California instituted some of the most restrictive non-pharmaceutical interventions in the U.S. Other states, such as Florida and Indiana had some of the least. Still others, such as Texas and Colorado, had some restrictions, but the restrictions were not well enforced. In the early part of the pandemic there was a narrative about the impact of these restrictions and the trade-off between the economy and public health. For many the Swedish example was thought to be a superior leading to individuals selectively staying away from high-risk venues on their own, and those venues able to stay open and remain in business. The year 2020 is now behind us, a fact we are all happy about, and the data are in. What was the magnitude of the trade-off and how did California’s economy perform relative to other states. In this talk we will discuss these issues and the reason for the surprising result that there was in fact no trade-off. States such as California had better health outcomes and no worse, but often better, economic outcomes.

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