

Facebook to label vaccine posts to combat COVID-19 misinfo

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This March 29, 2018 file photo shows the Facebook logo on screens at the Nasdaq MarketSite, in New York's Times Square. With vaccination against COVID-19 in full swing, social platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter say they've stepped up their fight against misinformation that aims to undermine trust in the vaccines. But problems abound. For years, the same platforms have allowed anti-vaccination propaganda to flourish, making it difficult to stamp out such sentiments now. And their efforts to weed out other types of COVID-19 misinformation – often with fact-checks, informational labels and other

restrained measures, has been woefully slow. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

Facebook is adding informational labels to posts about vaccines as it expands efforts to counter COVID-19-related misinformation flourishing on its platforms.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a [blog post](#) Monday that labels will contain "credible information" about the vaccines from the World Health Organization. They will be in English and five other languages, with more languages added in coming weeks.

"For example, we're adding a label on posts that discuss the safety of COVID-19 vaccines that notes COVID-19 vaccines go through tests for safety and effectiveness before they're approved," Zuckerberg said.

The social network is also adding a tool to help get users vaccinated by connecting them to information about where and when they can get their shot.

Facebook and Instagram have been criticized for allowing anti-vaccination propaganda to spread and for being woefully slow in weeding out the misinformation, often with fact-checks, labels and other restrained measures.

"This announcement falls well short of what is needed to solve the crisis of anti-vaccine lies polluting social media users' timelines," said Imran Ahmed, CEO of the nonprofit Center for Countering Digital Hate, a critic of social media companies' handling of hate speech and misinformation.

"Facebook and Instagram still do not remove the vast majority of posts

reported to them for containing dangerous misinformation about vaccines," her said "The main superspreaders of anti-vaccine lies all still have a presence on Instagram or Facebook, despite promises to remove them. And the evidence suggests that the way Facebook applies labels to misinformation posts has minimal impact."

For years, Facebook and other social platforms have allowed anti-vaccination propaganda to flourish, making it difficult to stamp out such sentiments now. And their efforts to weed out other types of COVID-19 misinformation—often with fact-checks, informational labels and other restrained measures, has been woefully slow.

The Associated Press recently identified more than a dozen Facebook pages and Instagram accounts, collectively boasting millions of followers, that have made false claims about the COVID-19 vaccine or discouraged people from taking it. Some of these pages have existed for years.

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