



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONNECTICUT

WILLIAM TONG
ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 24, 2021

Via First Class and Electronic Mail

Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Re: Vaccine Disinformation

Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Zuckerberg:

As Attorneys General committed to protecting the safety and well-being of the residents of our states, we write to express our concern about the use of your platforms to spread fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines and to seek your cooperation in curtailing the dissemination of such information. The people and groups spreading falsehoods and misleading Americans about the safety of coronavirus vaccines are threatening the health of our communities, slowing progress in getting our residents protected from the virus, and undermining economic recovery in our states.

As safe and effective vaccines become available, the end of this pandemic is in sight. This end, however, depends on the widespread acceptance of these vaccines as safe and effective. Unfortunately, misinformation disseminated via your platforms has increased vaccine hesitancy, which will slow economic recovery and, more importantly, ultimately cause even more unnecessary deaths. A small group of individuals use your platforms to downplay the dangers of COVID-19 and spread misinformation about the safety of vaccines. These individuals lack medical expertise and are often motivated by financial interests. According to a recent report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate¹, so-called “anti-vaxxer” accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter reach more than 59 million followers. “Anti-vaxxers” are using social media platforms to target people of color and Black Americans specifically, members of communities who have suffered the worst health impacts of the virus and whose vaccination rates are lagging.

¹ [Center for Countering Digital Hate \(counterhate.com\)](https://www.counterhate.com/)

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Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Given “anti-vaxxers” reliance on your platforms, you are uniquely positioned to prevent the spread of misinformation about coronavirus vaccines that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans in our states and that will prolong our road to recovery.

The updated community guidelines you have established to prevent the spread of vaccine misinformation appear to be a step in the right direction. However, it is apparent that Facebook has not taken sufficient action to identify violations and enforce these guidelines by removing and labelling misinformation and banning repeat offenders. As a result, anti-vaccine misinformation continues to spread on your platforms, in violation of your community standards.

- Twitter and Facebook have yet to remove from all their platforms the accounts of prominent “anti-vaxxers” who have repeatedly violated the companies’ terms of service. Digital media research groups estimate that as of March 10, 12 “anti-vaxxers” personal accounts and their associated organizations, groups and websites are responsible for 65% of public anti-vaccine content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Facebook has failed to consistently apply misinformation labels and popups on Facebook pages and groups that discuss vaccines or COVID-19. For example, the company neglected to apply warning labels on dozens of Facebook groups that “anti-vaxxer” Larry Cook created for his followers. At the same time, the company has mistakenly flagged pro-vaccine pages and content in ways that have undermined pro-vaccine public education efforts.
- Facebook has allowed anti-vaxxers to skirt its policy of removing misinformation that health experts have debunked, by failing to prevent them from using video and streaming tools like Facebook Live and sites like Bitchute, Rumble, and Brighteon to evade detection.

We call on you to take immediate steps to fully enforce your companies’ guidelines against vaccine misinformation. By effectively rooting out fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines, you can prevent needless illness and death and hasten our road to recovery.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM TONG
Attorney General of Connecticut

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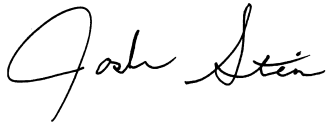


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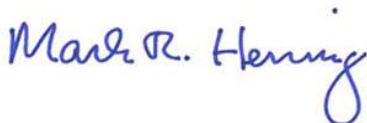
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