COVID-19 in the US:
A confluence of healthcare insecurity, an inadequate social safety net and feckless leadership

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The COVID-19 outbreak in the US is growing steeply and spreading widely.
Delays in diagnostic capacity hindered containment

January 7 - A cluster of atypical pneumonia in Wuhan, China was reported to the World Health Organization.

January 21 - Multiple teams announced diagnostic protocols. First case was diagnosed in the US. The Seattle case had visited family in Wuhan.

Feb 5 - Batches of test kits distributed by the CDC were faulty.

Feb 26 - Community transmission was confirmed in Washington and Oregon.

Feb 28 - “It’s going to disappear. One day it’s like a miracle - it will disappear”

Feb 29 - FDA approved clinical tests by facilities beyond the CDC.

March 13 - Large-scale companies started producing COVID19 test kits.
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Number of tests administered for COVID-19

Source: Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (https://www.cdc.go.kr/board/board.es?mid=&bid=0030); The COVID Tracking Project (https://covidtracking.com/data/)
Per capita comparisons of testing are even more stark

Source: Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (https://www.cdc.go.kr/board/board.es?mid=&bid=0030); The COVID Tracking Project (https://covidtracking.com/data/)
Healthcare insecurity exacerbated diagnostic delays
If you get seriously ill:
How much paid leave can you take for treatment and recovery?

*for workers with one year of tenure

To learn more, visit: worldpolicycenter.org
Projected need for ICU beds and ventilators

Moghadas, Shoukat, Fitzpatrick, Wells, Sah, Pandey, Sachs, Wang, Meyers, Singer & Galvani
Projecting hospital utilization during the COVID-19 outbreaks in the United States. In press PNAS
Mortality

Source: Data from New York Times, Updated March 29, 2020, 2:30 P.M. E.T.
Self-isolation eases the burden on the healthcare system

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Where do we go from here?

- Evidence-based decision making
- Accurate communication with the public
- Federal coordination of the production and distribution of PPE and ventilators
- Pharmaceutical research and development
- Universal healthcare which will be most cost-effectively achieved by a single-payer system (e.g., Medicare for All)
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Thank you