

Statements of support from Australia, New Zealand and the US for Zero-COVID advocate Dr David Berger

Our reporters
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The WSWS is continuing to receive statements in support of Dr. David Berger, an Australian physician and dedicated Zero-COVID advocate, who was ordered last month by the Australia Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to undertake a special “education program” or be deregistered over his social media criticism of governments’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the publication of our first article on July 8, which calls on scientists, health workers and other sections of workers to speak out in defence of Dr. Berger, the WSWS has published eight articles compiling statements of support.

In an important development, on July 14, a group of senior doctors and medical practitioners issued a powerful open letter to Australian federal and state health ministers, demanding “Free Speech for Doctors” and condemning disciplinary measures imposed on Dr. Berger.

The letter, which now has over 1,600 signatories, calls on the health ministers to revoke all disciplinary action against Berger, undertake an independent audit of AHPRA’s “handling of social media and public advocacy complaints” and to affirm “freedom of speech for doctors.” It also calls for a review of AHPRA’s ability to punish doctors for speaking out, its “remit as a blanket defender of government health policy,” and the removal of anonymity protections for those complaining about public advocacy.

We urge readers to speak out in Dr. Berger’s defence and email statements of support [here](#). Please indicate in the email how you would like to be identified in our next article, and if you want to include a photo, please attach one to the email.

Mila, a medical scientist from Western Australia:

I, like many other medical scientists around the world, condemn the actions of AHPRA on the silencing of Dr David Berger’s sensible COVID commentary.

It is important for all scientists, medicos and those with frontline experience to have a voice, especially when providing honest, fair critiques of the government public health response. This is all done in good faith, that our intentions are based on scientific reasoning, evidence and frontline experience, which neither AHPRA nor the public health government division has.

Dr Berger has always acted in good faith, coming from a place of what is best for the community, especially in rural and remote parts of WA, my home state. I fervently support Dr Berger and call for the immediate withdrawal of all sanctions and silencing against him.

Sofia, a pharmacy worker in Melbourne, Australia:

I was shocked to read about AHPRA’s actions against Dr David Berger. In a country which reported almost 40,000 new COVID-19 cases yesterday, a leading public health agency is targeting not the virus responsible for these casualties, but a doctor providing evidence-based information on how to reduce its impact.

Despite being swept under the rug by governments and media outlets, the current coronavirus surge is defining my day-to-day experience as a pharmacy worker. Every hour, I am confronted with people trying to give their loved ones some relief from its symptoms. This week I had to tell a distressed mother that there is not much we could do for her 18-month-old baby with COVID. Every day I meet people suffering the so-called “100-day cough” that is commonly left in the wake of COVID infection, and have to admit to them that none of the cough suppressants are likely to work.

For doing his part to tackle this crisis—spreading awareness about preventative measures, combating misinformation, and sharing his medical expertise—Dr Berger is being sanctioned by the very authorities who are meant to be ensuring public health. In the context of another day at work, where me and my colleagues are confronted with the results of a pandemic that is only getting worse, it is becoming clear where the priorities of the government and its agencies lie. It is certainly not with the public's best interest.

Pharmacy workers must demand hands off Dr David Berger; AHPRA must withdraw its sanction against him and rediscover its public health responsibilities.

Leanne, a health counsellor from Melbourne, Australia:

I'm recording this video in support of Dr David Berger. Dr Berger is currently under attack by his professional governing body, with the threat of deregistration, for daring to speak out against the murderous, "let it rip" policy concerning COVID. Dr Berger is advocating for a Zero-COVID health response, not the current economic response to COVID. The campaign to support Dr Berger is similar to the one that the Socialist Equality Party is currently running supporting Julian Assange. They are both campaigns pursuing truth and justice, for both Dr Berger, for Julian Assange, and ultimately for us.

Lisa, a disability support worker from New South Wales, Australia:

At the start of the pandemic, amidst the fear and death worldwide, I was heartened to see Australian governments paying attention to the advice of the medical and scientific community. Today, public health measures have been abandoned in the interests of business as usual for the sake of capitalist profits. The death and health tolls are accelerating, and the health system is in crisis.

Dr David Berger, a principled and highly respected medical professional, advocates for a scientifically based response to SARS CoV2, including the pursuit of elimination in opposition to the "let it rip" response of governments around the world, other than China. The false allegations made against him by AHPRA concerning discourteous and unprofessional behaviour can only be an attempt to silence him and others who call into question government inaction in the face of mass death. The persecution of Dr Berger must be opposed.

Bron Markham, a nurse in New Zealand:

It's a ludicrous response by AHPRA. My concern in all of this is the setting of a dangerous precedent in the

government's (mis)management of communicable diseases in the communities in the future. I just wonder how long NZ will continue to purchase vaccines and now anti-virals. Eventually, this question will be asked.

The attempted gagging of David Berger by the AHPRA is in itself unprofessional and a blatant misuse of the invested powers of the body.

This infringes on David's rights as a senior health professional to not only express his opinions based on accepted clinical practice but also his democratic right to free speech.

Greg Sullivan, a WSWS reader from San Diego in California:

I not only support Dr David Berger but would like to thank him for his inspiring words in the recent *World Socialist Web Site* [video interview](#).

He describes how the entrenched forces in the medical profession are pretty much telling prospective COVID patients with clinical vulnerabilities or who are immunocompromised that they're on their own, and how that makes one feel they too are on their own.

So true! Behind the scenes everyone feels "really at sea."

It takes an uncommon measure of honesty, courage, and strength to admit to oneself to feeling vulnerable, especially when so many others seem to feel such certainty, but that allows you to be more human and therefore "take account of the humanity of all of us."

That humanity is certainly present in all the true support for you by people who, like me, appreciate being told the truth about COVID. Thank you!



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