

# Partnering for **Vaccine Equity**



Learning Community Webinar  
September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

# Zoom Webinar Features

- Participants will **remain muted** during this webinar, but you can use the **raised hand feature** to be unmuted to ask a question, OR
- Use **Q&A tab** in Zoom task bar to submit a question at any time
- **Chatroom Etiquette:** Avoid posting questions for the speaker in the Chatroom, and be civil
- **Technical problems?** Email [vaxequitylearning@urban.org](mailto:vaxequitylearning@urban.org)

## Today's Speakers



Zandra Zuno Baermann



Bryan Garcia

# COVID-19 Vaccines Misinformation: Online & Social Media Audit

Presentation to CDC Learning Community  
September 1, 2021

# Esperanza Hope for All

Our institution-wide campaign to mitigate the health, economic and education implications of the pandemic on Latino families.

- **Health:** Ensure equitable delivery and update of COVID-19 vaccines through a public health awareness and education campaign and continue prevention, education, and testing efforts.
- **Economy:** Preserve Latino families' housing for renters and owners and prevent loss of home equity. Boost financial status of Latino working families with children via tax credits and financial education. And, accelerate the development of an equitable effective system of worker training aligned to digital jobs in demand.
- **Education:** Mitigate disproportionate learning loss among K-12 students/English learners due to remote schooling.

# UnidosUS Expands Vaccine Equity and Uptake

## BUILDING OUR GROUND GAME

### Leverage Affiliate Capacity to:

#### Lead on Culturally Competent Education and Outreach

- . Train local trusted messengers
- . Inform through dual-language communications – flyers, phone banking
- . Provide resources for local COVID-safe outreach and vaccine-scheduling events
- . Recruit local partners

#### Expand Access to Vaccine Distribution through Affiliate Health Centers

- . Staff time to administer vaccines
- . Technology and equipment for mobile outreach
- . Data collection/tracking efforts
- . Refer clients for health, nutrition and other needs

## BUILDING OUR AIR GAME

### Leverage UnidosUS credibility, national platform and voice through:

- National Education/Outreach
- National and targeted markets advertising campaign
- Influencer Engagement Campaign
- Mobile marketing tour in Affiliate markets (van/truck)
- **Mis/disinformation Initiative**

### IMPACT

- ✓ Reach 15 million Latinos with public health education
- ✓ Increase vaccine trust from 34% to 45%

## Background: COVID-19 Misinformation Among Latinos

- Latinos are using social media, mobile apps and other digital platforms at higher rates
- Hispanics are 57% more likely to use social media platforms as a primary source of information about the coronavirus compared with non-Hispanic
- Daily onslaught of misinformation related to the disease and the COVID-19 vaccine spreading in social media networks and other digital platforms. It is presented as opinion to evade fact-checking, paste false headlines on factual stories, or disguise stories' ownership

*This has led to a measurable and concerning distrust of the vaccines among many in the Latino community*

## UnidosUS Mis/Disinformation Initiative

As part of the UnidosUS CDC Cooperative Agreement (CDC-RFA-IP21-2106), the purpose of this initiative is to increase awareness and education among Latinos, including vulnerable populations, about accurate vaccine information and engagement.

### Goals

- Identify and combat mis/disinformation among Latinos on social media and non-digital media in support of UnidosUS's overarching efforts to build trust in the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines among Latinos
- Ensure that Latinos who have digital access build their understanding of the science and enhances vaccine intention
- Leverage UnidosUS network and broader advocacy capabilities to create complementary “offline” efforts that influence a change in practices and that effectively counters the mis/disinformation targeting Latinos



## Misinformation Campaign Overview: *Online Strategies (UPSTREAMERS)*

- Identification of Mis/Disinformation through social media audit and social listening conducted at an ongoing basis throughout the campaign
- Create an ad campaign that informs and empowers Latinos to identify and combat misinformation
- Leverage infiltration tactics with influencers to insert ourselves into conversations and amplify our awareness and reach

**Target Audience: Latino Millennials and Spanish-dominant/-preferred Latinos**

## Misinformation Campaign Overview: *Offline Strategies* (UnidosUS)

- Host a series of briefings on the state of mis/disinformation targeted at Latinos that in turn will be leveraged for a series of communications and advocacy efforts with decision-makers
- Bilingual COVID-19 Vaccine Mis/Dis Information Toolkit and Webinar Trainings
- Proactive/Reactive Media Relations & Advocacy and Accountability Efforts

***Target Audiences: Affiliates, CBOs, government entities and elected officials, news organizations, online platforms and technology companies, and business community***

## Purpose of Today's Presentation

Share insights and learnings from our first Online and Social Media audit , and the relevant emerging topics and sources of COVID-19 vaccine-related misinformation among Latinos

- The audit serves as a knowledge baseline so that we can respond with contextually and culturally appropriate messages using influencers and hired responders throughout the year (online efforts). It can also inform the evolution of our digital ad campaign
- The audit will also help inform UnidosUS' "offline" efforts – forthcoming.

## UPSTREAMERS

- A full-service advertising agency
- Latino marketing specialists
- Independent, minority-owned shop with big agency network experience
- Experience across various sectors and industries, including healthcare and non-profit
- Over the years, our team has helped various organizations and brands engage Latinos of all ages, nationalities, and acculturation levels



# The Problem

US Latinos  
Lagging In  
COVID-19  
Vaccinations

**Online Misinformation among  
US Latinos is Contributing to  
COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy**

# Approach To Detecting Mis/Disinformation Among Latinos Online

# Methodology

Audited COVID-19 vaccine-specific conversations, posts, and content shared between Latinos Online and on Social Media (SM) platforms both in English and Spanish.

## TIME PERIOD EXAMINED

- Past 12 months

## TOOLS USED

- Leveraged Quid/Netbase social listening platform
- Supplemented with Boolean keyword searches on leading search engines
- Cross-checked with leading fact-checking sites for verification (FactCheck.org, Poynter, Full Fact, Reuters Fact-Check, FEMA Rumor Control, CDC, WHO, etc.)

## SAMPLE OF SOURCES REVIEWED

### Leading SM Platforms

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Instagram
- TikTok
- WhatsApp
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn

### Alternative SM Platforms

- Gab
- BitChute
- Telegram
- MeWe

### Newsfeeds/News Sites

- BuzzFeed (Hispanic)
- Reddit

### Top Latino Sites

- HuffPost Latino Voices
- NewsTaco
- Remezcla
- Al Día News
- The Hill (Latino)
- BBC News Mundo
- Centro de Periodismo Investigativo

- Palabra (NAHJ)
- Latino Rebels
- Latin American News Dispatch
- NBC News/Latino
- Univision
- Telemundo
- CNN en Español
- Urban Latino



## Key Learnings & Challenges

## Learnings & Challenges

### Vaccine-Related Misinformation Targeting Latinos Online Is a Moving Target

#### Challenge

To varying degrees, leading SM platforms are increasingly banning individual Latinos who spread misinformation or making it harder to find the content they share (more so in English than Spanish). Despite this, these individuals frequently change their usernames and repost the “banned” content -- making it particularly hard to detect and weed these individuals out.

### Vaccine-Related Misinformation Aimed At Latinos Isn't Just a SM Issue, It's an Online Issue

#### Challenge

Banned or suppressed by some leading SM platforms, many individual Latino misinformation perpetrators are moving to seemingly less stringent alternative SM platforms (e.g. Gab, BitChute, WeMe, etc.) and/or creating harder-to-regulate blogs (many blogs are foreign-based) where their content continues to live.

### A Group of “Latino Misinformation Influencers” Exists

#### Challenge

Various well-known and influential Latinos that reside or work in the US (actors, pastors, public figures, etc.) are not only spreading misinformation, but influencing their followers. Their public platform is likely amplifying the potential impact of vaccine misinformation across the broader US Latino community that is online and offline.

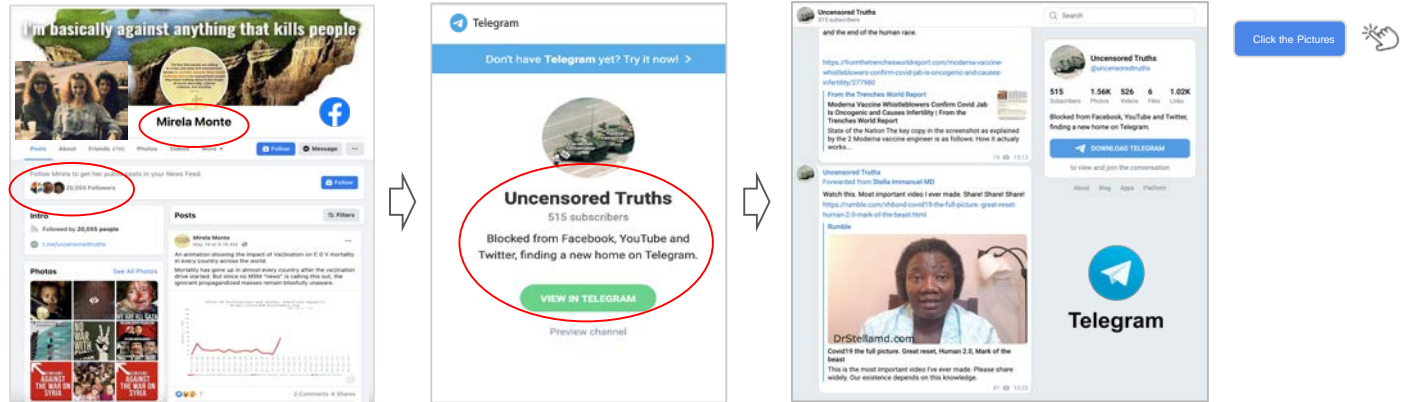
## *Our First Quarter's “Most Wanted” Sources*

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The vaccine-relevant **misinformation sources** we identified in our initial online misinformation audit. This list will grow as we detect more every quarter.

# Sources: Individual Latino Super-Spreaders

Individual Latinos like Myrtle Beach, SC-based Mirela Monte is an example of the vaccine misinformation spreader “moving target.” She is moving from spreading all manner of COVID-19 and vaccine-related misinformation content on leading platforms to alternative platforms under a different public-facing handle (after being blocked or suppressed on leading sites).



Consideration: Triangulate and expose perpetrators as being one-and-the-same across sites. Pressure alternative sites to also block these individuals to the same degree as pressure is being applied to leading platforms.

## Sources: Influential Well-Known Latino Public Figures

Various US-based Latino Actors & religious figures are sharing their views and false conspiracies regarding the origin or “dangers” related to COVID-19 vaccines via recorded interviews or sermons. They are sharing this bilingual content on their own SM on leading social media platforms like Instagram or Facebook.

Consideration: Leverage influencers or other Latino celebrities to combat false narratives from leading celebrities without explicitly singling them out by name.

US-Based Mexican Actress: Paty Navidad



US Actor: Esai Morales



Florida-Based Bishop Ruddy Gracia



Click the Pictures

## Sources: Latino Physicians

Latin American physicians with extreme views are consistently being referenced by US Latino as “scientific sources” for anti-vaccine misinformation content (which typically comes in the form of video interviews).

Such doctors often cite lack of transparency in vaccine trials or unsubstantiated conspiracy theories.

Consideration: Leverage influential US-based doctors to combat misinformation coming from physicians abroad.

Dr. Tony Morejon



Dr. Marcelo Peretta



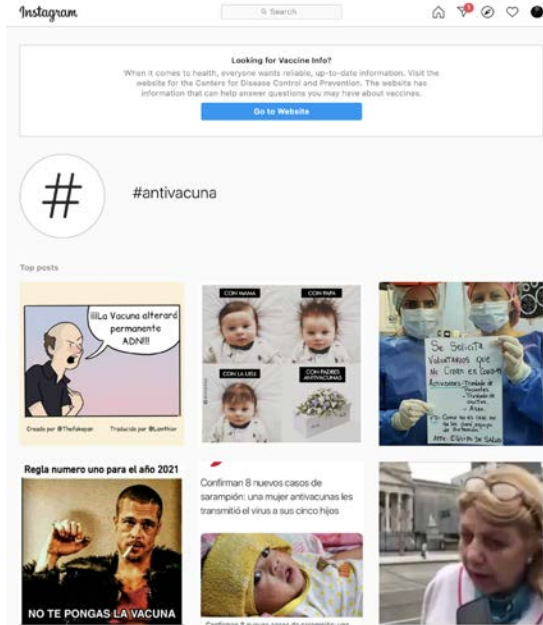
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# Sources: Anti-Vaxxer Hashtags/Handles/Sites

Despite efforts by leading social media platforms to curtail or eliminate false COVID-19 data (especially in English), hashtags like #antivacuna continue to exist on sites like Instagram.

Content found using these handles or tags promote all manner of unfounded, misleading, and blatantly-false information about COVID vaccines, the global pandemic, and claims that US Latinos are using to share online.

Consideration: Continue pressuring leading platforms to take down hashtags that present misinformation especially in Spanish.



Click the Pictures


# Sources: Misinformation Spreader Sites & Blogs

Anarchistic, anti-government blogs and websites are leading perpetrators of anti-COVID vaccine news among Latinos.

They typically spread false and bluntly misleading anti-COVID vaccine content sourced largely from Latin America in multiple languages.

Consideration: Pressure blogging services, domestic and foreign, to block the sites of those promoting such misinformation.



Click the Pictures 



# Our First Quarter's “Most Wanted” Topics

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The vaccine-relevant **misinformation topics** we identified in our initial online misinformation audit. This list will grow as we detect more every quarter.

# Topic: “Remedies” Against COVID-19 Exist And Are “Effective”

Many of these “COVID-19 remedies” originate from Latin America, but US-based Latinos are being targeted with such fake concoctions

### The Cultural Context:

Narratives surrounding “natural remedies” against COVID-19 are particularly pernicious because they play into Latinos’ cultural tendencies to use folk remedies and alternative treatments.



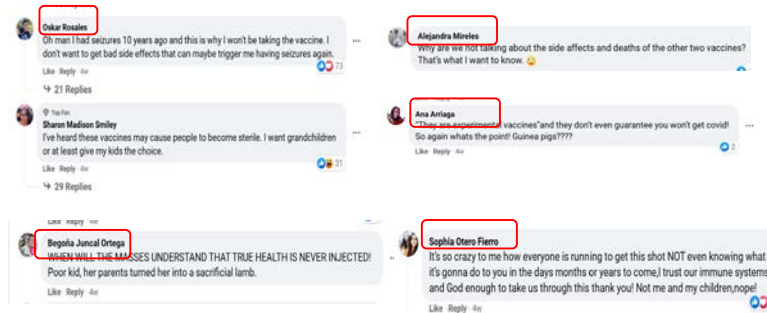
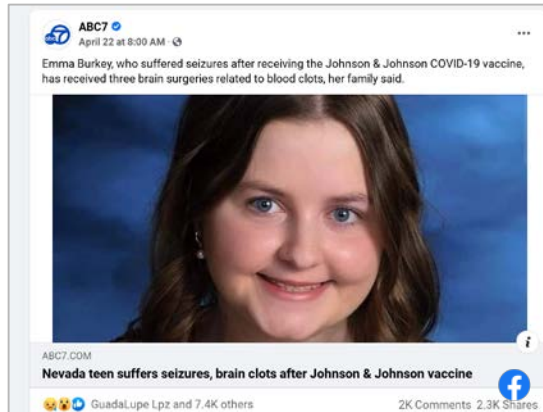
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# Topic: COVID-19 Vaccines Are Harming Children

Conspiracy theories and accusations against Pharmaceutical companies experimenting on children are also being shared by Latinos online (linkages to a “Plandemia” are frequently cited with no concrete or independent support provided).

## The Cultural Context:

One of the prevailing theories is that the Plandemic aims to reduce the global population. With higher birth rates, Latinos can easily fall victim to concerns that they’re being targeted based on race discrimination, perceived use of public resources, etc .



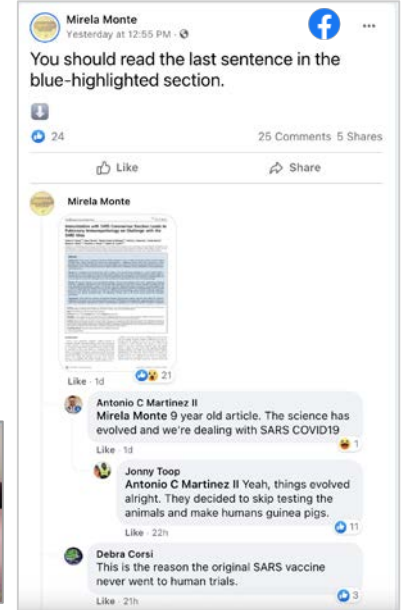
# Topic: COVID-19 Vaccines Can Lead To Medical Injuries Or Disorders

Latinos are sharing posts falsely linking vaccines to disorders or other medical injuries. Posts appear to place the blame on the intentional actions of greedy “pharma gangsters” or governments.

## The Cultural Context:

Plenty of distrust exists among Latinos when it comes to vaccines. Some stems from proven historical events in countries like Guatemala, other stems from outright disinformation efforts using unsubstantiated studies.

Click the Pictures

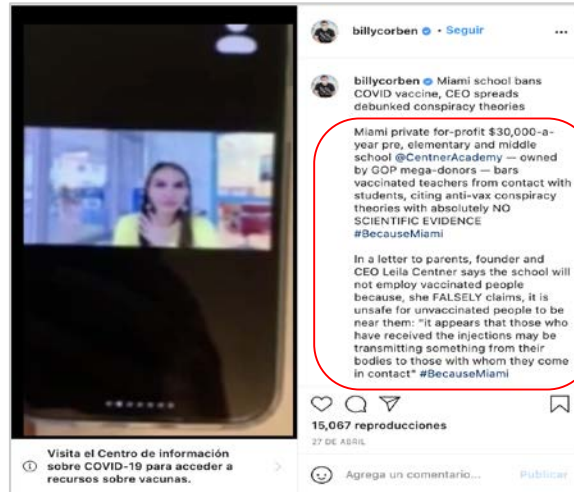


# Topic: Vaccinated Persons Can Cause Harm To The Non-Vaccinated

Content containing unfounded theories suggesting that those already vaccinated can cause “severe adverse effects” in others are being circulating among Latinos on both leading and alternative SM platforms (both in English and Spanish).

### The Cultural Context:

These types of claims can be particularly worrisome to Latinos who often live in larger, multi-family households or have jobs requiring tightly knit working conditions.



## Topic: COVID-19 Vaccinations Are “The Mark of The Beast”

Pastors and some in the Latino religious community are linking COVID-19 vaccines to theories (equating “vaccine defects” and “vaccine passports” to the “mark of the beast”).

### The Cultural Context:

Suggestions by trusted Latino religious figures that one would be marked as a follower of Satan are highly fear-inducing messages that serve to cast moral doubt on COVID-19 vaccines.

Pastor Albert Ixchu - Brotherhood of Faith Church Homeland, FL



Click the Pictures



1/17/21

# Topic: COVID-19 Vaccines Are Linked to Government-Related Conspiracy Theories

Similar to that seen in the mass market, conspiracies are circulate among Latinos regarding “governmental initiation” of the global pandemic. Alarming accusations are often incorporated into highly incendiary language.

## The Cultural Context:

Latinos have long felt that Western Governments (like the US) have repeatedly tried to suppress their countries or people. This belief continues to sow distrust in governments, foreign or even their own, which makes them more susceptible to such messages.

Inserting Nanotechnology (Microchips)



Decimating The Population



Click the Pictures

## Topic: COVID-19 Vaccine-Related Myth/Mitos Are Widespread

Misinformation-related myths among Latinos span the spectrum from virus' origins to ways one can contract the virus

Of particular concern are myths linked to non-scientifically proven homemade methods of “protecting oneself” from the virus

### Common Coronavirus & Vaccine-related Myths Among Latinos on Social Media

- La inmunidad natural es más saludable y eficaz que la inmunidad inducida por vacunas
- Las personas de Asia u Oriente Medio son más propensas a tenerlo, por eso debes evitarlos
- El coronavirus fue fabricado por alguien en un laboratorio
- Rociar cloro o alcohol sobre la piel mata los virus en el cuerpo
- Enjuagar la nariz con solución salina protege contra el coronavirus
- Puedes protegerte haciendo gárgaras con blanqueador (cloro)
- El ajo protege contra el coronavirus
- Las vacunas pueden sobrecargar tu sistema inmunológico
- Las inmunizaciones de rutina pueden suspenderse hasta que se termine la pandemia
- Necesitas estar con una persona infectada durante al menos 10 minutos para contagiarte el virus



## Conclusions and Opportunities:

## Conclusions & Opportunities

### This Is Not A 1-on-1 Fight

We believe that our efforts at combating misinformation shouldn't focus on trying to change the online behaviors of one Latino at a time.

On the contrary, opportunity exists to raise awareness and discussions at the topic-level in order to make as many US Latinos as we can reach realize the dangers of vaccine related misinformation in all its forms.

### If The Target Moves, Go After The Source

Various sources promoting vaccine misinformation exists among US Latinos (individuals on SM, individual websites, personal blogs, etc.). These sources move across the online space, particularly when they are banned from leading SM sites.

Opportunity exists to 1) make US Latinos realize that these sources exists, and 2) convey that despite looking "real" or "trusted", they are really just root spreaders of vaccine misinformation. Showing Latinos this reality and inviting them to fact-check sources and the vaccine info they share is our opportunity to fight back.

### "Good" vs. "Bad" Influence(rs)

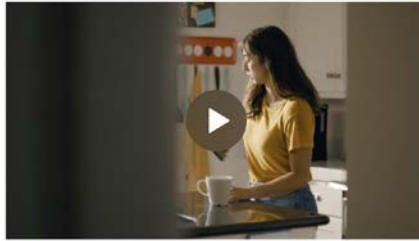
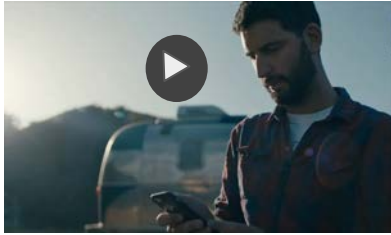
Vaccine misinformation perpetrators of different types and backgrounds are active and targeting US Latinos.

We feel there is opportunity to leverage the influence of various well-known Latinos (especially those well-liked and active online) to fight against the influence of those that are on our growing list of "most wanted" Latino misinformation perpetrators.

# Misinformation Ad Online Campaign Elements

**Website:** <https://www.unidosus.org/trustedinfo> and <https://www.unidosus.org/es/infoconfiable>

## Videos Online / Digital



## Online Banners



## Social Media Posts



## Influencers



## Radios



## Our Plan & Next Steps

## Next Steps

**Briefings:** UnidosUS will present results through external briefings with key stakeholders – government agencies, health partners, corporate partners, sister organizations, etc,

**Report:** Findings presented today are being summarized into a report that will be made available in early September to the Learning Community and other UnidosUS stakeholders.

**Quarterly Audits:** We will continue to identify new and emerging COVID-19 vaccine-related misinformation topics on a quarterly basis, which will inform and evolve our strategies. Future reports to be shared September 2021, November 2021 and February 2022.

# Help UnidosUS fight COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation

## Help us stop the spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation

There's a lot of information out there about the COVID-19 vaccines, and some of it is false. We all have power as influencers, and it's important to make sure that the information we're spreading is based in fact.

If you see or receive anything on digital or social media that contains false information on COVID-19 vaccines, please share it with us at [CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org](mailto:CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org). Share as much information about the accounts and posts as you can, including the platform used (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.) and the username of the original poster. Feel free to include screenshots and images of the posts and accounts in the email.



### How to Confirm The Facts

When you're scrolling social media, you probably come across headlines that really fire you up. Before you too "share," ask yourself a few questions:

- Who's saying this and can you trust them?
- What's the evidence?
- Do trustworthy sources back them up?

It's also important to read more than a headline, even from trustworthy sources. Sites and sources need to make eye-catching headlines to make noise, and there's always more to the story than one blurb.

There are a few ways fake news sites try to trick you. They copy the names of real sites and change them a little to look credible and get clicks. And some posts are also ads, which means they're not neutral. They're trying to sell you something!

Sometimes our own biases can get in the way, too. Confirmation bias causes us to believe claims that already match how we feel. If being a vegetarian is really important to you, you might believe and share an article about the negative effects of eating meat, even if they aren't true. Even if something you read feels right, it's still important to make sure it's credible.

### Where to Find The Facts

For more than 50 years, we've been fighting for Latinos when it comes to health care and other issues. We have a national presence, and our [victorias](#) are trusted pillars of Latino neighborhoods, helping the community every day.

We're working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to bring you the information you can trust about the vaccines. And you can find more information here:

- The CDC's [website](#) or your [local health department](#)
- Our website at [unidosus.org](https://www.unidosus.org); follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- Follow the [COVID-19 Prevention Network](#) for more information and resources in both English and Spanish. [Contact us](#) and [Instagram](#) (@PreventCOVID19) and [Twitter](#) (@PreventCOVID\_19).

We've answered some of the most common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, based both on information from health officials and the advice of trusted community leaders.

## COVID-19 Myths and Misinformation

**FALSE:** Natural remedies against COVID-19 exist and are effective.

There is NO medical evidence that natural remedies (including alcohol, garlic, herbs, spices, vitamins, and mineral supplements) help prevent or cure a COVID-19 infection.

Please visit and share **Misinformation Website**

- **English:** <https://www.unidosus.org/trustedinfo>
- **Spanish:** <https://www.unidosus.org/es/infoconfiable>

Share Assets

- **Digital Graphics and Video Ads/PSA** – Follow @WeAreUnidosUS and #EsperanzaHope4All
- **Esperanza Hope For All Toolkit:** Our bilingual toolkits contain misinformation messaging and assets for use by you and other partners

**Report Misinformation to us!** -- If you see or receive any posts or accounts that contain COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, share them with us at [CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org](mailto:CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org)

# Questions?

# ¡Gracias!

If you have any further questions or comments, feel free to contact:

- Zandra Zuno Baermann, Senior Vice President of Communications and Marketing ([zbaermann@unidosus.org](mailto:zbaermann@unidosus.org))
- Joanna Kuttothara, Senior Manager of Health Communications ([jkuttothara@unidosus.org](mailto:jkuttothara@unidosus.org))



## Resources Shared during Webinar Q&A (Added before circulating materials post-event)

- (1) Bilingual videos and digital toolkits: [unidosus.org/esperanzahopeforall](https://unidosus.org/esperanzahopeforall)
- (2) UnidosUS FAQ on the vaccines and clinical trials:  
English: [bit.ly/COVID19VaccinesFAQ](https://bit.ly/COVID19VaccinesFAQ)  
Spanish: [bit.ly/COVID19VacunasFAQ](https://bit.ly/COVID19VacunasFAQ)
- (3) Spanish and English videos answering FAQs around COVID-19 vaccines on our Social Media Channels. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram UnidosUS Handles: @WeAreUnidosUS
- (4) If you see or receive anything on digital or social media that contains false information on COVID-19 vaccines, please share it with UnidosUS by emailing [CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org](mailto:CovidVaccinesMisinfo@unidosus.org)

Partnering for **Vaccine Equity**

