

HEALTH CARE

Fauci acknowledges 'problems' after scathing report on pandemic response

BY JARED GANS - 04/26/23 11:39 AM ET

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Dr. Anthony Fauci, former White House Chief Medical Advisor and Director of the NIAID, addresses reporters during the daily briefing at the White House on Tuesday, November 22, 2022.

Anthony Fauci, the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, acknowledged “problems” in the country’s COVID-19 management following a scathing report on the U.S. response.

Fauci told CNN’s Kaitlan Collins in an interview on Wednesday that the U.S. had a “fractionated” response and needed to deal with significant polarization of the pandemic. He said officials had believed that the U.S. was the best prepared country from a science point of view, demonstrated through the rapid development of the COVID-19 vaccine, but challenges happened in other areas.

“There were a lot of problems, Kaitlan, that we had,” Fauci said on “CNN This Morning.”

during the pandemic to have a stronger response in the future.

"Hopefully the lessons learned from a really strict analysis of what went wrong will help prepare us for future pandemics," he said. "But no doubt about it, we didn't do as well as we could."

"We got to do better not only in the continued response to the current outbreak but in preparation for the inevitability of future outbreaks," Fauci added.

His remarks come after the COVID Crisis Group, an organization formed from a group of experts in 2021 to track the pandemic, released a report on Tuesday that said the U.S. health care system was uniquely disadvantaged compared to other countries in mitigating the pandemic's effects because it was divided, outdated and disorganized.

The report said "bad governance" prevented stakeholders from taking advantage of "wondrous scientific knowledge" available. The group also found that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is still operating on a "19th-century design," preventing it from properly addressing 21st-century challenges like the pandemic.

"Contrary to media stories, the federal government had no real playbook for how to contain the pandemic," the experts said. "It had 'programs.' It did not have preparedness."

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The report also comes as the COVID-19 public health emergency is set to expire next month.

Fauci said the country needs to "move forward" from the emergency, but the public should remain aware of the virus. He added that the U.S. also needs to ensure that those who are infected have access to the resources they need that they might have better access to with the emergency in place.

"We want to be able to have some sort of a safety net for them to be able to get drugs and to get vaccines so those things don't fall between the cracks," Fauci said. "If we take care of that, I think it's important to move forward."