

americasfrontlinedoctorsummit.com

A website connected to a Tea Party group that promotes the false claim that hydroxychloroquine is a proven treatment for COVID-19.



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

Score: 27.5/100

Ownership and Financing

AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com does not disclose its ownership. However, the website appears to be owned by Tea Party Patriots Action, a 501(c)(4) conservative nonprofit that registered the website's domain in July 2020. The website, which was first named AmericasFrontlineDoctors.com, was registered shortly before the America's Frontline Doctors group made public appearances in Washington that promoted hydroxychloroquine.

Tea Party Patriots Action's website states, "Tea Party Patriots Action's mission is to equip Americans with the resources and training they need to be engaged citizens and effective activists. Our vision is for a nation where individual liberty is cherished and maximized, where the Constitution is revered and upheld, and where Americans are free to pursue their American Dream." The organization reported \$2 million in revenue in 2018, all from contributions and grants, according to its most recent filing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Tea Party Patriots Action is associated with a political action committee, the Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, that has raised \$24 million since 2014 to support Republican candidates and conservative political causes, according to a July 2020 article from NBC News.

AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com accepts donations through a PayPal link on its homepage, stating that the funds would support efforts "to educate the American public and political leaders about HCQ."

-  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)
-  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.](#)

Content

AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com's homepage states, "American life has fallen casualty to a massive disinformation campaign. We can speculate on how this

has happened, and why it has continued, but the purpose of the inaugural White Coat Summit is to empower Americans to stop living in fear. If Americans continue to let so-called experts and media personalities make their decisions, the great American experiment of a Constitutional Republic with Representative Democracy, will cease.”

The website’s content is dedicated to promoting hydroxychloroquine, a drug used to treat malaria, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis, as a proven treatment for COVID-19.

The site’s homepage and Summit sections include videos from the America’s Frontline Doctors Summit held in Washington on July 27 and 28, with titles such as “Hydroxychloroquine Safety and Efficacy” and “Medical Cancel Culture.”

The References section includes two articles published by members of the group, which summarize evidence on the safety and efficacy of hydroxychloroquine, titled “White Paper on Hydroxychloroquine” and “Compendium of HCQ studies.” The HCQ section features two maps that show the availability of hydroxychloroquine based on government regulations in each state and around the world.

Credibility

AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com has repeatedly promoted the false claim that hydroxychloroquine is a proven cure for COVID-19.

For example, in the video of the group’s July 27, 2020, Washington press conference, provided on the website’s homepage, Dr. Stella Immanuel claimed that hydroxychloroquine was a proven cure for COVID-19 and asserted that she has successfully treated 350 COVID-19 patients with the drug at her own Texas clinic. “This virus has a cure, it’s called hydroxychloroquine, zinc, and Zithromax,” Immanuel said. “You don’t need masks, there is a cure.”

Contrary to Immanuel’s claim, multiple randomized clinical trials have found that hydroxychloroquine does not provide beneficial effects to COVID-19 patients. In June 2020, U.K. researchers ended the use of

hydroxychloroquine in a trial involving 4,600 patients treated with the drug. “We have concluded that there is no beneficial effect of hydroxychloroquine in patients hospitalised with COVID-19,” according to a statement by researchers Martin Landray and Peter Horby of the RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy) trial. Another trial involving 400 patients, conducted at the University of Minnesota and published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, found that for patients who did not require hospitalization, hydroxychloroquine had the same impact on the severity of COVID-19 symptoms as a placebo.

Immanuel commented on studies with negative results about hydroxychloroquine later in the video. “I have seen 350 patients and counting,” she said. “Put them on hydroxychloroquine. They all got better. This is what I would say to all those studies, they had high doses, they were given to wrong patients. I will call them fake science. Any study that says hydroxychloroquine doesn’t work, is fake science and I want them to show me how it doesn’t work. How is it going to work for 350 patients for me and they’re all alive, and then somebody says it doesn’t work? Guys, all them studies, fake science.”

Neither Immanuel nor AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com has provided any data to back Immanuel’s claim that she has successfully treated 350 COVID-19 patients with hydroxychloroquine.

Later in the video, Dr. Richard Urso, an eye doctor in Houston, asserted that the drug had a prophylactic effect, meaning that a person taking it will be protected from being infected with the COVID-19 virus in their lungs. “As soon as the virus gets there, it’s going to have a hard time getting through because the hydroxychloroquine blocks it from getting in,” Urso said.

Urso’s claim has been contradicted by a clinical trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine in June 2020. The study concluded, “After high-risk or moderate-risk exposure to COVID-19,

hydroxychloroquine did not prevent illness compatible with COVID-19 or confirmed infection when used as postexposure prophylaxis within 4 days after exposure.”

The video also included unsubstantiated claims about the risk of dying from COVID-19. Dr. Simone Gold, founder of America’s Frontline Doctors said, “If you’re young and healthy, this is not ... You’re going to recover. If you’re under 60 with no comorbid conditions, it’s less deadly than influenza.”

Neither Gold nor AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com provided evidence to back the claim that for people under 60 years old with “no comorbid conditions,” COVID-19 is less deadly than the flu.

Although comparing disease death rates is complicated by the existence of asymptomatic COVID-19 cases, there is no basis for the claim that COVID-19 is less deadly than the seasonal flu for any age group, and there is evidence that the opposite is true. A May 2020 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that in the U.S., weekly death tolls from COVID-19 in April 2020 were 20 times higher than the deadliest week of an average flu season. In March 2020, the World Health Organization stated on its website, “Mortality for COVID-19 appears higher than for influenza, especially seasonal influenza.”

Videos in the site’s Sessions section have also promoted unsubstantiated claims about COVID-19. In the video titled “Hydroxychloroquine Science,” Tea Party Patriots Action president Jenny Beth Martin said, “We know that, essentially, children do not die from the infection nor spread the infection to adults. In fact, they help block the disease’s transmission.”

While children do make up a small percentage of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19, Martin’s claim that children have not died from COVID-19 is inaccurate. According to a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, between January 22 and May 30, 2020, there were 13 COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. for patients aged 9 and under, and another 33 deaths for patients between the ages of 10 and 19.

There is uncertainty as to what degree children will transmit the COVID-19 virus, but available scientific evidence does not support Martin's definitive assertions that children do not spread COVID-19, or that they "help block the disease's transmission." A July 2020 report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit that studies health issues in the U.S., stated, "Our review of the latest available data indicates that, while children who are infected with COVID-19 are more likely to be asymptomatic and less likely to experience severe disease (though a small subset become quite sick), they are capable of transmitting to both children and adults."

The "White Paper on Hydroxychloroquine" credited to Gold on the website also promoted false claims. For example, under the section "Why Is HCQ Being Maligned?," Gold promoted misleading and false claims about hydroxychloroquine.

The article cited a 2005 study published in *Virology Journal*, which concluded that a similar anti-malaria drug, chloroquine, prevented the spread of a separate strain of coronavirus that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The study used animal cell cultures in a laboratory, not human subjects, but Gold's article presented the study's results as proof that hydroxychloroquine had been proven to treat coronaviruses in humans, saying "scientists discovered that CQ had a strong antiviral effect on this SARS-CoV virus, whether the CQ was used before or after infection."

The article went on to say that the study "was published by the official publication of the National Institutes of Health when Dr. [Anthony] Fauci was NIH Director. Given that CQ was demonstrated to be very effective against a 78% identical coronavirus less than 15 years ago during a very similar situation, it is very curious that there was a multinational effort to restrict it starting in mid-January."

Virology Journal is not an "official publication" of NIH, as Gold claimed. It is owned by U.K.-based publisher BioMed Central. In addition, Fauci has also never been

director of NIH; since 1984, he has been director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one of 27 institutes under NIH.

Contrary to Gold's claim that there was an effort to restrict hydroxychloroquine "starting in mid-January," in March 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization allowing hydroxychloroquine from the U.S. National Stockpile to be distributed to doctors to treat COVID-19. The FDA revoked that authorization in June 2020, saying in a statement that it had determined "that chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are unlikely to be effective in treating COVID-19."

The website's "White Paper on Hydroxychloroquine" also cherry-picked scientific studies to promote hydroxychloroquine. "The safety record of HCQ is indisputable," the article stated. "But now seven months into the pandemic there is overwhelming evidence accumulating that HCQ is also effective for Covid-19. There are dozens of studies demonstrating its effectiveness from all around the world. From China to France to Saudi Arabia to Iran to Italy to India to New York City to Michigan to Brazil."

The list of studies included in the article omitted multiple randomized clinical trials published in peer-reviewed journals that found no benefit for COVID-19 patients that received hydroxychloroquine. Summarizing the evidence of the drug, Fauci said at a July 2020 congressional hearing, "Any and all of the randomized, placebo-controlled trials — which is the gold standard of determining if something is effective — none of them have found any efficacy for hydroxychloroquine."

Because AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com has repeatedly promoted the false claim that hydroxychloroquine is a proven treatment for COVID-19, and has promoted other unsubstantiated claims related to the COVID-19 pandemic, NewsGuard has determined that the site has repeatedly published false content and does not gather and present information responsibly.

The website does not post a policy explaining how it corrects errors, and NewsGuard could not find any corrections.

While the website's content overwhelmingly promotes hydroxychloroquine as a COVID-19 treatment, it does not clearly disclose its purpose. The homepage says only, "American life has fallen casualty to a massive disinformation campaign. We can speculate on how this has happened, and why it has continued, but the purpose of the inaugural White Coat Summit is to empower Americans to stop living in fear." The homepage later asks users to donate to support efforts to "educate the American public and political leaders about HCQ," but does not say whether it supports or opposes the use of the drug. The About Us page also does not articulate an overall mission.

Because the website cherry-picks content and research to advance its belief that hydroxychloroquine can be used to treat or cure COVID-19, without clearly disclosing such a perspective to users, NG has determined that AmericasFrontlineDoctorSummit.com does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

A representative of the website, who did not provide their name, responded to NewsGuard's initial August 2020 email requesting a telephone interview, saying, "Please advise your questions and why you need this information." Two subsequent emails sent by NewsGuard and a phone call to the number listed on the site's About Us page, seeking comment on the site's editorial standards and practices, its undisclosed perspective, and its approach to corrections, were not returned.

Headlines on the site, such as "White Paper on Hydroxychloroquine," typically avoid repeating false or unsubstantiated claims made in the content. Therefore, NewsGuard has determined that the site meets NewsGuard's standard for avoiding deceptive headlines.

AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com identifies Simone Gold as the group's founder, but does not disclose the group's relationship with the Tea Party Patriots Action or name the website's owner.

After responding to NewsGuard's initial email, the website did not answer two subsequent emails and a phone call seeking comment on its ownership.

Along with naming Gold as founder, the About Us page also lists other physicians under titles such as "Communications Director," "Policy Liason (sic)," and "Investigative Physician," along with their biographies and social media accounts.

Two general email addresses are provided at the bottom of every page on the website. For media inquiries, the website provides two additional email addresses and a phone number on the About Us page for the Shirley & McVickers Public Affairs agency based in Alexandria, Virginia.

The documents on the site's References section identify their authors, whose biographies are provided either on the site's About Us page or within the articles. Individual contact information is generally not provided.

The site does not run advertisements.

History

The domain name for the group's original website, AmericasFrontlineDoctors.com, was registered on July 15, 2020. After videos of the group's July 27, 2020 press conference were pulled from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Dr. Simone Gold claimed on Twitter that on July 28, hosting provider Squarespace suspended AmericasFrontlineDoctors.com for violating Squarespace policies "regarding activity that's false, fraudulent, inaccurate or deceiving."

A domain for AmericasFrontlineDoctorsSummit.com was registered on July 29, 2020.

Editor's Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on Aug. 27, 2020.

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

Sources

Ownership and
Financing

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