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Inside C2

Overseas Americans feel left behind in COVID-19 vaccination: media

WASHINGTON, June 8 (Xinhua) -- As the United States continues to push forward its domestic vaccination program, overseas Americans who are required to pay U.S. taxes are feeling left behind by their own government, The Washington Post reported Monday.

Citing official figures, the report said that an estimated 9 million Americans now live outside the United States, and in recent weeks, "a growing chorus has argued that they should therefore be entitled to receive U.S.-approved coronavirus vaccines."

According to the report, unlike expatriates from most other countries, American expats are required to pay U.S. taxes, but their request to "have a vaccine" has been denied by the White House.

"We have not historically provided private health care for Americans living overseas, so that remains our policy," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki was quoted as saying in the report.

COVID-19 drives exodus from metropolises in U.S.

LOS ANGELES, June 7 (Xinhua) -- Before the onslaught of COVID-19, exorbitant real estate prices in large U.S. metropolitan centers had driven some residents to look further afield for more affordable housing.

But when the pandemic struck, the majority of the country's workforce shifted to remote and work-from-home practices, and living within a reasonable commuting distance to a central office was no longer a limiting factor. Thus, the mass exodus from the metropolises began in earnest, driving the rents and housing prices in small towns and cities higher.

Suddenly, small towns and mid-sized cities were the next "big things," even as many major U.S. metropolitan areas saw life begin to normalize this spring and more workers head back to offices.

Places like Sacramento in California, Charlotte in North Carolina, Boise in Idaho, Spokane in Washington state, Amhurst in Massachusetts and others saw their rents and housing prices go through the roof.

"Many of these markets had been heating up prior to the pandemic," said a recent report released early June from apartmentlist.com, an online marketplace with more than 4 million apartment units listed on it.

"The pandemic and remote work spurred demand for the space and affordability that these cities offered, and in response, rent prices grew even as the surrounding economy struggled," the report added.

In 2020, Sacramento was the 19th most expensive rental market in the country. According to apartmentlist.com, Sacramento in the past year leapt to the 14th place, edging out traditionally pricier places like Seattle and New York City.

Compared with a year ago, the report indicated that the prices in Fresno, California had jumped up 17 percent; 22 percent in Spokane; while those in Glendale, Reno, Mesa, and Gilbert in Nevada all spiked 16 percent, and were even 31 percent up in Boise, Idaho.

Along with proximity to jobs or responding to remote work options, pundits said that housing affordability was still a huge determining factor.

About 2,500 U.S. dollars in Los Angeles might get residents a small one-bedroom apartment in the less trendy neighborhoods, while the same amount could get them a three-bedroom house with a large, leafy yard and plenty of room for outdoor fun and BBQs in Sacramento.

It's also important to note that a dollar can be stretched much further on groceries, restaurants, utilities, etc., than it can in metropolitan areas.

Also, rents and housing prices in small towns and cities in the country grew for many other reasons.

The safety and wholesomeness of rural and suburban areas were also a big draw, the report said, and it's usually healthier and more relaxing to live in the countryside, with far less violent crime.

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

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Our Backyard Is On Fire

Vice President Kamala Harris made her first international trip to Guatemala and Mexico to address the root cause of undocumented migration.

One of the serious problems is armed violence according to the NGO, Doctors Without Borders. 62% of migrants arriving at the U.S. southern border said they were exposed to a violent situation during the two years prior to leaving their home country.

According to the Mexican government, at least 200, 000 guns are trafficked from the U.S. to Mexico each year.

The agenda of Vice President Harris's visit is focused on economic development, climate change, food insecurity and strengthening the rule of law.

We urge President Biden to pay more attention to economic issues. If the local people have hope and a future, they might not take a big risk to come to America.

Even today we are still facing a money challenge of our own. But still millions of people around the world still want to come to America to seek the American dream.

Time is very critical. Right now our backyard has caught on fire. We need to give them help. This is the only way we can improve our undocumented migration.

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Editor's Choice

Gondoliers help tourists to board gondolas, as the region of Veneto becomes a "white zone", following a relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions with only masks and social distancing required, in Venice, Italy, June 7, 2021. REUTERS/Yara Nardi

Abdullah Alzureiqi and his daughter Hala say a prayer at the fatal crime scene where a man driving a pickup truck jumped the curb and ran over a Muslim family, killing four and injuring a boy, in what police say was a deliberately targeted anti-Islamic hate crime, in London,

An aerial view shows wooden pontoons equipped to dredge the seabed for deposits of tin ore off the coast of Toboali, on the southern shores of the island of Bangka, Indonesia, May 1, 2021. REUTERS/Willy Kurniawan

Police detain protesters after they chained themselves to Enbridge equipment during a protest against the Line 3 pipeline at a pumping station in Hubbard County, Minnesota, June 7, 2021. REUTERS/Nicholas Pfosi

Nobel Peace Prize laureate and member of the Indigenous Women's Platform Rigoberta Menchu and Vice President Kamala Harris participate in a roundtable with members of the Guatemalan community and civil society leaders at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, during Harris' first international trip as vice president to Guatemala and Mexico, in Guatemala City, Guatemala June 7, 2021. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

Indigenous activists and supporters dump the head from a statue of Egerton Ryerson, considered one of the architect's of Canada's residential school system, into Lake Ontario in Toronto, Ontario, Canada June 7, 2021. The Tk'emlúps te Secwe´pemc indigenous nation in British Columbia announced last week it had found the remains of 215 children, some as young as three, buried at the site of the

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

A Pictorial Essay

A Brief History Of Vaccine Delivery Through The Years

In January 1929, Dr. L.E. Bensom of Los Angeles used his vacation to mush to native villages in Alaska. At the close of a particularly hard day on the trail, he found himself with 70 patients on his hands, all suffering from smallpox. There were 100 people in the village with no medical facilities. Bettmann/Getty Images

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Vaccines delivered by drones and by burros. People who shout about the danger of vaccines and refuse to get a jab. Public health campaigns to convince the vaccine hesitant. Public criticism of a failure to provide vaccines for lower-income countries and marginalized populations.

These are all part of the unprecedented world vaccination campaign now going on.

They're also the hot-button topics that go back to the very first vaccine — for smallpox in 1796.

Dr. Sergen Saracoglu (left) and nurse Yilzdiz Ayten (center) arrive at the village of Guneyyamac in Turkey on Feb. 15 as part of an expedition to vaccinate residents 65 years and over with Sinovac's CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccine. (Photo/Bulent Kilic/AFP via Getty Images)

In photographs and illustrations from past and present vaccine campaigns, you can see both the similarities and the striking contrasts.

James Colgrove, a professor of sociomedical sciences at Columbia University, and Sanjoy Bhattacharya, a professor of history at the University of York and director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Global Health Histories, helped us out with historical context to go along with the images.

The vaccine has been created. Now how to get it where it needs to go?

Getting a vaccine from point A to point B has been a logistical problem since the very start with the smallpox vaccines, Bhattacharya says.

Back then, it was a painstaking process. Liquid was usually taken from an open smallpox sore, dried and mixed with water when ready to vaccinate. But transportation delays would sometimes render the vaccine ineffective. (The method had a shelf life of weeks to months — not a long time considering the transport options at the time.)

In 1900, a young cow is tied onto a table waiting for the extraction of pox sore to be used for vaccines for smallpox. (Photo/Berliner Illustrations Gesellschaft/ullstein bild via Getty Images)

The solution? Medical teams would take children (in one case, orphans were used to transport the virus from Spain to its colonies) and animals (such as cows and horses) from village to village or from country to country, harvesting liquid from smallpox or cowpox sores and getting it under the skin of an unvaccinated person. But that was clearly not a sustainable practice, Bhattacharya says, for ethical and scientific reasons.

Many years of innovation followed, including the development of freeze-dried vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine world is dependent on cold chain technology that uses super freezers to keep vaccines at temperatures as low as minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit while they make their way on planes, trains and automobiles.

Ousseynou Badiane, the head of Senegal's vaccination program, stands in front of newly built cold rooms at Fann Hospital in Dakar, Senegal, in January. These cold rooms may be used to help store the country's stock of COVID-19 vaccines. (John Wessels/AFP via Getty Images)

Relying on cold storage technology is still not a perfect system.

The challenge has always been the greatest in poor and rural areas. "You have to make sure you have generators to maintain refrigerators," Colgrove says. It is the same problem countries are having with the COVID-19 vaccine today.

Left: A West German Navy vessel hands over vaccines to the U.S. transport General Patch in July 1957 for people sick with the Asiatic flu. The ship was anchored off Bremerhaven, West Germany, after a flu outbreak. Right: Health workers use a speedboat to make their way to vaccinate Quilombo communities against COVID-19 in Oriximiná, Brazil, in February. (Photo/Henry Brueggemann/AP; Tarso Sarraf/AFP via Getty Images)

Vaccine inequity is "just one part of a larger picture of inequity," Colgrove says. "People have been unvaccinated for the same set of reasons that they have always been deprived of other material goods."

For every vaccine, there's been a campaign against it

"Anti-vaccination movements are as old as vaccines themselves," Bhattacharya says.

What drives people to oppose a vaccine? You have to look at what is happening in a country or community culturally and politically and that is where you'll find your answers. It is usually a combination of factors that create doubts about how safe and effective a vaccine is, Bhattacharya says.

Left: A drawing of a human with a cow head holding a needle menacingly toward a child as he administers a tainted smallpox vaccination was meant to sow distrust of smallpox vaccines. Right: Protesters against COVID-19 vaccinations hold a rally in Sydney in February. (Photo/Bettman/Getty Images; Brook Mitchell/Getty Images)

But what really gets people riled up, Colgrove says, is when governments mandate vaccinations. "What gets people marching in the stress, forming orgs, creating pamphlets is when governments start to require it. If you don't want the vaccine, but you don't feel like anyone is forcing you to get it, then you just don't get it. Anti-vaccination movements really arose in the mid-19th century when governments started to require it."

There have always been trust issues

A vaccine campaign must address the issues of trust between those giving the vaccines and those receiving it, Bhattacharya says. You can't run it just with logistics. The vaccine campaigns that don't take trust into account end up struggling while the process drags on to get a disease under control.

In the case of polio, Bhattacharya says, it was difficult to convince communities to get the vaccine in places where governments hadn't acted in the communities' interest on other issues.

Boys stand in line to be vaccinated through the smallpox eradication and measles control program in West Africa in 1968. While smallpox has been eradicated, measles remains a leading cause of death among young children, even though a safe and cost-effective vaccine is available, the World Health Organization says. (Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images)

"It was about [the government] convincing people that the polio vaccination was about their best interests in a context where governments had done little for their general welfare. This was the context in which polio vaccination drives were resisted in northern India, for example," Bhattacharya says. People have said it was superstition about the vaccine that prevented Indians from getting the vaccine, but it was actually about "a fundamental lack of trust."

(Continued On Page C7-2)

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

(Continued From Page C7-1)

A Brief History Of Vaccine Delivery Through The Years

It's all about the advertising

To get the word out and make a convincing argument about the vaccine, it's all about marketing and messaging. Advertising techniques were first used in the 1920s for diphtheria immunizations, Colgrove says. (Think images of smiling babies with warnings in red ink that diphtheria kills.)

A 1963 poster featuring the CDC's national symbol of public health, "Wellbee," encourages the public to take an oral polio vaccine. (Photo/CDC/PHIL/Corbis via Getty Images)

The way a vaccine is given is also critical. The first oral vaccine in the 1960s for polio replaced the hypodermic needle. It certainly made it much easier to sell to those who might be hesitant or fearful of needles, Colgrove says.

"Needle phobia is a big deal, and orally administered vaccines are more acceptable to many people. Also you don't have to worry about the injection equipment [which was helpful for mass vaccinations]," Colgrove says. "In fact one of the reasons the global polio eradication ended up being so successful was they used the oral vaccine as opposed to the injected vaccine." The oral vaccine also did a better job of protecting against the virus.

The West makes the vaccines and the rules. That's actually kind of new

The West wasn't always the main player in vaccine production — although it was always on the path to be. Following World War II, several newly independent (decolonized) countries were keen to develop their own vaccine production capabilities. Two examples are India and Pakistan, Bhattacharya says.

"Countries like India and Pakistan were able to play Cold War foes [the U.S. and Soviet Union] against each other to get access to new vaccine production technologies, assistance in setting up new vaccine production units," he adds.

So how did the West ultimately get control? In that post-World War II era in the West, people started to realize there was money to be made in all pharmaceuticals (not just vaccines), and "the business landscape changed," Colgrove says.

Marie Josette Francou (right), a Red Cross nurse, vaccinates a child against cholera in 1953 in Indochina (now Vietnam). (Intercontinentale/AFP via Getty Images)

What had been a cottage industry of small pharmaceutical companies, individual investigators and physician scientists started producing more products along with vaccines, Colgrove says. They evolved into the mega companies that exist today.

That said, other countries are still in the vaccination business — albeit with mixed results — including Russia's Sputnik V, China's Sinovac and outlier Cuba.

Workers wait to open a secure door in the packaging area of Sinopharm's COVID-19 vaccine during a media tour organized by the State Council Information Office in February in Beijing. Sinopharm is one of China's largest state-owned biotech companies. Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

The power and politics behind vaccines

Politicians love their mottos and the vaccination effort is no different. In the U.S., government officials called it Operation Warp Speed and now the "We Can Do This" campaign. In Germany, it's "Vaccinate, Vaccinate, Vaccinate." In Israel, it's "Getting Back to Life."

So, how much of vaccine production and distribution is about political power and money?

Bhattacharya says pretty much all of it. "Pandemic responses, including the vaccination programs that underpin them, are always political," he says. "Those who claim that they know the means of accentuating 'global solidarity' are no less political; they just have different political goals."

Left: Thousands of New Yorkers, on an appeal by government officials, came to city hospitals and health stations to get vaccinated against smallpox. Here a crowd lines up outside a Bronx hospital in April 1947. Right: In an aerial view from a drone, cars line up for a mass COVID-19 vaccination event in January in Denver. (Photo/Bettmann/Getty Images; Michael Ciaglo/Getty Image)

And the money? Most vaccines wouldn't exist if Big Pharma didn't make a profit off them, Colgrove says.

One of the criticisms is that we have vaccines for diseases that burden rich countries but not for those that plague poor countries — such as malaria and dengue fever. "If those diseases were a problem in Europe and the U.S., we would probably have vaccines for them now."

That's the contradiction of the pharma industry, Colgrove says. "On the one hand they produce these drugs for the benefit of everyone, but their mission is to make profits for their shareholders."

What will the world say about the COVID-19 vaccination effort in 100 years?

People will not remember the details, Colgrove says. Take, for example, the polio vaccine rollout, he says. If you ask people today, they would say it was a huge success, but they forget it was total chaos for a while. "There were a lot of problems with the initial distribution during the period when the demand exceeded the supply. The polio vaccine was developed by a nonprofit foundation. The U.S. government had very little involvement because the Eisenhower administration saw involvement as the opening for socialized medicine.

"There was also lots of confusion and uncertainty about who should get the vaccine first and supplies were limited. There were stories of rich people pulling strings to get their kids vaccinated first."

Sanitation worker Ramesh Solanki cleans the streets outside India's Palghar railway station. "I get up every morning at 5:30, and I see news about the vaccines on TV," he says. "I don't know about any controversies. I just know I'm proud to be part of this." As a sanitation worker, he was among the first Indians eligible to get the coronavirus vaccine. (Photo/Viraj Nayar for NPR)

When it came to the COVID-19 vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention knew there were limited supplies so it was able to prioritize certain populations such as health care workers and older people, Colgrove says. "But I think the way people will remember the COVID rollout will depend on what happens in the coming months and years."

No one can deny the incredible feat of making vaccines in a year. But Bhattacharya points to another legacy.

Bhattacharya says it's unfortunate, but this vaccination effort will be all about profits, not humanity — the world was let down when it comes to equity and access to the vaccine.

Two men, wearing personal protective equipment, visit the grave of a relative in a public cemetery, reserved for suspected COVID-19 victims, in December in Jakarta, Indonesia. Ulet Ifansasti/Getty Images

"I think our descendants will look back with some shame at the efforts of so many private vaccine producers to make immense profit from human misery and anxiety." (Courtesy npr.org) NPR Writers include: Michele Abercrombie, Xueying Chang, Ben De La Cruz and Suzette Lohmeyer.