

# fakepandemic.com

An anonymous website that publishes false claims about the COVID-19 pandemic while featuring the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's logo at the top of its homepage.



**Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.**

**Score: 20/100**

## Ownership and Financing

FakePandemic.com does not disclose its ownership and NewsGuard was unable to determine who or what owns it. The website's domain was registered in March 2020 using a service that hides the registrant's identity.

The site does not run advertisements, thus making the source of its financing completely unclear.

## Content

FakePandemic.com says on its homepage that it supports the idea that "the reaction to this fake pandemic by federal, state and local governments is tyrannical, unconstitutional, and a complete violation of our rights and a destruction of our freedoms." The website states at the top of the page that "corona viruses have always been around. Nothing new. Real viruses, but FAKE PANDEMIC."

On FakePandemic.com's homepage, the website publishes a few paragraphs of text explaining its mission, and published quotations by people who have made critical and unsubstantiated claims about COVID-19, such as former U.S. Rep. Ron Paul and Dr. Andrew Kaufman, a natural medicine advocate.

The website primarily republishes content from YouTube and websites that range from major organizations such as Bloomberg News, to websites that publish false or misleading claims about the pandemic, such as DefendingUtah.org.

Typical headlines of republished articles include "The Coronavirus Hoax," "The Only Pandemic in America Is That of Unbridled Fear and a Total Lack of Intelligent Thought," and "Panic Pandemic - Why are people who should know better buying the Covid19 hype?" Typical headlines of YouTube videos include "Doctor says the

-  Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
-  Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
-  Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
-  Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
-  Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
-  The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

*Criteria are listed in order of importance.*

[More information.](#)

data is dishonest,” “You can’t catch a virus part 2,” and “Humanity is NOT a virus! - What I Think COVID-19 Really Is.”

Fake Pandemic publishes a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention logo at the top of the website, which also says “U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.” Appropriating the government agency’s logo is illegal without obtaining a trademark licensing agreement, according to the CDC’s website. “The CDC and/or ATSDR logo and other related CDC, ATSDR or Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) logos and marks are U.S. government property and may not be used without express written permission from CDC, ATSDR and/or HHS,” the site reads. FakePandemic.com often directly contradicts advice from the CDC about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following an exchange of emails and telephone calls with the CDC, the agency did not issue a comment to NewsGuard in response to the appearance of its logo on FakePandemic.com.

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Credibility

The website publishes false claims about the virus that causes COVID-19, as well as the global response to the pandemic. For example, FakePandemic.com falsely claims in an introduction at the top of the website, “The bottom line — SIMPLIFIED — Viruses do not cause disease.”

Michigan Medicine, the academic medical center of the University of Michigan, explains on its website that “viruses cause disease by destroying or damaging the cells they infect, damaging the body’s immune system, changing the genetic material (DNA) of the cells they infect, or causing inflammation that can damage an organ.” Mayo Clinic says on its site that “viruses are responsible for causing many diseases,” including influenza, the measles, AIDS, and the common cold.

And while an April 2020 article by National Geographic acknowledged that “the vast majority of the viruses we encounter simply bounce off our cells, eventually exiting

our bodies as harmless visitors,” the same article noted that more than 200 viruses are known to cause diseases in humans.

FakePandemic.com has also pushed misleading information about the U.S. government’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The site republished a YouTube video titled “DOCTOR Scott Jensen: Doctors Paid, \$13k - \$39k, per fake diagnosis,” featuring a Fox News interview in April 2020 with Jensen, a physician and Republican state senator in Minnesota.

Jensen told Fox News host Laura Ingraham in the video, “Right now Medicare has determined that if you have a COVID-19 admission to the hospital, you’ll get paid \$13,000. If that COVID-19 patient goes on a ventilator, you get \$39,000.” Jensen also says, “The idea that we’re going to allow people to massage and sort of game the numbers is a real issue because we’re going to undermine the (public) trust.”

In an interview with FactCheck.org in April 2020, Jensen denied that he was suggesting Medicare fraud or “fake diagnosis” by doctors, as the headline that appeared on FakePandemic.com claimed. Jensen told FactCheck.org that he was questioning hospitals’ “less precise standards” for classifying deaths as COVID-19. “Do I think people are misclassifying? No,” he said.

According to fact-checking site Snopes, the numbers Jensen cited are closest to those reported in an April 2020 article published by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. The KFF article did note that hospitals were paid between \$13,297 and \$40,218 by Medicare to treat cases similar to COVID-19 in 2017, but those numbers were being used to estimate the potential financial impact of the current pandemic in 2020.

According to Snopes, a spokesperson for the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) said that “there is no set or predetermined amount paid to hospitals for diagnosing and treating COVID-19 patients, and the amounts would depend on a variety of factors driven by the needs of each patient.”

FactCheck.org noted that recent legislation such as the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act has allowed hospitals to be paid higher Medicare rates for treating cases of COVID-19, “but there is no evidence of fraudulent reporting.”

An undated story republished from DefendingUtah.com, headlined “Covid19 Gov. Death Stats: Based on Your Feelings,” made misleading claims about March 2020 guidance from the CDC about how COVID-19-related deaths should be reported on death certificates.

“According to an official notice on ‘guidance for certifying COVID-19 deaths’ from the director of the National Center for Health Statistics, deaths can be officially labeled COVID-19 deaths if you feel like it, ‘just because,’” the Defending Utah story stated. “Why are we allowing the ruin of this world on such a scientifically unsound methodology?”

The claim that hospitals can count deaths as COVID-19 fatalities “just because” is unfounded. An April 2020 article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association said of COVID-19 patients, “the vast majority of patients who have died had one or more major pathologies.” And the CDC’s guidance to pathologists states, “COVID-19 should be reported on the death certificate for all decedents where the disease caused or is assumed to have caused or contributed to death.”

In an April 2020 fact check by USA Today, Dr. Sally Aiken, president of the National Association of Medical Examiners, said that just because a person tests positive for COVID-19 does not mean that their death will be automatically classified as one that is related to the COVID-19 virus.

In one section of the site, FakePandemic.com promotes the false notion that holistic medicine can prevent and treat the COVID-19 virus. The solution to the pandemic, the website says, “is simple: stop this panic, end the lock downs, quit the social distancing nonsense and go back to how we’ve handled things for decades — but

perhaps with some additional caution, educating ourselves better about how to naturally boost our immune systems.”

“Using proper nutrition and vitamins, supplements, herbs, etc, to strengthen our immune system, we can easily fight off these viruses,” the site continued, without citing any evidence.

On the Mayo Clinic’s website, the hospital writes that “any claims that a medication, herbal supplement or other substance can prevent infection with the COVID-19 virus or cure COVID-19 are bogus.”

Because FakePandemic.com has promoted false and misleading claims in articles, videos, headlines and posts about the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and because it purports to represent the U.S. government by featuring the CDC’s logo at the top of its website, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false information, does not gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid the use of deceptive headlines.

The website prominently discloses a viewpoint that is critical of the government response to the pandemic, including guidance that defines it as a pandemic. The homepage says, “The reaction to this fake pandemic by federal, state and local governments is tyrannical, unconstitutional, and a complete violation of our rights and a destruction of our freedoms.” Because the website discloses the overall perspective that is apparent in its content, NewsGuard has determined that FakePandemic.com does not handle the difference between news and opinion irresponsibly.

The website does not publish a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find any corrections.

NewsGuard was unable to reach FakePandemic.com for comment about the false content on its site and its failure to correct errors. A NewsGuard email to an address listed on the homepage was returned as undeliverable in July 2020. NewsGuard could not find other addresses or telephone numbers associated with the website.

Transparency FakePandemic.com does not disclose information about its ownership, editorial leadership, or content creators.

The website does not run advertisements.

NewsGuard was unable to reach FakePandemic.com for comment about its failure to identify owners, editors, or content creators. A NewsGuard email to an address listed on the homepage was returned as undeliverable in July 2020. NewsGuard could not find other addresses or telephone numbers associated with the website.

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History The site's domain was registered in March 2020.

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**Send feedback to NewsGuard:** [Click Here](#)

## Sources

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Ownership and Financing <https://lookup.icann.org/lookup>  
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History

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