

Controversial Great Barrington ‘focused protection’ herd immunity declaration finds support at the White House

Many experts say “herd immunity” — the point at which a disease stops spreading because nearly everyone in a population has contracted it — is still very far-off. Leading experts have concluded, using different scientific methods, that about [85 to 90 percent of the American population is still susceptible](#) to the coronavirus.

On a call convened [October 12] by the White House, two senior administration officials, both speaking anonymously because they were not authorized to give their names, cited an October 4 petition titled [The Great Barrington Declaration](#), which argues against lockdowns and calls for a reopening of businesses and schools.

[Editor’s note: [Read more about the Great Barrington Declaration here](#). Find more information about herd immunity at “[What does ‘herd immunity’ mean and why is it important?](#)”]

“Current lockdown policies are producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health,” the declaration states, adding, “The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. We call this Focused Protection.”

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Last month, at the request of The New York Times, three epidemiological teams calculated the percentage of the country that is infected. What they found runs strongly counter to the theory being promoted in influential circles that the United States has either already [achieved herd immunity](#) or is close to doing so, and that the pandemic is all but over.

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