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**From:** [REDACTED]@fb.com  
**Sent:** 5/28/2021 5:48:14 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] EOP/WHO ([REDACTED]@who.eop.gov); [REDACTED] HHS/OASH  
[REDACTED]@hhs.gov  
**CC:** [REDACTED]@fb.com  
**Subject:** Message from [REDACTED]  
**Attachments:** 5\_28 - COVID-19 Insights.pdf

Dear [REDACTED] dear [REDACTED] (if I may),

Thanks again for the time the other day.

As promised, I'm sending our latest report that includes topline performing posts for the weeks of 5/3-5/9 and 5/9-5/15. Report is attached, and myself and the team are of course happy to discuss anything within.

I also want to highlight a few policy updates we announced yesterday regarding repeat misinformation. The full Newsroom post with product mock ups is available [here](#), but I wanted to call out a few key points:

1. We've added more context about Pages that repeatedly share false claims;
2. We are expanding penalties for individual Facebook accounts that share misinformation; and
3. We've redesigned notifications when they share content that a fact-checker later rates.

Finally, I wanted to include here the data I mentioned on our call earlier that point to the positive (if not as publicly discussed) influence we're having on attitudes toward vaccines:

**Overall trends in vaccine acceptance amongst Facebook users are positive: this has increased considerably since January, and racial/ethnic disparities have also decreased.**

Since January, vaccine acceptance in the US from a daily survey of Facebook users (done in partnership with CMU) has \*increased\* by 10-15 percentage points (e.g. 70 %-> 80-85%), and racial/ethnic disparities in acceptance have shrunk considerably (e.g. some of the populations that had the lowest acceptance in January had the highest increases since).

**Not only are the overall trends increasing, we also have data showing our efforts are contributing: including some of our specific collaborations with HHS/CDC and work around trusted messengers and messaging.**

Over the same time period, we've been working closely with partners to run the largest scale on line campaign in support of vaccination efforts. We've delivered over 10B ad impressions from health partners worldwide since January, and have also run significant on-platform product promotions. These have been focused on 3 goals: i) increase access to vaccines; ii) help people get questions answered; iii) socially normalize the vaccine.

**Early evidence that these are increasing drivers of vaccination, at scale, include:**

- **Social Norming: 50 percent of Facebook users have seen someone they follow (e.g. friend, family member, community leader, public figure) use an HHS/CDC vaccine frame.** [Research from MIT shows](#) that similar types of social normalization efforts can meaningfully improve people's likelihood to get vaccinated, which is consistent with other [expert advice](#) (e.g. "Encouraging those who are vaccinated to show their vaccination status with pride, both online and offline, can nudge their family, friends and networks to follow suit."). We are seeing some encouraging preliminary results in vaccine sentiment (the safety and importance of COVID-19 vaccines) in the US through our surveys as a result of vaccine profile frame promotions. As a result, we are scaling the launch of these features globally.
- **Access: Over 3M people have used our Vaccine Finder since March, developed in partnership with Boston Children's Hospital.** We've been promoting Vaccine Finder and eligibility information to all people on Facebook in close partnership with states, which are seeing impact. For example, West Virginia reported a meaningful increase in vaccine registrations after we started our efforts.
- **Education: A single "Facts about COVID19" News Feed campaign — that reached 100s of millions of people worldwide--increased belief in key facts about vaccine safety and testing by 3% across 5 countries.** We've directed 2B+

people to expert health resources through the Covid Info Center, which in the US includes information from local county-level public health departments. We observed a particularly large increase in vaccine acceptance within certain populations in the US. Vaccine acceptance increased 26% among Black adults and 14% among Hispanic adults.

- **Equity: We're more frequently reaching people in areas with lower vaccination rates using CDC's Social Vulnerability Index.** We are partnering with a wide range of organizations to deliver trusted, accessible messages; Spanish-language campaigns from AARP and Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health; and CARE US for conservative audiences. Our work to promote information on how to get a vaccine to high-SVI zip codes increased confidence that people in those zip codes have in being able to get a vaccine.

**This builds on work—and uses similar strategies—to what we did over the last few years to support flu vaccination, mask wearing, blood donation, and voting, all of which also had meaningful population-level positive impact.**

- **Flu Vaccination:** We employed similar strategies with partners around a major flu vaccination campaign last fall. These reached 10s of millions of people in the US; some of these campaigns increased perceived safety or intent by 3-5%.
- **Mask Wearing:** Social normalization campaigns reaching millions of people featuring trusted public figures increased mask wearing behavior and attitudes by 3-8%. This included the "You Will See Me" campaign from CDC Foundation/Ad Council. Note that mask wearing attitudes and reported behaviors increased dramatically since early spring 2020, and by summer the [vast majority of all people in the US reported wearing masks](#), a trend mirrored in CMU's large-scale survey of Facebook users.
- **Blood Donations:** Our blood donations product—which notifies people nearby about opportunities to donate blood, and makes it easy for them to find a schedule an appointment—[increased first time donors across the US by 19% when we rolled it out](#) across sites from the American Red Cross, Vitalant, Versiti, and New York Blood Centers.

We think there's considerably more we can do in partnership with you and your teams to drive behavior. We're also committed to addressing the defensive work around misinformation that you've called on us to address. But we don't want to miss the full story of Facebook's impact on attitudes toward vaccine acceptance—we believe our work is paying real dividends in the form of more people getting shots, and we believe data bears this out. We're eager to find additional ways to partner with you.

All my best wishes,



—let me know if it makes sense to sync on next steps? Would love to move forward with the meetings we identified as next steps as soon as your team is ready.

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**From:** <@fb.com>  
**Date:** Friday, July 23, 2021 at 11:20 PM  
**To:** <@fb.com>, (HHS/OASH) <@hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** <@fb.com>, (HHS/OASH) <@hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Message from

Including this week's updated report here. Look forward to scheduling our next working session. As always please let us know if you have any questions.

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**From:** <@fb.com>  
**Date:** Friday, July 23, 2021 at 7:29 PM  
**To:** (HHS/OASH) <@hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** <@fb.com>, <@fb.com>, (HHS/OASH) <@hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Message from

Dear (if I may),

Thanks again for taking the time to meet earlier today. It was very helpful to take stock after the past week and hear directly from you and your team, and to establish our next steps.

We talked about the speed at which we are all having to iterate as the pandemic progresses. I wanted to make sure you saw the steps we took just this past week to adjust policies on what we are removing with respect to misinformation, as well as steps taken to further address the "disinfo dozen": we removed 17 additional Pages, Groups, and Instagram accounts tied to the disinfo dozen (so a total of 39 Profiles, Pages, Groups, and IG accounts deleted thus far, resulting in every member of the disinfo dozen having had at least one such entity removed). We are also continuing to make 4 other Pages and Profiles, which have not yet met their removal thresholds, more difficult to find on our platform. We also expanded the group of false claims that we remove, to keep up with recent trends of misinformation that we are seeing.

We hear your call for us to do more and, as I said on the call, we're committed to working toward our shared goal of helping America get on top of this pandemic. We will reach out directly to to schedule the deeper dive on how to best measure Covid related content and how to proceed with respect to the question around data. We'd also like to begin a regular cadence of meetings with your team so that we can continue to update you on our progress. You have identified 4 specific recommendations for improvement and we want to make sure to keep you informed of our work on each.

I want to again stress how critical it is that we establish criteria for measuring what's happening on an industry-wide basis, not least to reflect the way platforms are used interchangeably by users themselves. We believe that we have provided more transparency, both through CrowdTangle (the flaws of which we discussed in some detail) and through our Top 100 report, than others and that any further analysis should include a comprehensive look at what's happening across all platforms--ours and others – if we are going to make progress in a consistent and sustained manner.

Finally, we will be sending you the latest version of our Top 100 report later today, per our regular schedule. [REDACTED] will do the honors this week as it will likely be completed at our end later today East Coast time. We really do hope that we can discuss our approach to this data set in greater detail during our next session with [REDACTED] as we genuinely believe it is an effective way of understanding what people are actually seeing on the platform.

Once again, I want to thank you for setting such a constructive tone at the beginning of the call. We too believe that we have a strong shared interest to work together, and that we will strive to do all we can to meet our shared goals.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@fb.com]  
**Sent:** 8/31/2021 3:43:19 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] (HHS/OASH) [REDACTED]@hhs.gov]  
**Subject:** Re: Facebook Covid actions

**Flag:** Followup

Hi [REDACTED]—hope you're well. Just checking back in on setting a potential meeting—don't want it to fall through the cracks on our end.

Thanks—look forward to being in touch.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] (HHS/OASH) <[REDACTED]@hhs.gov>  
**Date:** Monday, August 23, 2021 at 10:38 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Facebook Covid actions

Hi [REDACTED],

Thanks so much for following up. I'll circle with [REDACTED] and the team. Definitely want to keep moving the ball forward.

Best,

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2021 4:11 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] (HHS/OASH) <[REDACTED]@hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Facebook Covid actions

Hi [REDACTED]—following up just with you. We wanted to make sure to get you our latest plan within the two week window that you requested, but this represents a snapshot of where we are today, not a final destination. We're continuing to look for ways to be responsive, and would very much like to schedule time with [REDACTED] to cover possible approaches for increased transparency.

Let me know if helpful to connect.

Thanks and have a good weekend.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2021 3:08:20 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@hhs.gov <[REDACTED]@hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] (HHS/OASH) <[REDACTED]@hhs.gov>; [REDACTED]@gmail.com <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Subject:** Facebook Covid actions

Dear Surgeon General

Many thanks again for the recent opportunity to discuss our Covid related work. You asked for an update on existing and new steps that Facebook is taking. As you know, Facebook takes its responsibility during this prolonged, unprecedented public health crisis extremely seriously. In light of our conversation we have been reviewing our efforts to combat COVID-19, and are eager to continue working towards our shared goal of helping more people get vaccinated and limiting the spread of harmful misinformation.

The White House described four recommendations to social media platforms in July, which cover access to authoritative information, enforcement and speed of enforcement, and transparency. Those are priorities we have shared throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In this update, we describe both our historic actions in these areas, as well as new information on boosting access to authoritative information, and further policy work to enable stronger action against persistent distributors of vaccine misinformation. Finally, as agreed at our last meeting, we remain eager to meet with you and/or your team about our ideas regarding data that could potentially be shared with the public.

### **Elevating access to better information**

We continue to review, experiment and adapt to find better ways to increase access to quality information, as we have done since the start of the pandemic:

- We have heard your and others' concern that people should be better able to access authoritative information on our platform. We agree, and have already taken action to make it easier for people to find more authoritative and trusted information in News Feed. We would be happy to describe these efforts to you in a specific briefing.
- We continue to help people directly access accurate information through the COVID Information Center, and will keep adding to this as the situation evolves and especially as guidance for various populations is updated - including when children should get vaccinated, and when the already vaccinated should be getting boosters.
- So far we have connected over 2 billion people globally with resources about COVID, and in the US alone we've helped over 4 million people get vaccinated through our Vaccine Finder, which connects them with appointment information, directions, and contact information.
- We're continuing to refine how we help health partners reach communities with less access to information or lower vaccination rates, leveraging the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index and other resources to reach those populations with high-quality, authoritative information.

### **Limiting Potentially Harmful Information**

We continue to improve and refine measures that reduce the spread of potentially harmful content and limit the distribution of actors who share misleading information about COVID and the vaccine:

- We will shortly be expanding our COVID policies to further reduce the spread of potentially harmful content on our platform. These changes will apply across Facebook and Instagram.
  - We are increasing the strength of our demotions for COVID and vaccine-related content that third party fact checkers rate as "Partly False" or "Missing Context." That content will now be demoted at the same strength that we demote any content on our platform rated "False."
  - We are making it easier to have Pages/Groups/Accounts demoted for sharing COVID and vaccine-related misinformation by also counting content removals under our COVID and vaccine-related Community Standards violations towards their demotion threshold.
  - Any entity linked to another entity that is removed for violating our COVID or vaccine misinformation policies will be rendered "non-recommendable" on our platform.
  - Lastly, we will also be strengthening our existing demotion penalties for websites that are repeatedly fact-checked for COVID and vaccine misinformation content shared on our platform. Together, we intend for these policies to further limit the traction that misinformation can get on our platform.
- To date, we've removed over 20 million pieces of content for COVID- and vaccine-related misinformation. We've also taken action against people who repeatedly post content that violates our policies. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have removed over 3,000 accounts, Pages, and groups for repeatedly violating our rules against spreading COVID and vaccine misinformation.
- We've specifically investigated the people sometimes identified in the media as the 'Disinfo Dozen'. We've applied penalties to some of their website domains as well so any posts, including their website content, are moved lower in News Feed. The remaining accounts associated with these individuals are not posting content that breaks our rules, have only posted a small amount of violating content, which we've removed, or are simply inactive. In fact, these 12 people are responsible for about just 0.05% of all views of vaccine-related content on Facebook. This includes all vaccine-related posts they've shared, whether true or false, as well as URLs associated with these

people. In total we have removed three dozen Pages, groups and Facebook or Instagram accounts linked to these 12 people, including at least one linked to each of the 12 people, for violating our policies.

- We continue to notify people when content that they have interacted with is removed for violating our policies on COVID and vaccines.
- We have implemented and continue to experiment with signals that we can use -- around specific kinds of sharing behavior, specific page types, and specific types of language, among other factors -- to demote content that we predict will contain low quality information.

### Increasing Transparency

We will continue to seek to ensure the actions we are taking (as well as misses) are apparent and discernible by people who don't work at Facebook. We are especially keen to discuss with you what form shared data could take in order to be most valuable to analysts and researchers, both inside and outside of government.

In terms of what we're doing now:

- We already have a wide amount of data available for analysis through our academic partnerships like FORT, but we are keenly aware that more kinds of data, or more specific cuts, may be valuable to the people actively looking to study this area more closely. We also share data with the public through our quarterly Community Standards Enforcement Report releases, [most recently this past Wednesday](#), and have also [just launched a Widely View Content Report](#) to further increase transparency with the public.
- We are currently deep in internal discussions to identify the best ways we can share with the public information about some of the most widely viewed content on Facebook. We're actively considering how we can best share that information so that it is valuable to the public and to researchers, which to the best of our knowledge no other company provides.
- We're also looking at ways we can produce more data and deeper data sets that can create richer opportunities for researchers to analyse the reach of various kinds of content.
- We have examined the distribution patterns of the so-called 'Disinfo Dozen' (as above - <https://about.fb.com/news/2021/08/taking-action-against-vaccine-misinformation-superspreaders/>).
- To advance public understanding of how social media and behavioral sciences can be leveraged to improve the health of communities around the world, we've supported researchers attempting to understand social media's role in the ongoing pandemic. One report [has already been published](#), and we are pleased to see that social media can have positive impacts on public health needs. There are other researchers we are supporting, and look forward to reviewing their work as it is completed and peer reviewed.
- While separate from the issue of content online, researchers are also able to access our COVID-19 Trends and Impact Survey, which is a global survey gathering insights about symptoms, testing, mask-wearing, social distancing, mental health, vaccine acceptance, reasons for vaccine hesitancy, and more. We believe this is the largest public health survey in history. Over 70 million responses from more than 200 countries and territories have been collected, and the data can be broken down by self-reported demographic information like gender and race as well as by hyper-local geographic regions. The data is available in near real-time and is collected off-platform by academic partners at the University of Maryland (UMD) and Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). Academic and nonprofit researchers are able request access to non-public, non-aggregated survey data for their research.

I hope this is a useful update, pending further work and discussions we will continue to update you and your teams and we are happy to meet and discuss any of the work we have outlined here. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my team with any further questions.

Best wishes,

