



Confederation of Meningitis Organisations
Newminster House
Baldwin Street
Bristol
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To The Rt. Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care,
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Dear the Rt. Hon Matt Hancock MP,

I am writing to introduce the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) and to offer you our congratulations based on your recent comments surrounding the spread of vaccine misinformation.

Vaccine hesitancy, and the anti-vaccine activists who are responsible for increasing vaccine hesitancy, pose a huge challenge to public health and our work. CoMO is a meningitis umbrella charity that engages in advocacy work surrounding meningitis, raising awareness and supporting over 55 patient groups and other meningitis charities worldwide. Fully aware of the dangers of meningitis and its human impact, anti-vaccine pundits undermine our vision of a world free from meningitis.

With measles outbreaks happening all over the world, the time to act is now before vaccine hesitancy threatens herd immunity and thus the most vulnerable people in our communities. We have welcomed the moves made so far by Facebook, Pinterest and GoFundMe to clamp down on the spread of vaccine misinformation. We were delighted to hear you raising these issues and the challenges surrounding misinformation. The exploitation of parents' fears must be acknowledged and these conversations had so as not to relegate the issue of anti-vaccine rhetoric to the online world, diminishing its importance, when it actually has very tangible and harmful consequences. As an international organisation with its headquarters based in the UK, it is heartening to see the UK taking the lead in these debates.

From our perspective vaccines are so critical because meningitis is largely vaccine-preventable. The importance of vaccines will only continue to rise due to anti-microbial resistance, which threatens the efficacy of the standard treatment of meningitis. As we continue to advocate for vaccines and to counter mistruths, we look forward to the continued support of the UK government.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Nye
Executive Director
Confederation of Meningitis Organisations