



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 4, 2022

Surgeon General Calls on Tech Platforms, Users to Share Data on COVID “Misinformation”

The U.S. government has formally requested that Big Tech and social-media platforms provide data on COVID “misinformation.”

According to a *New York Times* [report](#), U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy “formally requested that the major tech platforms submit information about the scale of Covid-19 misinformation on social networks, search engines, crowdsourced platforms, e-commerce platforms and instant messaging systems.”

The *Times* noted that Murthy “demanded” that tech platforms send data and analysis on the prevalence of COVID-19 misinformation on their sites, starting with common examples of [vaccine misinformation documented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).



AP Images
Vivek Murthy

The above link goes to the CDC’s webpage titled “Myths and Facts about COVID-19 vaccines.” Among such “myths” are:

- The ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines are dangerous.
- The natural immunity I get from being sick with COVID-19 is better than the immunity I get from COVID-19 vaccination.
- COVID-19 vaccines cause variants
- The mRNA vaccine is not considered a vaccine
- COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips
- COVID-19 vaccines can alter my DNA
- COVID-19 vaccines may affect my fertility

Posting any information that supports any of these claims is considered “misinformation.”

Noting that the request all about “protecting the nation’s health,” Murthy said in an e-mailed statement to the outlet, “Technology companies now have the opportunity to be open and transparent with the American people about the misinformation on their platforms.”

Companies were given until May 2 to submit the requested data. Citing the surgeon general’s office, *The Times* reports, “The notice is the first formal request from the Biden administration of the tech companies to submit Covid-19 misinformation data.” The companies are not legally obligated to comply



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with the request and will not face any penalties should they decide against cooperating with the government, per the outlet.

The request for information is part of President Biden's so-called COVID [National Preparedness Plan](#), which the White House released on Wednesday. The plan is presumably crafted to serve as a roadmap to "help us fight COVID-19 in the future as we begin to get back to our more normal routines," per the [White House](#).

Murthy is also calling on everyday Americans to snitch on "anti-vaxxers" and "COVID deniers" they encounter online.

In a [formal notice](#) posted on his site, Murthy called on Americans to share their "research, data, and personal experiences related to health misinformation, in an effort to deepen our collective understanding of its sources and impact." He explained that "misinformation" is any "information that is false, inaccurate, or misleading according to the *best available evidence at the time*." (Emphasis added.)

In other words, the nation's top doctor wants to know who exactly posts and shares medical "misinformation," which is any information that deviates from the current official COVID narrative. He also wants to know which outlets the "misinformation" spreaders use to promote their "harmful" messages, and who constitutes their audience.

What type of impact does "misinformation" have on Americans? Per Murthy, it causes people "to decline COVID-19 vaccines, reject public health measures such as masking and physical distancing, and use unproven treatments."

The notice contains a link to the [request for information](#) that anyone could submit to HHS starting March 7.

Who will be able to send a report? "You!" says Murthy. "This is an opportunity to have your voice heard, no matter who you are: a researcher studying the issue, a health care worker, or someone who has seen the effect of health misinformation on their loved ones or community. No dataset is too big and no story is too small," he noted.

Back in 2021, Murthy released a [Surgeon General's Advisory on Confronting Health Misinformation](#) that provides "specific guidance and resources for health care providers, educators, librarians, faith leaders, and trusted community members to understand, identify, and stop the spread of health misinformation in their communities." Identifying "misinformation" is rather easy, per the guidance. For example, if the medical information one finds online does not align with the views of the CDC on the matter, then it should not be shared.

The federal government takes deviations from the official COVID dogma seriously: In February, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a [bulletin](#) stating that the domestic terrorism threat remains heightened due in part to "false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories."

The issue appears to be extremely complicated, since the official government narrative on COVID-related issues changes rather frequently, starting with a "reevaluation" of the benefits of masking and lockdowns to the vaccines' safety and efficacy. Therefore, it seems rather challenging to keep up with the current set of dogmas that should not be questioned.

Most importantly, the rules on "misinformation" seem to undermine the very foundation of science, which questions everything. The blatant dismissal of any data that goes against the official narrative



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stifles scientific debate and harms public health, especially when the nation's top health agencies are strongly influenced by politics and special-interest groups, as argued by many non-establishment scientists.

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