

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO DECLARE HEALTH MISINFORMATION A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) has impacted all aspects of a citizen's physical and mental health, and economic wellbeing globally, including throughout the United States, the State of Georgia, and DeKalb County;

WHEREAS, the continuing advancement of COVID-19 variants including the Delta Variant, has caused highly contagious infections in both eligible unvaccinated persons and breakthrough infections in vaccinated persons in DeKalb County and abroad which in turn causes significant strain on local and state hospital resources;

WHEREAS, the increase in COVID-19 cases underscores the importance of clear and unequivocal communication from public officials that facial masks and vaccines are the best protection against unnecessary suffering from severe illness, prolonged hospitalization, and death;

WHEREAS, during this unprecedented time of rapid evolving scientific and medical information from numerous sources; the threat of medical and health misinformation has been a consistent issue for governing authorities, medical personal and all citizens;

WHEREAS, all aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic including; virus origins, disease transmission, treatments, and preventive measures, have been exposed to misinformation, misperception and doubt;

WHEREAS, the United States Surgeon General issued a warning describing false and misleading information about the pandemic as an "urgent threat" to public health and has recommended decisive action through community efforts be taken to curb the spread of the of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, multiple local governing authorities, such as Clark County, NV, San Diego County, CA, and Sacramento County, CA have passed resolutions to counteract health misinformation in their communities;

WHEREAS, private sector businesses such as YouTube and Facebook are making a concerted effort to combat COVID-19 misinformation and remove false and misleading information and content from their platforms; and

WHEREAS, misinformation on COVID-19 origins, transmission and treatment, such as the belief that the virus is transmitted via 5G towers and virus treatments including the use of Ivermectin have been proven false by the CDC, FDA and other Federal authorities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONER OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA:

1. Adopt and approve this resolution titled “Declare Health Misinformation A Public Health Crisis”
2. Direct the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to implement the following strategies cited by the U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek H. Murthy, in his advisory entitled "Confronting Health Misinformation," and report back within 90 days on the status of implementation and within 180 days upon completion:
 - a. Devote resources to identify and label health misinformation and disseminate timely health information to counter misinformation that is impeding the ability to keep our communities safe;
 - b. Work with the Board of Health to modernize public health communications with investments to better understand gaps in health information, and questions and concerns of the community, especially in hard-to-reach communities;
 - c. Develop targeted community engagement strategies, including partnerships with trusted messengers;
 - d. Expand research efforts to better define and understand the sources of health misinformation, document and trace its costs and negative impacts, and develop strategies to address and counter it across mediums and diverse communities;
 - e. Invest in resilience against health misinformation including digital resources and training for health practitioners and health workers.
 - f. Explore educational programs to help our communities distinguish evidence-based information from opinion and personal stories;

- g. Partner with federal, state, territorial, tribal, private, nonprofit, research, and other local entities to identify best practices to stop the spread of health misinformation and develop and implement coordinated recommendations;
- h. Identify resource gaps to combating health misinformation and working with state and federal partners to meet ongoing needs;
- i. Work with the medical community and local partners to develop a website that will serve as a central resource for combating health misinformation in DeKalb County;
- j. Continue to advocate locally and through the National Association of Counties (NACo) for relevant policies that improve health in the community at-large.
- k. Support community efforts to combat issues of misinformation and unsubstantiated data, while amplifying efforts to connect with county residents to recognize misinformation as a public health emergency; and
- l. Promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse health conditions.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this _____ day of _____, 2021.

STEPHEN R. BRADSHAW
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2021.

MICHAEL L. THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

BARBARA NORWOOD- SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

BENITA RANSOM
HR & Merit System Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

VIVIANE H. ERNSTES
County Attorney