

Experts' top COVID mitigation action: National stay at home order with financial compensation

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A [report summary](#) released today by a team at Lehigh University led by Thomas McAndrew , a computational scientist and assistant professor in

Lehigh's College of Health, shares the consensus results of experts in the modeling of infectious disease when asked to rank the top 5 most effective interventions to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19 in the U.S.

The report is part of an ongoing meta forecasting project aimed at translating forecasting and real world experience into actions.

McAndrew and his colleagues wanted to answer "Here is where we are, what should we do about it?" They worked with forecasting technology experts at Metaculus, which describes itself as "a community dedicated to generating accurate predictions about future real-world events."

"We asked subject matter experts in the modeling of infectious disease to rank the top 5 most effective interventions alongside a rationale for each [intervention](#) to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and burden of COVID-19," says McAndrew. "The process is called a Delphi process—a technique to generate a behavioral, as opposed to a mathematical, consensus by allowing a group of experts to iteratively propose and revise ideas.

The top 5 interventions experts proposed are:

- A national stay at home order with [financial compensation](#) for lost wages
- Better access to a COVID-19 vaccine
- A national mask mandate
- Better access to diagnostic testing
- A national, coordinated response to COVID-19

From the report summary:

"An expert consensus ranked a national stay at home order with financial

compensation for lost wages as the most effective intervention to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the burden of COVID-19. Experts reasoned that the US may see a surge in cases with the presence of new variants like B.1.1.7, that testing and contact tracing are most effective when a population is under quarantine, and that decreasing the frequency of contact between individuals will slow the spread of disease. Though, experts did comment that this may be a difficult intervention to implement in the US due to sociocultural and economic factors.

The second most effective intervention proposed by experts was to increase the rate of vaccination by opening new locations to provide a vaccine or expanding the hours of vaccination centers, making it easier to register for a vaccine, adopting methods of vaccine delivery proven to be effective in other countries, and placing priority on a first dose over second dose. The most frequent reason for an increased rate of vaccination, given by experts, was that a small percentage of distributed vaccines to date have been used to inoculate the US population.

The third most effective intervention proposed by an [expert](#) consensus was to impose a mask mandate, an enforceable requirement that the population wear masks when interacting in a public place. Experts reasoned that masks are known to effectively reduce the transmission of viral particles from one infected person to another."

Provided by Lehigh University

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