



# THE DISINFORMATION DOZEN

**WHY PLATFORMS MUST ACT ON TWELVE  
LEADING ONLINE ANTI-VAXXERS**

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The Center for Countering Digital Hate is a not-for-profit NGO that seeks to disrupt the architecture of online hate and misinformation.

Digital technology has changed forever the way we communicate, build relationships, share knowledge, set social standards, and negotiate and assert our society's values.

Digital spaces have been colonised and their unique dynamics exploited by fringe movements that instrumentalise hate and misinformation. These movements are opportunistic, agile and confident in exerting influence and persuading people.

Over time these actors, advocating diverse causes - from anti-feminism to ethnic nationalism to denial of scientific consensus - have formed a Digital Counter Enlightenment. Their trolling, disinformation and skilled advocacy of their causes has resocialised the offline world for the worse.

The Center's work combines both analysis and active disruption of these networks. CCDH's solutions seek to increase the economic, political and social costs of all parts of the infrastructure - the actors, systems and culture - that support, and often profit from hate and misinformation.

## **Anti-Vax Watch**

Anti-Vax Watch is an alliance of concerned individuals who are seeking to educate the American public about the dangers of the anti-vax industry.

As the anti-vaccine industry actively seeks to undermine the rollout of the COVID vaccine - capitalizing on a heightened sense of hesitancy from the public and targeting communities of color who have already been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic - we recognize that this is an all-hands-on-deck moment. We believe we must join together to bring science and facts to the forefront and alert the public to the dangerous agenda of anti-vaccine leaders.

Our efforts center around bringing to light the nefarious activities of the anti-vaccine industry and working with leading experts to dispute their falsehoods and non-medical disinformation with science, research and expert analysis. Our goal is to support the efforts of leading health experts, pro-vaccine researchers and educators, civil rights and business organizations, and others who, like us, recognize the importance of raising awareness of the science of vaccines.

# Introduction

We are in the middle of the deadliest US public health crisis in more than a century. Covid-19 has killed more than 500,000 Americans and undermined the livelihood of millions of American workers and families. The virus has had a particularly devastating impact on Black, Latino, and Native American communities, all of whom are suffering severe illness and death from COVID-19 at rates far greater than the general population.<sup>1</sup> Compounding this crisis, vaccination rates in communities of color have also lagged those for whites, and skepticism and distrust of the vaccines are greater in these marginalized communities.<sup>2</sup>

With widespread distribution of coronavirus vaccines, we have an opportunity to turn a corner on the pandemic. Our recovery depends on the public's willingness to receive a vaccine. However, researchers are increasingly connecting misinformation disseminated via social media to increased vaccine hesitancy, which will ultimately cause unnecessary deaths.<sup>3</sup>

Living in full view of the public on the internet are a small group of individuals who do not have relevant medical expertise and have their own pockets to line, who are abusing social media platforms to misrepresent the threat of Covid and spread misinformation about the safety of vaccines. According to our recent report, anti-vaccine activists on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter reach more than 59 million followers, making these the largest and most important social media platforms for anti-vaxxers.<sup>4</sup> Our research has also found anti-vaxxers using social media platforms to target Black Americans, exploiting higher rates of vaccine hesitancy in that community to spread conspiracies and lies about the safety of Covid vaccines.<sup>5</sup>

Facebook, Google and Twitter have put policies into place to prevent the spread of vaccine misinformation; yet to date, all have failed to satisfactorily enforce those policies. All have been particularly ineffective at removing harmful and dangerous misinformation about coronavirus vaccines, though the scale of misinformation on Facebook, and thus the impact of their failure, is larger. Further, they have all failed to remove the accounts of prominent anti-vaxxers who have repeatedly violated their terms of service, as documented in later sections of this report.

**Imran Ahmed**  
**CEO, CCDH**

# Executive Summary

1. The Disinformation Dozen are twelve anti-vaxxers who play leading roles in spreading digital misinformation about Covid vaccines. They were selected because they have large numbers of followers, produce high volumes of anti-vaccine content or have seen rapid growth of their social media accounts in the last two months.
2. Analysis of a sample of anti-vaccine content that was shared or posted on Facebook and Twitter a total of 812,000 times between 1 February and 16 March 2021 shows that 65 percent of anti-vaccine content is attributable to the Disinformation Dozen.
3. Despite repeatedly violating Facebook, Instagram and Twitter's terms of service agreements, nine of the Disinformation Dozen remain on all three platforms, while just three have been comprehensively removed from just one platform.
4. This is the product of a series of failures from social media platforms:
  - a. Research conducted by CCDH last year has shown that platforms fail to act on 95 percent of the Covid and vaccine misinformation reported to them.
  - b. CCDH's recent report, Malgorithm, uncovered evidence that Instagram's algorithm actively recommends similar misinformation.
  - c. Tracking of 425 anti-vaccine accounts by CCDH shows that their total following across platforms now stood at 59.2 million in December, an increase of 877,000 more than they had in June.
  - d. CCDH's ongoing tracking shows that the 20 anti-vaxxers with the largest followings account for over two-thirds of this total cross-platform following of 59.2 million.
5. Analysis of anti-vaccine content posted to Facebook over 689,000 times in the last two months shows that up to 73 percent of that content originates with members of the Disinformation Dozen of leading online anti-vaxxers.
6. Facebook's own internal analysis of vaccine hesitant content on its platform is likely to underestimate the influence of leading anti-vaxxers by failing to address the ultimate source of this content, and by the recorded failure of its algorithms to identify content concerning vaccines.
7. Analysis of over 120,000 anti-vaccine tweets collected in the last two months shows that up to 17 percent feature the Disinformation Dozen of leading online anti-vaxxers.
8. The most effective and efficient way to stop the dissemination of harmful information is to deplatform the most highly visible repeat offenders, who we term the Disinformation Dozen. This should also include the organisations these individuals control or fund, as well as any backup accounts they have established to evade removal.
9. Platforms should establish a clear threshold for enforcement action, such as two strikes, after which restrictions are applied to accounts short of deplatforming them.
10. Users should be presented with warning screens when attempting to follow links to sites known to host vaccine misinformation, and users exposed to posts containing misinformation should be shown effective corrections.
11. Facebook should not allow private and secret anti-vaccine Groups where dangerous anti-vaccine disinformation can be spread with impunity.

# The Disinformation Dozen are responsible for up to 65% of anti-vaccine content

At the outset of this research, we identified a dozen individuals who appeared to be extremely influential creators of digital anti-vaccine content. These individuals were selected either because they run anti-vaccine social media accounts with large numbers of followers, because they produce high volumes of anti-vaccine content or because their growth was accelerating rapidly at the outset of our research in February. Full profiles of each are available at the end of this report.

1. Joseph Mercola
2. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
3. Ty and Charlene Bollinger
4. Sherri Tenpenny
5. Rizza Islam
6. Rashid Buttar
7. Erin Elizabeth
8. Sayer Ji
9. Kelly Brogan
10. Christiane Northrup
11. Ben Tapper
12. Kevin Jenkins

## **The Disinformation Dozen are responsible for up to 65% of anti-vaccine content**

Our analysis of over 812,000 posts extracted from Facebook and Twitter between 1 February and 16 March 2021 shows that 65 percent of anti-vaccine content is attributable to the Disinformation Dozen.

This shows that while many people might spread anti-vaccine content on social media platforms, the content they share often comes from a much more limited range of sources. Exposure to even a small amount of online vaccine misinformation has been shown by the Vaccine Confidence Project to reduce the number of people willing to take a Covid vaccine by up to 8.8 percent.<sup>6</sup>

## **Platforms have failed to act on the Disinformation Dozen**

Despite repeatedly violating Facebook, Instagram and Twitter's terms of service agreements, nine of the Disinformation Dozen remain on all three platforms, while just three have been comprehensively removed from just one platform.

This is an extension of platforms' failure to act on vaccine misinformation. Research conducted by CCDH last year has shown that platforms fail to act on 95 percent of the Covid and vaccine misinformation reported to them, and we have uncovered evidence that Instagram's algorithm actively recommends similar misinformation.<sup>7</sup>

Tracking of 425 anti-vaccine accounts by CCDH shows that their total following across platforms now stands at 59.2 million as a result of these failures.<sup>8</sup> The 20 anti-vaxxers with the largest followings account for over two-thirds of this total.

# The Disinformation Dozen account for up to 73% of Facebook’s anti-vaxx content

Analysis of anti-vaccine content posted to Facebook over 689,000 times in the last two months shows that up to 73 percent of that content originates with members of the Disinformation Dozen of leading online anti-vaxxers.

This analysis is based on a representative sample of 483 pieces of anti-vaccine content that are known to be circulating in anti-vaccine Facebook Groups.

We collected this sample by analyzing anti-vaccine posts containing URL links from 10 private and 20 public anti-vaccine Facebook Groups between 1 February and 16 March 2021. Groups in this sample have between 2,500 and 235,000 members and generate up to 10,000 posts per month.

## Vaccination Re-education Discussion Forum

Private group · 236.0K members

*The largest anti-vaccine Facebook Group now has 236,000 members.*

Researchers then analyzed the content of these URL links, tagging each of them to indicate whether they contained a member of the Disinformation Dozen or originated from a website controlled by or related to one of those members. For example, URL links to articles hosted on Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.’s Children’s Health Defense website were attributed to Kennedy, Jr.

Finally, in order to establish the full distribution of this content on Facebook, we used Facebook’s own CrowdTangle analytics tool to establish how many times these URLs have been shared on the platform.

**How COVID-19 'Vaccines' May Destroy the Lives of Millions**  
Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola Fact Checked  
February 14, 2021

**Judy Mikovits Discusses SARS-COV-2 VACCINE COVID-19 VACCINATION**

**FACEBOOK INTERACTIONS**  
26,737 | 8,541 | 5,876 | 12,320

**TOP REFERRALS**

SOURCE (FOLLOWERS)	DATE	INTERACTIONS	LINK
The World Freedom Alliance (5,383)	Feb 12, 2021	75	[Link]
Cynthia McKinney, PhD (101,799)	Jan 31, 2021	58	[Link]
Shirley's Wellness Cafe (4,308)	Jan 31, 2021	31	[Link]

*This article by Joseph Mercola is from our sample of posts in anti-vaccine Facebook Groups. Facebook’s CrowdTangle analytics tool shows it was shared over 12,000 times on the platform.*

This revealed that the anti-vaccine content in our sample had been posted or shared across Facebook a total of 689,404 times. Content attributed to members of the Disinformation Dozen had been posted or shared 503,896 times, representing 73.1 percent of the total anti-vaccine posts represented by our sample.

# Facebook is underestimating the influence of leading anti-vaxxers

Recent reports suggest that Facebook conducted its own internal analysis to understand the spread of vaccine hesitant content on its platform.<sup>9</sup>

According to these reports, Facebook’s data scientists discovered that just 10 out of 638 population segments contained 50 percent of all vaccine hesitancy content on the platform. These segments represented distinct types of users, Groups and Pages that could each be at least each 3 million people.

Facebook also found that in the population segment containing the most vaccine hesitancy, just 111 individual users contributed half of all vaccine hesitant content.

These findings corroborate our research showing that just a small number of determined anti-vaxxers are responsible for much of the anti-vaccine content on Facebook, but Facebook is likely to be under-representing the concentration of the problem for two reasons.

## **Facebook does not address the sources of anti-vaccine content**

Facebook’s internal research does not seem to examine the ultimate source of “vaccine hesitant content” on its platform. This means that posts that share someone else’s vaccine hesitant content are attributed to the individual users that share that content, instead of the ultimate source. In this case, Facebook would attribute 12,000 shares of an anti-vaccine article from Joseph Mercola’s website to the individual users who shared it, instead of Mercola himself.

This approach is also in keeping with Facebook’s failure to recognise the real-world connections between accounts, for example by deplatforming the Instagram accounts of some anti-vaxxers while leaving their Facebook and organisational accounts intact, as was the case with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

## **Facebook’s algorithms struggle to identify vaccine content**

The Center for Countering Digital Hate’s previous report, Malgorithm, showed that Instagram’s algorithm would not always identify posts that contained content about vaccines, and so many posts about vaccines would not carry information labels as intended.<sup>10</sup> Facebook is reported to have carried out this internal research using similar “software algorithms”, meaning it may have missed significant amounts of vaccine hesitant content. It also makes it far less likely that Facebook has developed algorithmic methods of distinguishing between individual expressions of vaccine hesitancy and the organised vaccine disinformation that this report examines.



# Up to 17% of anti-vaccine tweets feature the Disinformation Dozen

Analysis of over 120,000 anti-vaccine tweets collected in the last two months shows that up to 17 percent feature the Disinformation Dozen of leading online anti-vaxxers.

This analysis is based on a representative sample of 123,494 anti-vaccine tweets identified by analysis of their text contents.

We collected this sample using Brandwatch, an enterprise social listening tool, to extract anti-vaccine tweets posted between 1 February and 16 March 2021 based on text analysis. Retweets and quote tweets were also extracted to discover which pieces of anti-vaccine content were shared most frequently.

Tweets were selected based on their use of anti-vaccine keywords, phrases and hashtags, as well as selecting tweets about vaccines from known anti-vaxxers including those who are not members of the Disinformation Dozen. This process selected tweets using phrases commonly used by anti-vaxxers such as “informed consent” and “casedemic” in combination with more common terms regarding Covid vaccines.

This sample was then analysed using an automated set of rules to tag those that featured the name or username of a member of the Disinformation Dozen, or contained a link to a website controlled by or related to one of them.

Tweets that were extracted and tagged using these methods were then checked by researchers on a daily basis to maintain the quality of our data.

This analysis showed that 21,351 of the tweets in our sample featured members of the Disinformation Dozen equivalent to 17.3% of the whole sample.



*An example tweet from our sample in which Rizza Islam, a member of the Disinformation Dozen, promotes an anti-vaccine film featuring Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*



*This tweet from our sample was identified by its use of the words “rona”, “vaccine” and “plandemic”.*

# Platforms must act on the Disinformation Dozen

Social media companies must now follow their repeated promises with concrete action. Updated policies and statements hold little value unless they are strongly and consistently enforced.

With the vast majority of harmful content being spread by a select number of accounts, removing those few most dangerous individuals and groups can significantly reduce the amount of disinformation being spread across platforms.

The public cannot make informed decisions about their health when they are constantly inundated by disinformation and false content. By removing the source of disinformation, social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can enable individuals to make a truly informed choice about vaccines.

## **Deplatform the Disinformation Dozen**

The most effective and efficient way to stop the dissemination of harmful information is to deplatform the most highly visible repeat offenders, who we term the Disinformation Dozen. This should also include the organisations these individuals control or fund, as well as any backup accounts they have established to evade removal.

1. Joseph Mercola
2. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
3. Ty and Charlene Bollinger
4. Sherri Tenpenny
5. Rizza Islam
6. Rashid Buttar
7. Erin Elizabeth
8. Sayer Ji
9. Kelly Brogan
10. Christiane Northrup
11. Ben Tapper
12. Kevin Jenkins

## **Deplatform key anti-vaxxer organisations**

In addition to deplatforming the personal accounts of the Disinformation Dozen, platforms must also acknowledge the real-world networks they use to spread their anti-vaccine messages. This means deplatforming key organisations that are linked to the Disinformation Dozen or simply help spread their messages.

- Children's Health Defense (Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.)
- Informed Consent Action Network (ICAN) (Del Bigtree)
- National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) (Barbara Loe Fisher, Joseph Mercola)
- Organic Consumers Association (OCA) (Joseph Mercola)
- Millions Against Medical Mandates

# Platforms must do more to protect users from harmful misinformation

In addition to removing repeat offenders, in taking the following steps, social media platforms can make monumental strides toward decreasing the presence of misinformation on feeds.

## **Establish a clear threshold for enforcement action**

A low threshold, such as two strikes, would allow for moderate enforcement that does not rise to the level of removal, such as restriction of a page's ability to go live or post video content without moderated review. Such an approach could allow for efficient balancing of harm reduction with the preservation of free speech on a large scale.

## **Display corrective posts to users exposed to disinformation**

Serve users who have been exposed to content deemed to be in violation of the policy with corrective posts from trusted providers at three times the frequency at which they consumed misinformation. These corrective posts should be designed with input from experts to ensure that they help address the negative social consequences of misinformation such as vaccine hesitancy without inadvertently entrenching their opinions through the "backfire effect".<sup>11</sup>

## **Add warning screens when users click links to misinformation sites**

Add a warning screen in front of third-party websites housing content associated with vaccine misinformation profiteering. Additionally, platforms should stand up a task force to maintain awareness of trends in vaccine misinformation dissemination and provide updated recommendations as needed.

## **Institute an Accountability API**

Institute an Accountability API to allow experts on sensitive and high-importance topics to perform the human analysis that will ultimately make Facebook's AI more effective. Platforms can also offer guidance for users wishing to debunk information without running afoul of enforcers.

## **Ban private and secret anti-vaccine Facebook Groups**

Ban private groups that traffic primarily in vaccine disinformation and prevent groups that require a Facebook disclaimer from existing as private or secret Groups. Anti-vaxxers rely on the privacy of these Groups to spread dangerous anti-vaccine disinformation with impunity.

# Appendix: The Disinformation Dozen

The following profiles of the Disinformation Dozen collate their current access to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; key biographical details; and examples of their content and posts which breach platform standards.

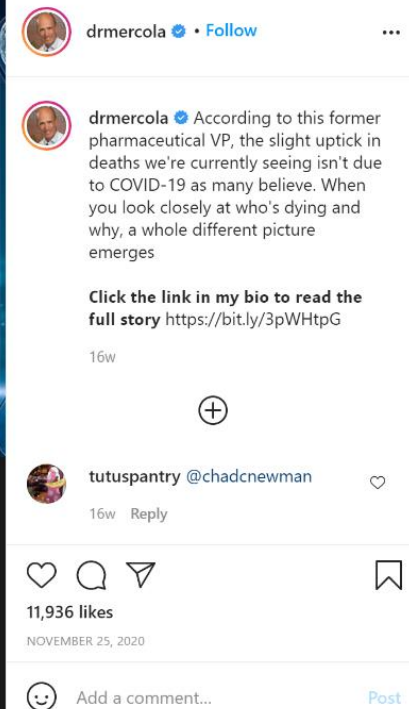
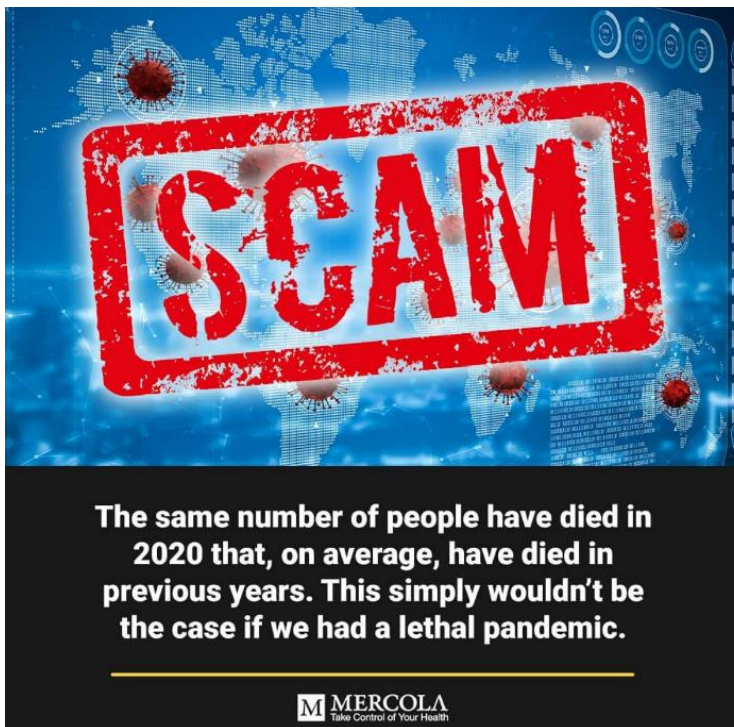
## 1 Joseph Mercola


Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Joseph Mercola is a successful anti-vaccine entrepreneur, peddling dietary supplements and false cures as alternatives to vaccines. Mercola’s combined personal social media accounts have around 3.6 million followers.

### Example Violations





**Forced vaccination is part of the plan to “reset” the global economic system. Now, global vaccine passports are being introduced, and it’s only a matter of time before vaccination status will be a prerequisite for travel.**

**MERCOLA**  
Take Control of Your Health

drmercola • Follow

drmercola • CommonPass is a digital “health passport” framework initiated by The Commons Project, the World Economic Forum and The Rockefeller Foundation.

Click the link in my bio to read the full story <https://bit.ly/33fqDsm>

16w

deleitch If we resist and the airlines go broke, they will stop this insanity!

16w Reply

2,859 likes

NOVEMBER 24, 2020

Add a comment... Post

This Mercola article included in our sample of URLs posted in anti-vaccine Facebook Groups claims that “hydrogen peroxide treatment can successfully treat most viral respiratory illnesses, including coronavirus” has been shared on Facebook 4,600 times.

## Could Hydrogen Peroxide Treat Coronavirus?

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#) ✓ Fact Checked

April 09, 2020

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Next ▶



**Dr. Mercola Discusses**  
**HYDROGEN PEROXIDE**  
**NEBULIZATION**

**MERCOLA**  
Take Control of Your Health

15:33

## 2 Robert F. Kennedy Jr.



Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Part Removed**

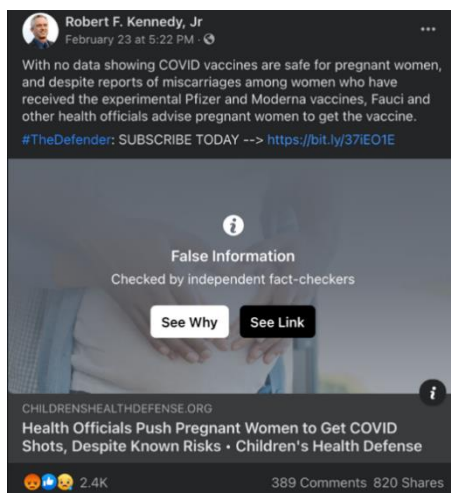
Kennedy is a long-standing anti-vaxxer, and his Children’s Health Defense (CHD) hosts a range of anti-vaccine articles.

Kennedy’s account was banned from Instagram on 8 February, yet his Facebook Page remains active, as does the CHD’s Instagram page.

Kennedy and [Children’s Health Defense released a film](#) in mid-March targeting members of the Black and Latino communities with tailored anti-vaccine messages. Facebook and Twitter continue to allow him a platform to promote these false claims.

### Example Violations

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. shared [this post](#) which contains misinformation about Covid vaccines posing a threat to pregnant women.




A [misleading claim](#) that Hank Aaron’s death was “part of a wave of suspicious deaths” remains available with a “missing context” label, despite the Medical Examiner confirming no association.



[Here](#) and [here](#), Kennedy promotes misinformation linking Covid vaccines to deaths.

**Robert F. Kennedy, Jr**  
January 15 · 🌐


READ + SHARE this excellent account on COVID vaccine-related adverse events, ranging from life-threatening anaphylaxis to death.



CHILDRENSHEALTHDEFENSE.ORG  
**Tip of the Iceberg? Thousands of COVID Vaccine Injuries and 13 Deaths Reported in December Alone · Children'...**

**Robert F. Kennedy, Jr**  
February 14 at 10:49 AM · 🌐

These numbers reflect the latest data available as of Feb. 4 from the CDC's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System website. Of the 653 reported deaths, 602 were from the U.S. The average age of those who died was 77, the youngest was 23.



CHILDRENSHEALTHDEFENSE.ORG  
**653 Deaths + 12,044 Other Injuries Reported Following COVID Vaccine, Latest CDC Data Show · Children's Health Defense**

**Missing Context.** Independent fact-checkers say this information could mislead people.

See Why

👍👎🗨️ 2.7K      673 Comments 1.6K Shares

# 3 Ty & Charlene Bollinger

Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Ty and Charlene Bollinger are anti-vax entrepreneurs who run a network of accounts that market books and DVDs about vaccines, cancer and COVID-19. In 2020 they launched the United Medical Freedom Super PAC ahead of last year's United States elections.

The Bollingers have [promoted](#) the conspiracy theory that Bill Gates plans to inject everyone with microchips as part of a vaccination program.

## Example Violations



**Dr. Ken P. Stoller, MD**  
Board certified Pediatrician for over 20 years,  
focusing on brain injured children and adults.

---

**"For over 20 years, the federal government has publicly denied a vaccine/autism link while at the same time, its Vaccine Injury Compensation Program has been awarding damages for vaccine injury to children with brain damage, seizures, and autism... Vaccines cause autism."**

*The TRUTH About*  
**VACCINES**

For information about vaccines, visit [who.int](http://who.int).

**thetruthaboutvaccinestt** • Follow ...

**thetruthaboutvaccinesttav** If vaccines don't cause #Autism, why does the government compensate families that have been affected by Autism after receiving a vaccine?

#TTAV #VAERS #criticalthinking

1w

**inga\_r\_ingo** I choose not to vaccinate my children because I believe there is a link. However, one of my children has Autism anyway. There must be other reasons - environmental factors etc that are also contributing to the rising numbers of children with Autism.

1w 5 likes Reply

View rantiae (1)

754 likes

FEBRUARY 2

Add a comment... Post



Promoting a [debunked story](#) which claims that the Covid vaccine is responsible for several deaths in Senegal.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Killed Seven Children in Senegal, Africa



by Alter Picar 17 hours ago

1 1.1k views



[@thetruthaboutvaccinesttav](#)



The Truth About Vaccines Docu-Series  
10 April 2020 · 🌐

👍👎👏 7

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

Write a comment...

The Bollingers have also posted content that violates platform standards on election misinformation. [This](#) post falsely claims the US Presidential election was “stolen” and promotes the rally the Bollingers spoke at on 6 January.

### Join us in DC on Jan 6

**Ty Charlene Bollinger**  
1h · 🌐

Our internet is finally back up here in Nashville after the Christmas day bombing. They will stop at nothing to steal this election and America. Be assured that they will not win. Ty and I will be in DC on Jan 6th speaking. We hope you will be there with us! [#StopTheSteal](#) [#MAGA](#) [#Trump2020](#)

👍👎👏 442      22 Comments 21 Shares

# 4 MORE years

**ty.charlene.bollinger** · Follow

**ty.charlene.bollinger** Come join us in DC on Jan 6th. Ty and I will be speaking with some of our good friends: [#RogerStone](#) [@joyvilla](#), [@mikkiallenwillis](#), [@lori\\_martin\\_gregory](#), [@highwiretalk](#), and more! Let us know if you are coming. And come by to say hello and get a picture with us. 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸 [#MAGA](#) [#StopTheSteal](#) [#Trump2020](#) [#Freedom](#)

8w

**modelcarolalt** ❤️❤️  
8w 2 likes Reply

**rosiecharleslopez** We are with you!  
!

4,546 views  
DECEMBER 27, 2020

Add a comment... Post

## 4 Sherri Tenpenny

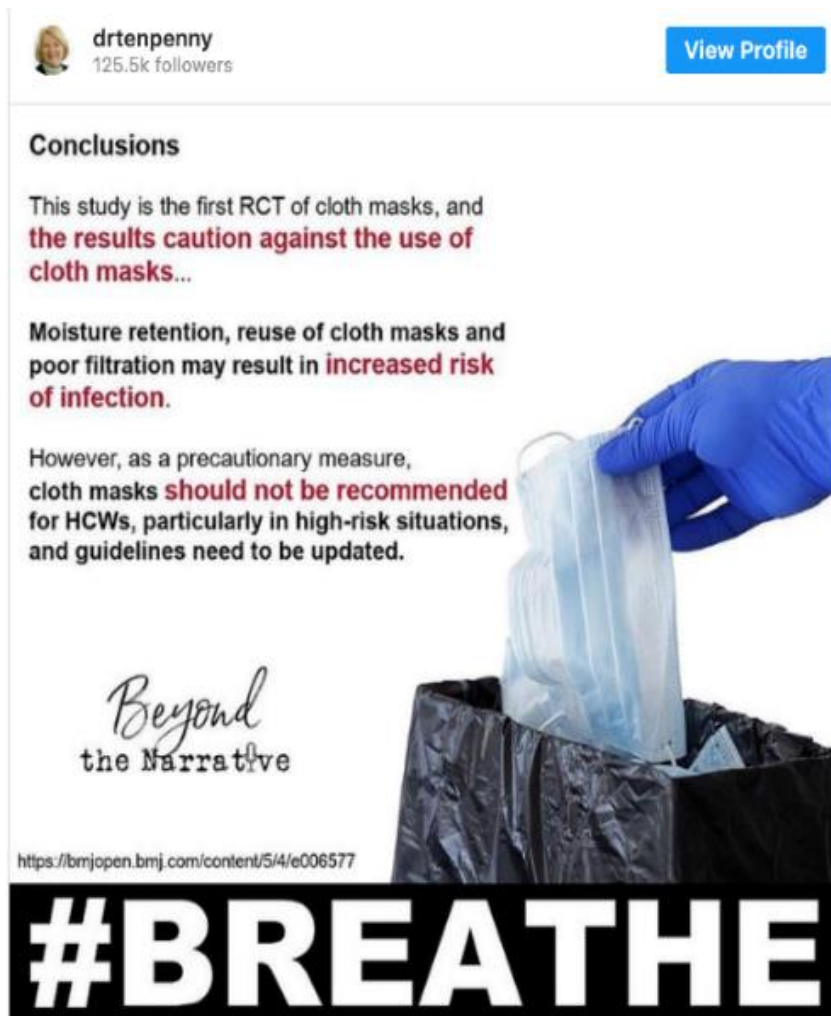
Facebook: **Part Removed**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Sherri Tenpenny is an osteopath physician who spreads anti-vaccine sentiment and false claims about the safety and efficacy of masks via her social media channels. While her Facebook account has been removed, her Twitter and Instagram are still intact.

### Example Violations

Facebook's policies state that false claims about the safety and efficacy of masks are prohibited. Tenpenny, who regularly advocates against mask-wearing, is clearly in violation of that policy [here](#).



drtenpenny  
125.5k followers

View Profile

### Conclusions

This study is the first RCT of cloth masks, and **the results caution against the use of cloth masks...**

Moisture retention, reuse of cloth masks and poor filtration may result in **increased risk of infection.**

However, as a precautionary measure, cloth masks **should not be recommended** for HCWs, particularly in high-risk situations, and guidelines need to be updated.

Beyond  
the Narrative

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/4/e006577>

# #BREATHE

On 23 June 2020 Sherri Tenpenny [tweeted](#) that the longer you wear a mask, the more unhealthy you get. Tenpenny alleged that masks suppress your immune system.



**Dr Sherri Tenpenny**  
@BusyDrT



The [#MaskAgenda](#) has nothing to do with health and everything to do with control & suppressing your [#immunesystem](#). The longer you wear one, the more unhealthy you become.



**USAVET!!!** @USAVET6 · Jun 23, 2020

Hillsborough County I HAVE BEEN UP IN PANHANDLE AREA FOR TWO WEEKS AND BASICALLY NO ONE WEARS MASKS!! THEY HAVE THE LOWEST CASES AND THE LOWEST DEATHS!! EXPLAIN THAT LITTLE SHEEP!! KEEP DRINKING THE KOOL AID!!!

[Show this thread](#)

7:27 PM · Jun 23, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Tenpenny [also posts](#), “Stop getting tested. If you are getting tested you are part of the problem.” This clearly violates Facebook’s policy against claims that can discourage someone from getting a government-approved COVID-19 test.



**drtenpenny**  
Ohio, USA

[View Profile](#)



**Kulvinder Kaur MD** @dockaurG · 8h

▶ On Dec 14, 2020, even the political WHO issued a public warning re “elevated risk for false SARSCoV2 results” with PCR tests used for detection of SARSCoV2. The WHO recommended “manually” adjusting “high Ct values” and providing “Ct value in the report”.



WHO Information Notice for IVD Users  
who.int

[View More on Instagram](#)

After Instagram took down an Instagram Live with disgraced former doctor Andrew Wakefield, Tenpenny took to Instagram again with Wakefield with a video where Wakefield calls COVID-19 an “alleged plague,” and errantly discusses a vaccine that “has killed more children than it has saved from the targeted disease.” [This video alone](#) contains numerous violations of Facebook’s stated policies yet remains available despite Instagram seeing fit to remove it the first time it was posted.



## 5 Rizza Islam

Facebook: Removed  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Rizza Islam's anti-vaccine posts aim to spread vaccine hesitancy amongst African Americans. While Facebook removed Rizza Islam's Facebook Page in February, he continues to post anti-vaccine messages from his Instagram and Twitter accounts.

### Example Violations

Rizza Islam promoted the false conspiracy theory that COVID vaccines make women infertile in a [tweet](#) last June.



**Rizza Islam**  
@IslamRizza



Now it has been SAID that a whistleblower at [#glaxosmithkline](#) just tested their new [#COVID19](#) vaccine on 63 women in the UK and made 61 of them infertile! Sanofi's S-protein [#Covid\\_19](#) antigen and GSK's pandemic adjuvant technology. This information is currently being confirmed.

8:46 PM · Jun 18, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Rizza Islam recently [tweeted](#) that he recovered from COVID in 48 hours by following a special diet.



**Rizza Islam**  
@IslamRizza

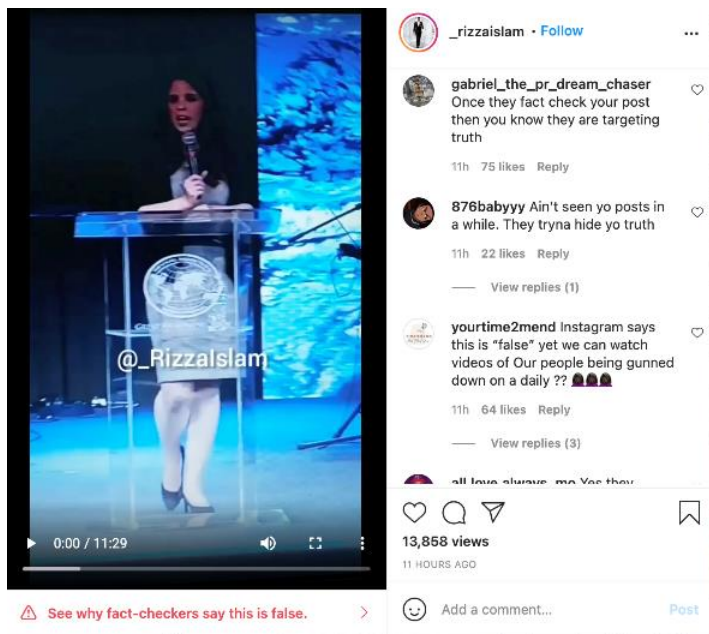


I BEAT [#COVID](#) in 48 hours. This was how; 1. No solid foods only hot soups with vegetable broth, no dairy, lots of spices including turmeric & cayenne pepper. 2. Roughly 2 gallons of water each day=4 gallons of water that i drank in 2 days. 3. 4,000 mgs of vit. C every 4 hours. 🖐️

12:31 AM · Feb 3, 2021 · Twitter for Android



In this [February 2021 post](#), Islam posts a video which contains the claim that vaccines cause autism in higher rates in non-white children.



This [post](#) claims that “Satan” is behind the COVID vaccine and discourages audience members from receiving the vaccine.

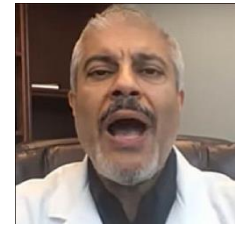


In this [February 2021 post](#), Islam suggests that Bill Gates had a role in planning the pandemic.



# 6 Rashid Buttar

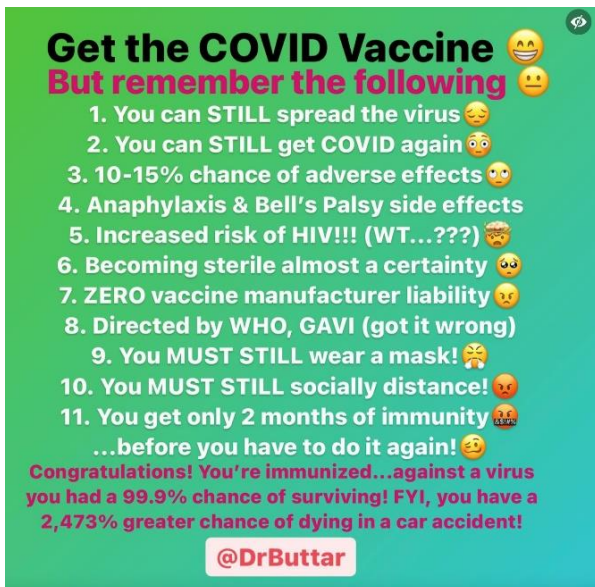
Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Rashid Buttar is an osteopath physician and conspiracy theorist known for [videos](#) posted to his YouTube channel.

## Example Violations

In this [Facebook post](#), Buttar claimed that Covid vaccines cause infertility.



In [this video](#) posted to Facebook, Buttar claims that COVID-19 tests have living microorganisms (discouraging people from getting government-approved tests).





# 7 Erin Elizabeth

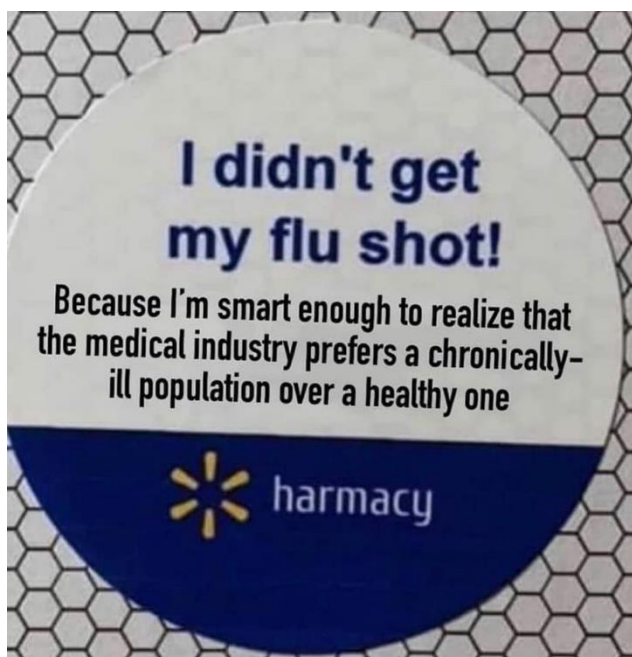
Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Erin Elizabeth, partner to Joseph Mercola, runs [Health Nut News](#), a prominent 'alternative health' website with affiliated newsletter and social media accounts.

## Example Violations

This [Instagram post](#) claims vaccines are part of a medical industry plan to create “a chronically-ill population”.



Everyone is arguing over the safety of a drug that was FDA approved in 1955, and I'm just over here like:



"Hydroxychloroquine was more thoroughly tested than the vaccines they want to mandate on your baby"

AGGRESSIVE



healthnutnews • Follow

healthnutnews Pretty much spot on. #Reality #HealthFreedom #MedicalFreedom #MedicalChoice #MedicalChoice #NotMiracle #HealthNutNews #ErinElizabeth #Truth #Holistic #HolisticHealth

33w



kaytprend Truth

33w Reply

hairbyjoc 🍷🍷🍷

33w Reply

3,667 likes

AUGUST 2, 2020

Add a comment... Post

healthnutnews • Follow Ormond Beach, Florida

healthnutnews A little humor this weekend although you better laugh or you'll cry. #ExposeBillGates #Truth #Health #MedicalFreedom #MedicalChoice #HealthFreedom #HealthChoice #HealthNutNews #ErinElizabeth

33w



livepauhana 🤔

2,802 likes

AUGUST 3, 2020

Add a comment... Post

Erin Elizabeth also [posted](#) this antisemitic conspiracy theory about the Rothschilds to her Instagram account



HELLO THERE,  
MY NAME IS JACOB ROTHSCHILD.  
MY FAMILY IS WORTH  
500 TRILLION DOLLARS.  
WE OWN NEARLY EVERY  
CENTRAL BANK IN THE WORLD.  
WE FINANCED BOTH SIDES OF  
EVERY WAR SINCE NAPOLEON.  
WE OWN YOUR NEWS,  
THE MEDIA, YOUR OIL,  
AND YOUR GOVERNMENT.  
You have probably never heard of me.

@HealthNutNews  
#TruthTeller

**healthnutnews** • Follow  
Ormond Beach, Florida

**healthnutnews** I'm sorry to be the truth teller here but the Global elite are running the show. #Rockefeller #Epstein #Weinstein #ExposeBillGates #Rothschild #GlobalElite #NewWorldOrder #TruthTeller #HealthNutNews #ErinElizabeth  
32w

**hereiamsendit** And he is satanist  
32w 1 like Reply  
View replies (2)

**kennielove** I've never seen

3,961 likes  
AUGUST 7, 2020

Add a comment... Post

## 8 Sayer Ji

Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Removed**  
Instagram: **Part Removed**



Sayer Ji runs a popular alternative health website, [GreenMedInfo.com](https://www.greenmedinfo.com), and affiliated social media accounts that promote pseudoscience and anti-vaccine misinformation. Despite his GreenMedInfo accounts being removed by Twitter and Instagram, it is still available on Facebook.

An [article](#) on GreenMedInfo.com falsely claimed that "The FDA knows that rushed-to-market COVID-19 vaccines may cause a wide range of life-threatening side effects, including death."

### Example Violations

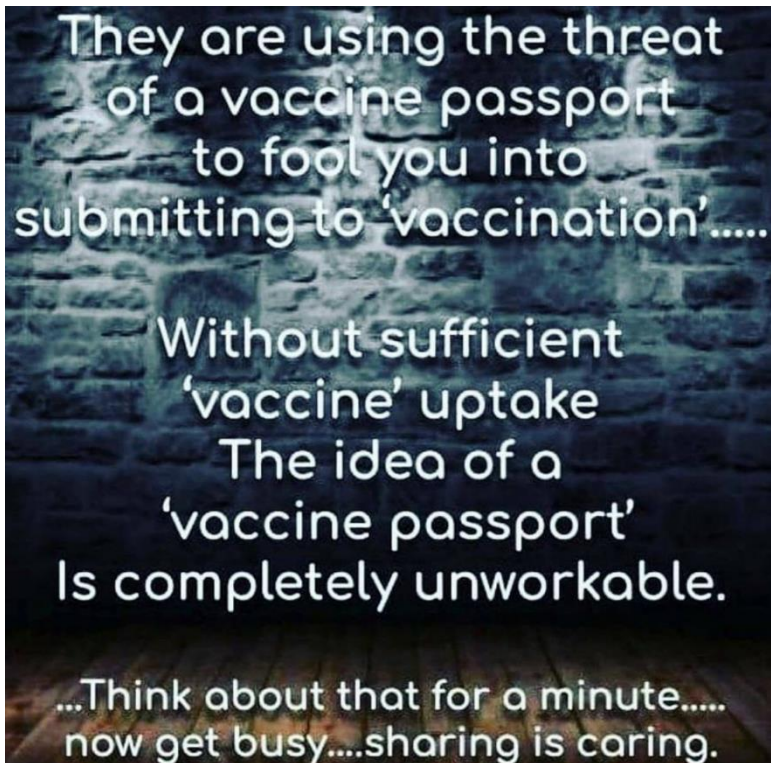
[In this March 2021 post](#) Ji shares claims that the Pfizer vaccine has killed more people than COVID.



"We conclude that the **Pfizer vaccines**, for the elderly, killed during the 5-week vaccination period about **40 times more people than the disease** itself would have killed, and about **260 times more people than the disease** among the younger age class. We stress that this is in order to produce a **green passport** valid at most 6 months, and promote **Pfizer sales**."

~ Haim Yativ and Dr Seligmann,  
Israeli researchers





 **sayergmi** • Follow ...

---

 **michele\_snaps\_life** I haven't been on Facebook since last summer, due to seeing posts of people I thought were thoughtful people simply parroting media hype, so I was sickened when I popped into FB just now. Even my most aware (or so I thought... one woman I know knows about the Tuskegee Experiments, eugenics, the Rockefeller influence in AMA...) are bragging about their V shots. One "really cool" (or so I thought) friend compared people who don't get the V to... (gulp 😬) DRUNK DRIVERS. I think I'm going to vomit. I don't pay attention to any fear about the monster virus, not one minute of

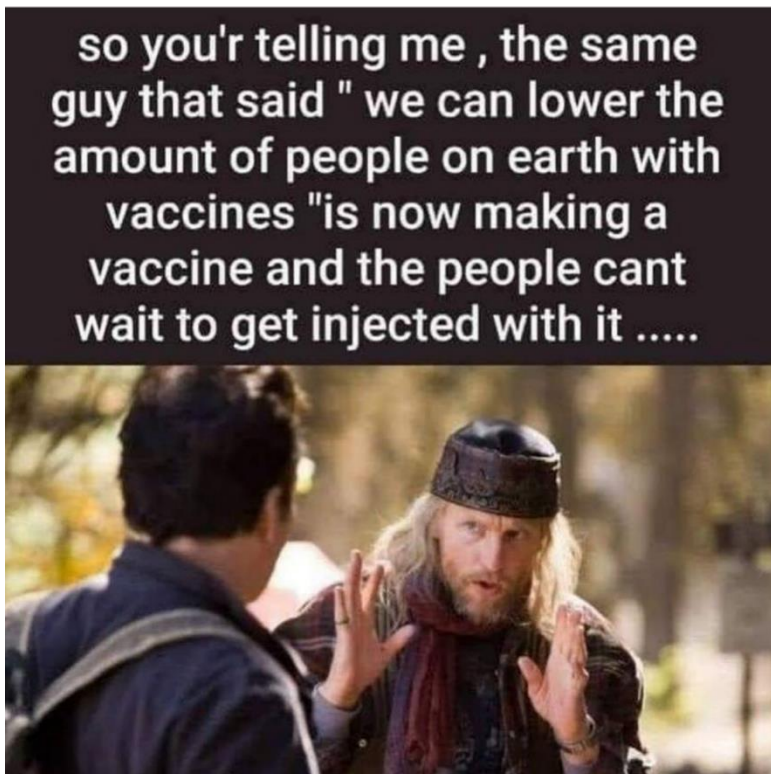
---

👍 🗨️ 📌

**3,416 likes**

2 DAYS AGO

 Add a comment... [Post](#)



 **sayergmi** • Follow ...

---

 **ohdeardrea**  i ask this all the time.

1w 54 likes Reply

— View replies (3)

---

 **blvck\_light** and people get mad at u for not wearing a mask, after it being over a year. same people who don't have a clue about nutrition and the body

1w 41 likes Reply

— View replies (2)

---

 **voulacheech** This is exactly how i feel every time someone excitedly tells me thev'e aoina for their

---

👍 🗨️ 📌

**5,413 likes**

MARCH 14

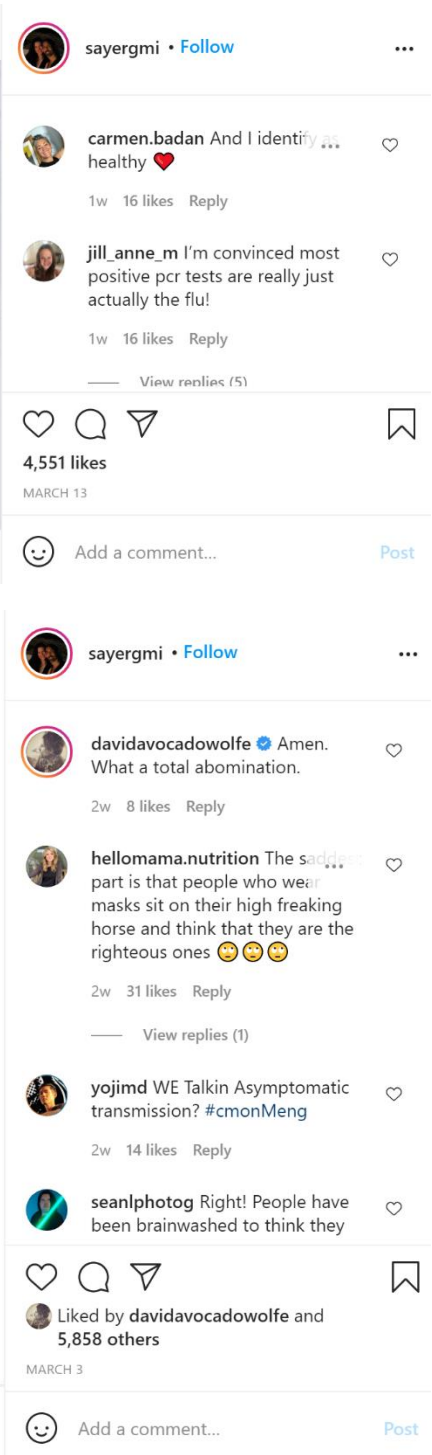
 Add a comment... [Post](#)

**The FLU has decided to identify as COVID-19 and we should all respect and support its decision.**

**I refuse to participate in a medical conspiracy that says wearing a mask is healthy and we all pretend healthy people are ill and can make us all sick.**

**@sayergmi**

 **Missing Context. Independent fact-checkers say information in this post could mislead people.**



**sayergmi** • Follow

**carmen.badan** And I identify as healthy ❤️  
1w 16 likes Reply

**jill\_anne\_m** I'm convinced most positive pcr tests are really just actually the flu!  
1w 16 likes Reply

— View replies (5)

4,551 likes  
MARCH 13

Add a comment... Post

**sayergmi** • Follow

**dauidavocadowolfe** Amen. What a total abomination.  
2w 8 likes Reply

**hellomama.nutrition** The saddest part is that people who wear masks sit on their high freaking horse and think that they are the righteous ones 🙄🙄🙄  
2w 31 likes Reply

— View replies (1)

**yojimd** WE Talkin Asymptomatic transmission? #cmonMeng  
2w 14 likes Reply

**seanlphotog** Right! People have been brainwashed to think they

Liked by **dauidavocadowolfe** and 5,858 others  
MARCH 3

Add a comment... Post

# 9 Kelly Brogan

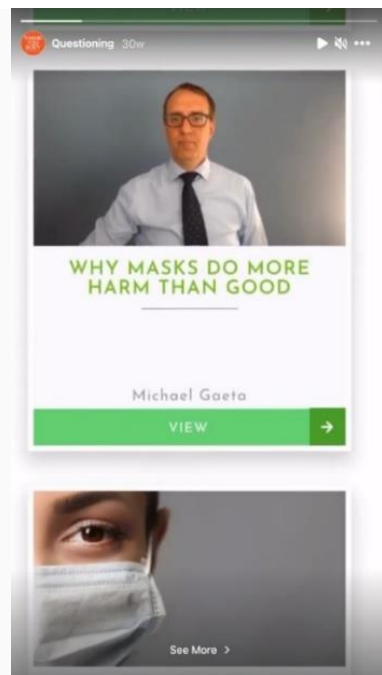
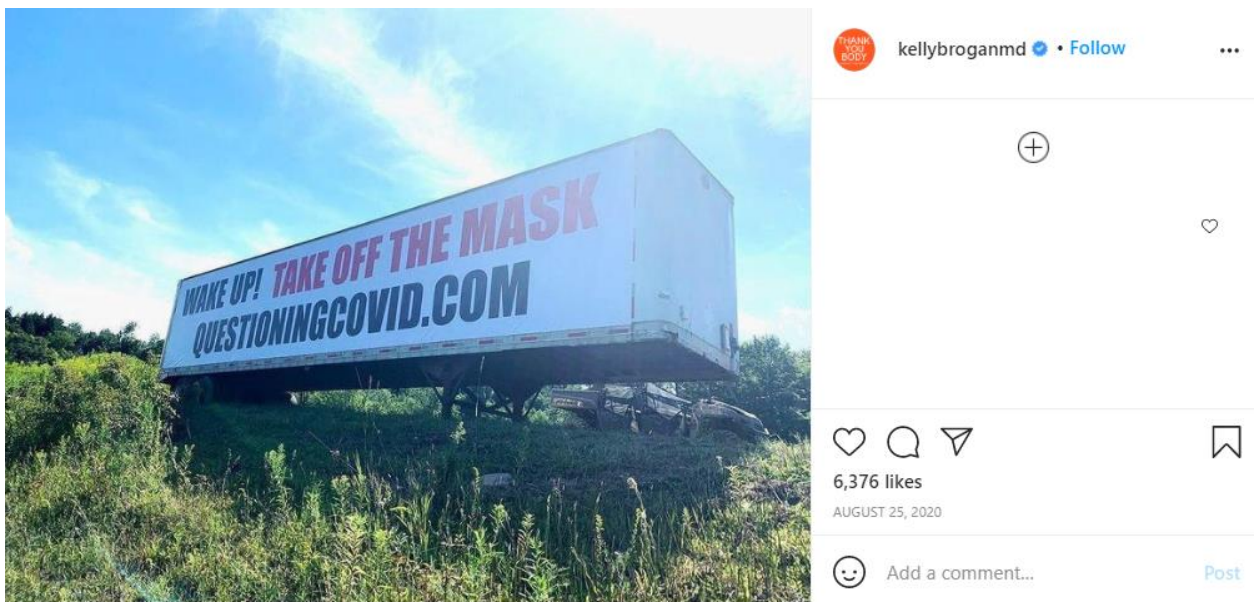
Facebook: Removed  
 Twitter: **Active**  
 Instagram: **Active**



Kelly Brogan is the partner of fellow alternative health entrepreneur Sayer Ji. She claims to practice “holistic psychiatry” and sells a range of books and courses from her website.

## Example Violations

Brogan has [posted messages](#) encouraging Instagram users not to wear masks



In a widely viewed video in March, 2020, Kelly Brogan [claimed](#) that “there is potentially no such thing as the coronavirus” because “it’s not possible to prove that any given pathogen has induced death.”

A [post](#) on Kelly Brogan’s website titled “Why We Stay Asleep When Covid-19 Is Trying to Wake Us Up” cites a number of COVID conspiracy theories, including that the pandemic was planned. CrowdTangle analytics show it has been shared on Facebook nearly 11,000 times.

# Why We Stay Asleep When Covid-19 Is Trying to Wake Us Up

By Kelly Brogan, MD, Ali Zeck, Sayer Ji





# 10 Christiane Northrup

Facebook: **Active**

Twitter: **Active**

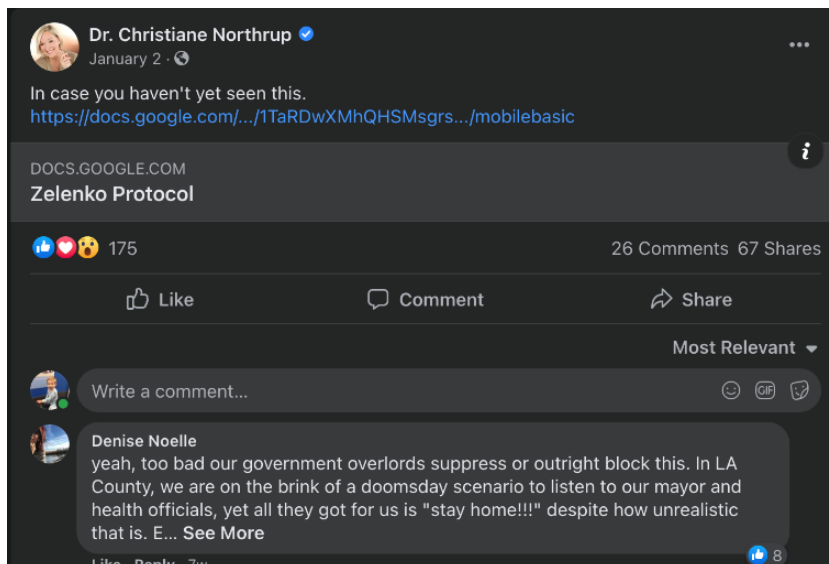
Instagram: **Active**



Christiane Northrup is an obstetrics and gynecology physician who has embraced alternative medicine and anti-vaccine conspiracies. She has used her social media accounts to spread disinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Example Violations

[Here](#), Northrup links to a Google Doc that recommends HCQ and Ivermectin among several substances as cures for COVID.



[Here](#) she makes the baseless claim that vaccines cause an 800% increase in chronic illness.



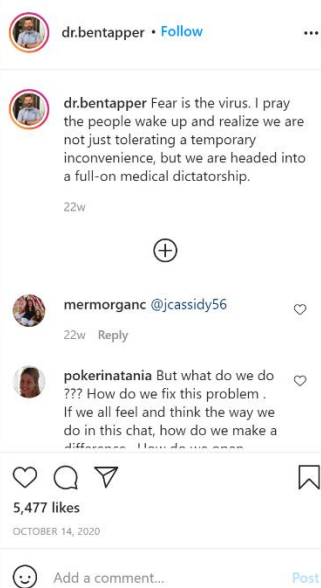
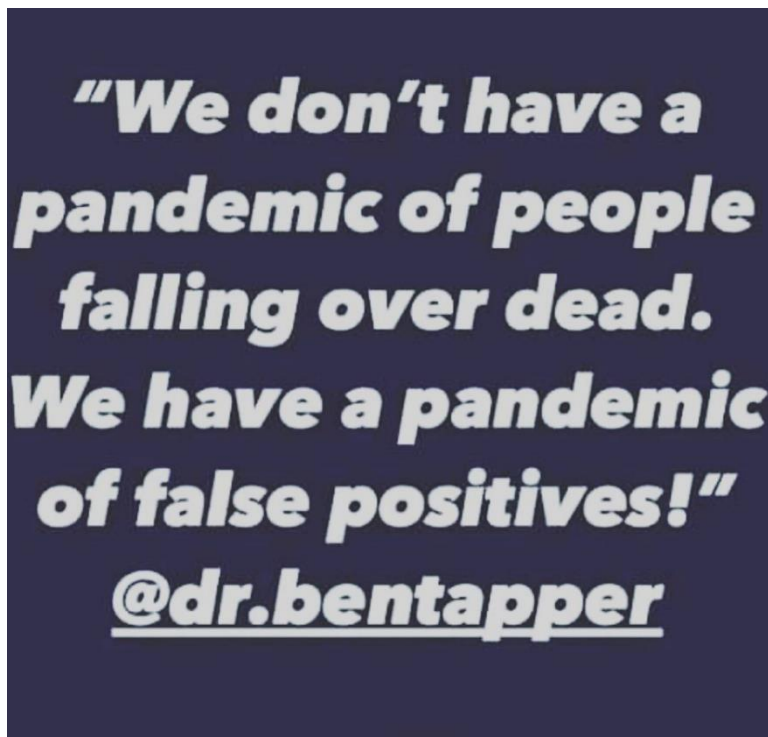
# 11 Ben Tapper

Facebook: **Active**  
Twitter: **Active**  
Instagram: **Active**



Ben Tapper is a chiropractor with a growing following on social media. He has routinely posted COVID disinformation and [spoken out against masking](#).

## Example Violations





dr.bentapper • Follow

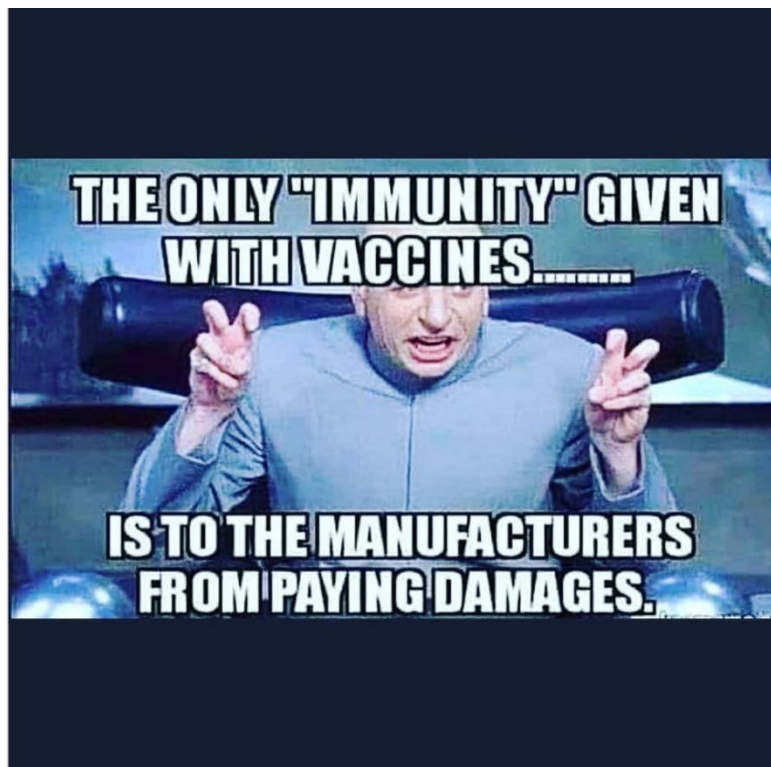
dr.bentapper Like our billboard? 😄  
18w

yasminodeepshah Ur in omaha? My old stomping ground  
16w Reply

anton\_toha Агонь! 🏹 Каркас для дебилов, которые не понимают ))  
16w Reply

10,286 likes  
NOVEMBER 11, 2020

Add a comment... Post



dr.bentapper • Follow


dr.bentapper 😄  
#vaccinetruthadvocate #plantbased #plandemic2020 #truth #vaccineinjury  
12w

mrsjessicamaatouk @adamjkhoury  
12w 1 like Reply

labrunete Boom !!!!  
12w Reply

2,375 likes  
DECEMBER 23, 2020

Add a comment... Post



**Dr. Ben Tapper**  
@DrBenTapper1

There is a total lack of evidence that viruses can live outside the body. When the whole healing profession comprehends this simple fact, there will no longer be this fear of germs, nor the need for vaccines, disinfectants, or other harmful germicides.

7:26 PM · 12/21/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



dr.bentapper • [Follow](#)

---



dr.bentapper #science 😊

12w

+



soulmeetshuman Thank goodness I'm not the only one that believes our immune system is all we need

12w Reply



allvaccineskillandinjure Amen

---

♥️ 💬 📌

Liked by [the\\_conscious\\_awakening](#) and **2,763 others**

DECEMBER 22, 2020

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😊 Add a comment... [Post](#)

## 12 Kevin Jenkins

Facebook: **Active**

Twitter: **Active**

Instagram: **Active**

Kevin Jenkins is an anti-vaccine activist with a growing social media presence who has [appeared at public events](#) with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Jenkins has [called](#) vaccines a “conspiracy” to “wipe out” black people and is a [co-founder of the Freedom Airway & Freedom Travel Alliance](#), a company founded in late 2020 to help its members travel around the world without observing any masking, quarantining, vaccination, or other pandemic control measures.

### Example Violations

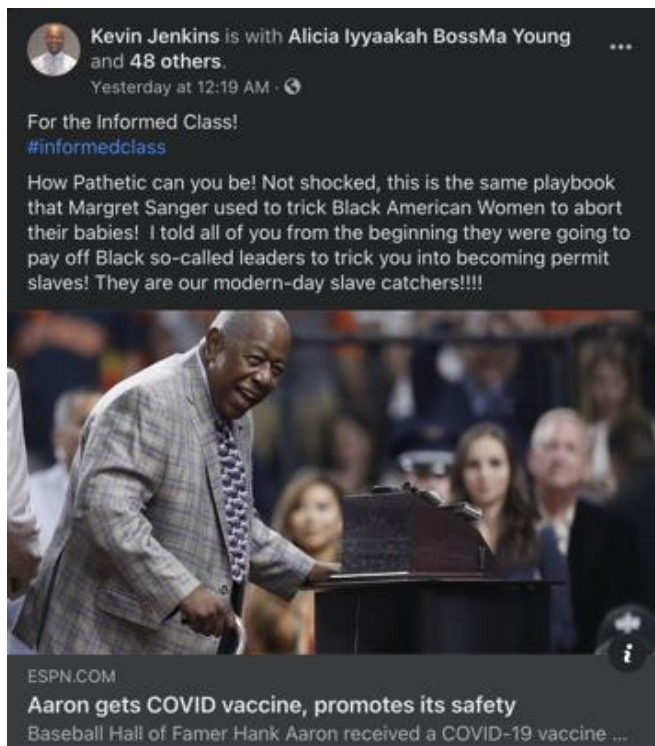
In a now-deleted Facebook Live from DC on January 6th, Kevin Jenkins stands on stage and tells the crowd that Black people are being targeted with the vaccine. *“They are spending a trillion dollars to convince you [the Black Community] that it’s ok to kill yourselves [with the COVID vaccine].”*



[Here](#) Jenkins claimed that the Black community is being targeted for experimentation with the vaccine.



In a now-deleted post, he also accused Hank Aaron of being paid off to take the vaccine - calling him a "modern-day slavecatcher."



**Published 24 March 2021**

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, 10 December 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/racial-ethnic-disparities/disparities-hospitalization.html>

CDC, 10 December 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/racial-ethnic-disparities/disparities-deaths.html>

<sup>2</sup> KFF, 17 March 2021, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-race-ethnicity/>

KFF, 26 February 2021, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-february-2021/>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Allington, Siobhan McAndrew, Vivienne Louisa Moxham-Hall, Bobby Duffy, Media usage predicts intention to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 in the US and the UK, Vaccine, 2021, ISSN 0264-410X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.02.054>

<sup>4</sup> “The Anti-Vaxx Playbook”, CCDH, 22 December 2020, <https://www.counterhate.com/playbook>

<sup>5</sup> USA Today, 10 March 2021, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/tech/2021/03/10/covid-vaccine-facebook-youtube-instagram-black-misinformation-fight/6943180002/>

<sup>6</sup> Loomba, S., de Figueiredo, A., Piatek, S.J. et al. Measuring the impact of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on vaccination intent in the UK and USA. Nat Hum Behav 5, 337–348 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01056-1>

<sup>7</sup> “Failure to Act”, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 3 September 2020, <https://www.counterhate.co.uk/failure-to-act>

“Malgorithm”, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 8 March 2021, <https://www.counterhate.com/malgorithm>

<sup>8</sup> “The Anti-Vaxx Playbook”, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 22 December 2020, <https://www.counterhate.com/playbook>

<sup>9</sup> Washington Post, 14 March 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/03/14/facebook-vaccine-hesitancy-qanon/>

<sup>10</sup> “Malgorithm”, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 8 March 2021, <https://www.counterhate.com/malgorithm>

<sup>11</sup> Nyhan B, Reifler J. Does correcting myths about the flu vaccine work? An experimental evaluation of the effects of corrective information. Vaccine. 2015 Jan 9;33(3):459-64. doi: [10.1016/j.vaccine.2014.11.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2014.11.017). Epub 2014 Dec 8. PMID: 25499651.

Skurnik, I., Yoon, C., Schwarz, N. (2007). “Myths & Facts” about the flu: Health education campaigns can reduce vaccination intentions. Retrieved from [http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/yoonc/research/Papers/Skurnik\\_Yoon\\_Schwarz\\_2005\\_Myths\\_Facts\\_Flu\\_Health\\_Education\\_Campaigns\\_JAMA.pdf](http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/yoonc/research/Papers/Skurnik_Yoon_Schwarz_2005_Myths_Facts_Flu_Health_Education_Campaigns_JAMA.pdf)

Peter C, Koch T. When Debunking Scientific Myths Fails (and When It Does Not): The Backfire Effect in the Context of Journalistic Coverage and Immediate Judgments as Prevention Strategy. Science Communication. 2016;38(1):3-25. doi:[10.1177/1075547015613523](https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547015613523)

Douglas MacFarlane, Li Qian Tay, Mark J. Hurlstone, Ullrich K.H. Ecker, Refuting Spurious COVID-19 Treatment Claims Reduces Demand and Misinformation Sharing, Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition, 2020, ISSN 2211-3681, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2020.12.005>.