decided that the pandemic is over, which is further hurting people who are disabled and/or are immunocompromised. There have been many good things to come out of the pandemic such as being able to work at home more frequently and now having subtitles on zoom, but there is still much more to improve upon. The pandemic was enlightening and a cultural reset, but the United States should not need a deadly viral disease to acknowledge the ableism that is predominant in the country.



# Foot Notes

1. **COVID- 19** stands for **Co**-Corona **Vi**-virus **D**- disease **19**-2019
2. Reading we did for class
3. **IDD** - People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities
4. **ADA** – America Disability Act

\*\*The choice not to include citations was purposeful. Each source I use is hyper-linked to the slide it is on.

Citation for CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline:

“CDC Museum Covid-19 Timeline.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 16 Aug. 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html#Early-2020>.

# Other interesting articles not included

- [Article](#) written by and about a black disabled woman and her struggle with COVID
- Administration for Community Living [pdf](#) research findings