



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kick COVID-19 Community Corps Urges Area Organizations & Leaders to Join Fight Against Health Misinformation

Scranton, Pa., July 29, 2021 – On July 15, the **U.S. Surgeon General issued an Advisory** for individuals and organizations to join a nationwide effort to confront the urgent threat of health misinformation. To support this effort, **Kick COVID-19 Community Corps is asking area schools, businesses, organizations, and community leaders to join its partner organizations in committing to and promoting five simple and actionable steps.**

1. **Ask a professional, not the Internet.** Medical professionals are the best source for accurate health information and the latest developments. Their advice is backed by licensure, certification, years of schooling and on-the-job training.
2. **Before sharing, verify.** When online, validate the accuracy of information against trustworthy and credible sources, such as the CDC, U.S. Department of Health, and World Health Organization. If you cannot verify, do not share.
3. **Report health misinformation to social media platforms.** If you see health information you believe to be false or misleading, report it to the hosting platform (i.e., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter). Only then, can we begin to change the algorithms that determine what we see online, and eventually reduce exposure to misinformation.
4. **Refresh security awareness training.** The COVID-19 pandemic has given cyber criminals new opportunities for waging disinformation attacks and influence campaigns. Review and refresh your organization's security awareness training to ensure it helps employees recognize and weed out disinformation.
5. **Communicate expectations.** Employers play an essential role in protecting our workers and businesses from forces that could disrupt operations. Establish clear expectations that discourage the spread of misinformation and share them with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., employees, vendors, elected/public officials).

Kick COVID-19 partner State Rep. Bridget Malloy Kosierowski, stated, "Over the last year, health information has been politicized and misrepresented to the detriment of Americans fighting to remain safe in extraordinary times. As our state began turning the corner on COVID-19 by late June, reaching key milestones that allowed for the lifting of restrictions, a perfect storm was brewing. Health misinformation worsened, those who are vulnerable to such misinformation were declining vaccinations, and the Delta variant began spreading." She added,

“Today we’re seeing locally that nearly all new COVID-19 hospitalizations are among the unvaccinated.”

“Misinformation not only imperils public health efforts, but those who decline vaccinations can easily become sources of the next coronavirus variants, risking the lives of those around them, as well as anyone who cannot be vaccinated – like children,” added Gary Drapek, President and CEO of the United Way of Lackawanna & Wayne Counties, another Kick COVID-19 partner. He added, “For these reasons, we all have an ethical obligation to identify and stop the spread of health misinformation. The steps we’ve put forth are sensible and easy for any organization to implement.”

About Kick COVID-19 Community Corps

Kick COVID-19 Community Corps is a collaborative between Lackawanna County, the City of Scranton, local health care providers, social service agencies, faith groups, cultural organizations, economic and educational institutions, and dedicated volunteers. Our mission is to stop the spread of COVID-19 through a grassroots public education campaign that motivates residents to be vaccinated and encourages meaningful acts of service.

Visit <https://covid.lackawannacounty.org/> and [join us on Facebook](#).

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