

# Trump uses quack science to promote back-to-school, back-to-work drive

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World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, speaking Monday on the coronavirus pandemic, said, “This is the sixth time a global health emergency has been declared under the International Health Regulations, but it is easily the most severe.”

As of Tuesday evening, close to 17 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported across the globe, according to Worldometer, and more than 662,000 have died. “And the pandemic continues to accelerate,” the director general said. “In the past 6 weeks, the total number of cases has roughly doubled.”

In Europe, the pandemic is again threatening to spiral out of control, with a total of 2.8 million cases and more than 202,000 deaths. In Germany, Spain, Belgium and other countries, the resurgence of the virus can be traced to premature reopening of the economy in the interest of corporate profit.

In the US, which now has close to 4.5 million cases and nearly 150,000 deaths, a report Sunday by the White House Coronavirus Task Force, sent to state officials and obtained by the *New York Times*, cautioned that the number of states with outbreaks serious enough to place them in the “red zone” had grown to 21.

A day later, speaking in North Carolina, one of these “red zone” states, President Donald Trump said, “A lot of the governors should be opening up states that they’re not opening, and we’ll see what happens with them.”

That night, the president was sharing with his 84 million Twitter followers multiple versions of a video published by the ultra-right media outlet Breitbart News. The video featured a group of people wearing white lab coats, calling themselves “America’s Frontline Doctors,” staging a press conference in front

of the US Supreme Court spouting various forms of reactionary anti-scientific views on the coronavirus crisis.

That the president is once again endorsing unfounded, fraudulent views at odds with those of his own scientific advisers comes as no surprise nearly six months into the pandemic. However, from the standpoint of blatantly false theories, and the criminal implications of their promotion, this one might take the prize.

Organized by the right-wing Tea Party Patriots, Monday’s press conference was introduced by Congressman Ralph Norman of South Carolina, one of the newly designated “red zone” states. Taking center stage at the event was Dr. Stella Immanuel, who described herself as a primary care physician in Houston, Texas. The doctor, who is also a religious minister, said, “I’m here because I have personally treated over 350 patients with COVID. Patients that have diabetes, patients that have high blood pressure, patients that have asthma, old people.”

“And the result has been the same,” she said. “I put them on hydroxychloroquine, I put them on zinc. I put them on Zithromax, and they’re all well. ... We’ve not lost one patient.” The doctor went on, “I know you people want to talk about a mask. Hello? You don’t need a mask. There is a cure. I know they don’t want to open schools. No, you don’t need people to be locked down. There is prevention and there is a cure.”

It has been scientifically demonstrated in several studies that neither hydroxychloroquine on its own or in conjunction with zinc and/or Zithromax has been proven effective in treating COVID-19 patients. Furthermore, it has been shown to cause unusual heart rhythms and elevated liver-enzyme levels. It is not recommended by the US Food and Drug

Administration, and studies on the drug have been stopped due to dangers posed to patients, in the US and elsewhere.

After the America's Frontline Doctors video began to go viral, it was taken down by Twitter, Facebook and YouTube due to its dubious and dangerous claims. But this did not stop Trump from defending his retweets of the video at a press conference Tuesday afternoon. After falsely claiming, "Large portions of our country and coronavirus-free," and that "Arizona, Texas, California and even Florida"—states that are seeing a massive rise in COVID-19 cases and deaths—"are beginning to head down" in cases, he said that "based on a lot of reading" he felt that hydroxychloroquine was a legitimate treatment.

It should be noted that Dr. Immanuel's statements on hydroxychloroquine are far from her most outrageous medical claims. She has claimed that gynecological problems like cysts and endometriosis are in fact caused by people having sex in their dreams with demons and witches.

She alleges alien DNA is currently used in medical treatments, and that scientists are conspiring to develop a vaccine to prevent people from becoming religious. She also says that the government is run, in part, not by humans but by "reptilians" and other aliens. It is not necessary to subject the reader to any more of her bizarre mysticism.

But Trump described her Tuesday as a "spectacular voice," and said he wondered why Twitter et al. had taken her comments down. While it would be easy to dismiss Trump's endorsement of such lunatic theories as just another demonstration of his demented psyche, there is a more sinister motive underlying his madness.

Also speaking at the doctors' press conference was Dr. Bob Hamilton, a pediatrician from Santa Monica, California. He said that children were taking the coronavirus "quite well" and that they are not the drivers of the pandemic. He made the wild and unsubstantiated claim that there had not been a single documented case "in the world" where a student had given COVID-19 to a teacher.

"Yes," the doctor said, "We can send the kids back to school without fear. We need to normalize the lives of our children by getting our kids back to the classroom. The barrier to getting our kids back to school is not the science. It's going to be the unions, the national

teachers unions." He said it was fine to give people money for personal protective equipment and other things in the classroom, but that "some of [the teachers'] demands are ridiculous."

The Trump administration's homicidal policy of forcing teachers back into classrooms as the pandemic continues to spread uncontrollably will lead to the deaths of countless teachers, students and their family members unless it is met by a unified mobilization of teachers, linking up their struggle with other workers and taking it out of the control of the unions.

The driving force behind this criminal policy is to force teachers back into the classroom so that students' parents can be forced back on the job to continue to enrich the ruling elite through their labor. As Trump stated on Tuesday, the stock market is approaching its pre-pandemic levels and still rising, which is his primary concern.



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