

Nancy Snyderman

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The Modern World of Medicine. To say that the world of medicine will be transformed by recent disruption would be an understatement. In this talk, Dr. Nancy Snyderman explores the following topics that are worth contemplating, and in some cases implementing, in the new, complex world.

- **Telemedicine** – Doctors have dragged their feet for years about seeing patients remotely (Dr. Snyderman was one of them). No longer. Patients like these visits and they are here to stay. Looming question for doctors and hospitals will be how this changes reimbursement.
- **Offshoring production of medical supplies** – The last four administrations have known that masks, gowns, and even ventilators have been increasingly made abroad. At the same time, hospitals have run inventory on a tight string. That is okay when the cardiac and orthopedic procedures can be planned in advance. But recent events have shown that very few hospitals were prepared for what happened, with a few notable exceptions.
- **Public-private partnerships** – Vaccine development and distribution are among the pressing topics in the new world. Pharmaceutical companies are working with governments and information and science are being shared in a horizontal fashion. That is markedly different than the vertical silos that usually define university-based science. This will benefit all of humanity.
- **Vaccine technology** – Dr. Snyderman was on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic. It is hard to believe now, but it took them seven years from the recognition of the disease until they had AZT. Now people can be treated with antiviral drugs and resume normal lives. But now the challenge is to put the importance of vaccines front and center. The anti-vaccine lobby has been vocal and wrong in many cases and we are tipping toward being a scientifically illiterate nation.
- **Genomics** – A lot went wrong regarding public health in recent times and China will need to held accountable for the misinformation that it allowed to continue for too long. Nonetheless, the genome was shared with the US, WHO, and the world in January. That is mind blowing when you consider the history of past global infections. And that sharing has allowed us to be flirting with the idea of having a vaccine within 12 months.
- **Brick and Mortar** – Just as the retail world will be reeling from how much office space is too much, the same will happen in medicine. Do huge out-patient centers really need to exist? Can you get your MRI locally and meet with your doctor online? How do hospitals recoup the money they have lost and how do we protect against a boomerang of unnecessary elective surgery that could fill the coffers? The economics of medicine, along with health and economic disparities of the haves and have nots, need to be front and center as we move on.
- **The power of human touch and how we die** – Dr. Snyderman is a big advocate of sitting at the patient bedside and having real conversations with her patients. This experience not only helps the unhealthy heal, but it restores the humanity that disease strips away. This is at risk. Harvard Medical School has announced that incoming first year students will be learning online. They will not be touching patients anytime soon. They are losing valuable experiences before they even begin. In a world where we are now connecting with Zoom calls and computer interfaces, how will young doctors learn the art of medicine? That, after all, is the calling.