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NPI School Closure Timeline

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This poster will examine the impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), such as school closures, on spread of the 1918 influenza pandemic in Missouri Specifically.

Currently, the entire world is dealing the COVID-19 pandemic and over the past 8 months, many governments have tried various strategies to counter the pandemic. The United States, which leads the world in total number of cases ,especially in states such as Texas, Florida, and Wisconsin faces policy decisions on how to best implement protective measures while considering impacts to socioeconomic and educational life. This poster will look back on the efficacy of school-closures during the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic in selected Missouri counties, representing a variety of sub-populations within the state, including rural communities. Utilizing the Library of Congress newspaper database, announcements of school cancellations and duration of closures were recorded to form an “NPI school-closure timeline” organized by county. The timeline of closures was placed side-by-side with data on county influenza deaths to determine any possible correlation. Death data was utilized at the county level due to absence of incidence reports.

Preliminary Data shows increase of flu mortality after school re-openings.

Much can be learned from the 1918 Influenza pandemic and applied to today’s COVID-19 situation. Policy makers and legislators can learn from the actions of the past on the efficacy of school-closures when making decisions today about the health and safety of students, teachers, faculty, and the community.