

BIG TECH, CENSORSHIP, AND SOCIALISM

UN Initiative Tasked with Targeting COVID-19 ‘Disinformation’ Quietly Vanishes



The TikTok logo displayed on a tablet on March 23, 2022. (Denis Charlet/AFP via Getty Images)



By [Katie Spence](#)

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The [message](#) "Can't find the server" or "This site can't be reached" pops up when visiting Team Halo's website. And when trying to reach all three of Team Halo's previous email addresses, the email delivery subsystem returns with: "Address not found."

Team Halo was a social media influencer campaign formed as part of the United Nations Verified [initiative](#) and the Vaccine Confidence Project, and its members had targeted health care workers for what they called the spreading of "disinformation" about COVID-19.

On X, previously known as Twitter, doctors Peter McCullough and Mary Talley Bowden were quick to [rejoice](#) over what appears to be the demise of Team Halo.

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"Remember 'Team Halo'... the CDC-funded group of young, hip propagandists who attacked me and others who questioned the COVID shots? POOF!" Dr. Bowden [posted](#) on X with a screenshot of the now-defunct website.

"Yes, we also help expose this malevolent group of young hackers on Courageous Discourse. Hopefully, they are gone for good," Dr. McCullough [responded](#) to Dr. Bowden's post.

Dr. Bowden is a Stanford-educated ear, nose, and throat doctor who was [suspended](#) from Houston Methodist after her comments promoting ivermectin and questioning the vaccines caught the attention of Team Halo members Dr. Zachary Rubin, a pediatrician, and Christina Kim, an oncology nurse practitioner.

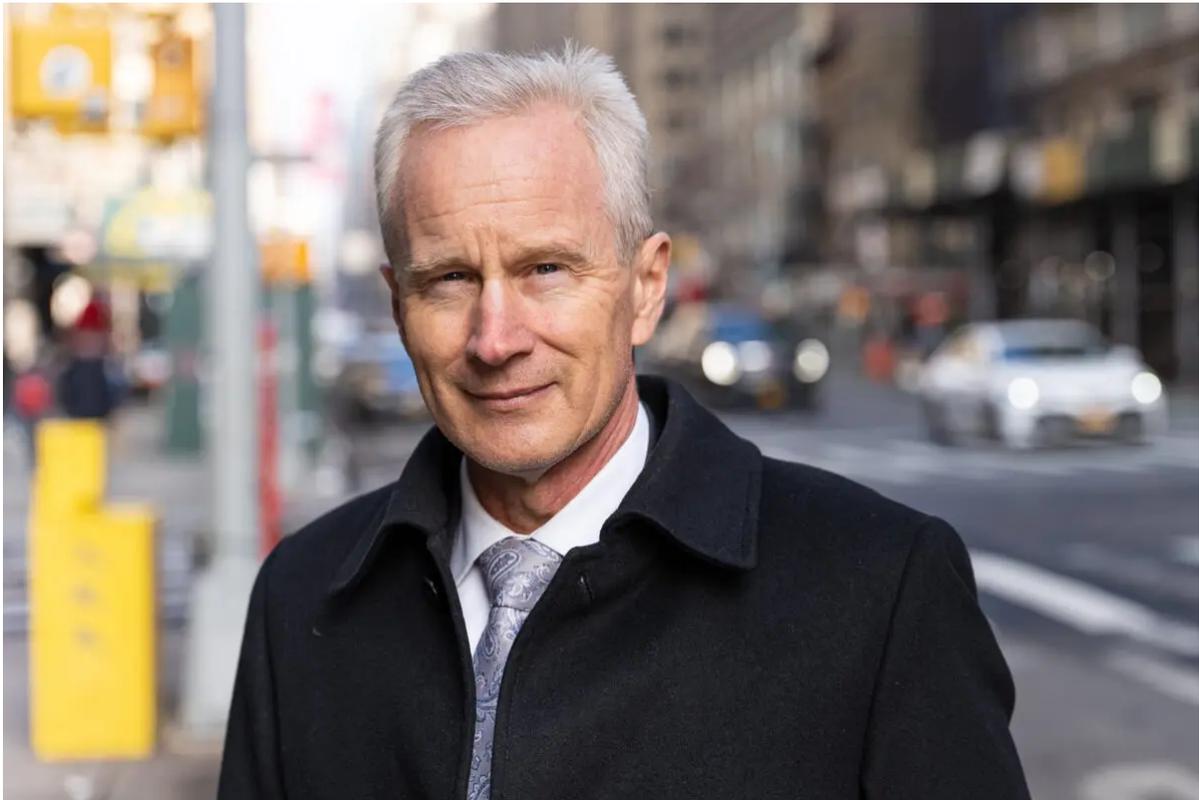
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"That doc is problematic," Dr. Rubin wrote on [TikTok](#). Ms. Kim followed with, "Wow. That 'doctor' should have her license revoked."

Dr. McCullough is one of America's most published cardiologists, but that didn't save him from being a regular target of Dr. Johnathan Laxton, an assistant professor of medicine and guide and a Team Halo member, who posts under the name "[dr.jon.l](#)" on TikTok.

In a [video](#) posted on Oct. 7, 2022, Dr. Laxton celebrated Twitter's suspension of Dr. McCullough's account and what he saw as the possible future suspension of Dr. McCullough's medical certification.

"Good luck Peter with your ABIM certification—you're going to need it!" ABIM stands for the American Board of Internal Medicine and is the medical board that certifies internists and sub-specialists.



Dr. Peter McCullough in New York on Dec. 24, 2021. (Jack Wang/The Epoch Times)

Prominent doctors weren't the only ones to feel the effects of social media campaigns against them. And often, the social media campaigns trying to silence health care workers questioning the official COVID-19 narrative bled over into the real world.

Such was the case of registered nurse Nicole Sirotek, who was the target of Team Halo members Tyler Kuhk, a nurse practitioner who posts under the handle [@thatsassynp](#), and "Jess," a registered nurse who doesn't list her real name on TikTok or X, but posts under [@jesss2019](#). Ms. Sirotek is the founder of [American Frontline Nurses](#), an advocacy organization for patients and healthcare workers, which has over 26,000 nurse members. The organization routinely helps minority communities, and those with income levels below the poverty line.

In [June](#) 2022, Mr. Kuhk and "Jess" called on their followers to demand that the Nevada state board of nursing remove Ms. Sirotek from the Practice Act Committee and discipline nurses for spreading "disinformation." The videos received thousands of "loves" and comments.

At the same time, Ms. Sirotek started receiving death threats against herself and her children and was forced to file a police report and a cease-and-desist against Mr. Kuhk.

Ms. Sirotek, like Drs. McCullough and Bowden, is happy to see Team Halo disappear but told The Epoch Times, "Just because Team Halo was disbanded doesn't mean that those influencers are gone."

Team Halo Goes Dark

Team Halo's website was up and running on July 27 , but no activity has occurred since then, according to internet [archives](#). However, its social media profiles on TikTok, [X](#), and [Facebook](#) haven't been active since Jan. 18, when the group posted "5 Facts about #Covid19 vaccines and pregnancy with #TeamHalo Guide Anita Raja."

"They left the social media up, but my assumption is that whoever runs the social media is different than the person that pays for the website and manages the website," Ms. Sirotek said. "That they can just disband after they've destroyed so many people's lives is crazy."

In addition to her own harassment, Ms. Sirotek said she's spoken to countless nurses who've been targeted by Team Halo members, and had complaints filed against them with their state medical boards.

"I mean, they can just file all of these anonymous complaints and you're just stuck having to figure it out legally, and you get buried in debt because they fight you with lawfare," Ms. Sirotek said.



Nicole Sirotek (Courtesy of Nicole Sirotek)

According to the domain information website who.is, Google hosts Team Halo's website, but it's on a "client hold," and transfer is prohibited. "Client hold" means the domain is not active on the Domain Name System, and the uncommon status is "usually enacted during legal disputes, non-payment, or when your domain is subject to deletion," [according](#) to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

Team Halo's website was first registered on Oct. 16, 2020, and expires on October 16 of this year, but the name of the registrant and administrative contact information is "redacted for privacy." However, before its website went dark, Team Halo listed Purpose Europe as the website's owner.

[Purpose Europe](#) is a social impact agency that works with the world's leading philanthropies, companies, and nonprofits to "create campaigning labs and new initiatives that can shift policies and change public narratives when it matters most." On its [website](#), Purpose Europe calls Team Halo a "cutting-edge global program of trusted messenger networks across 10 countries" made up of social media influencers and supported by the media. Purpose Europe's Team Halo link leads to the now-defunct website.

On [LinkedIn](#), Team Halo lists its primary headquarters as New York, New York. Still, an Entity Name [search](#) on New York's Department of State Division of Corporations for "Team Halo" returns zero results.

The Vaccine Confidence Project at the University of London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which Team Halo was previously partnered with, receives funding from the pharmaceutical companies Johnson & Johnson, GlaxoSmithKline, Merck, and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, according to its [website](#).

The link to Team Halo on the Vaccine Confidence Project's website now leads to the defunct website.

The Vaccine Confidence Project, Purpose Europe, and London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine didn't respond to The Epoch Times request for comment on what happened to Team Halo.

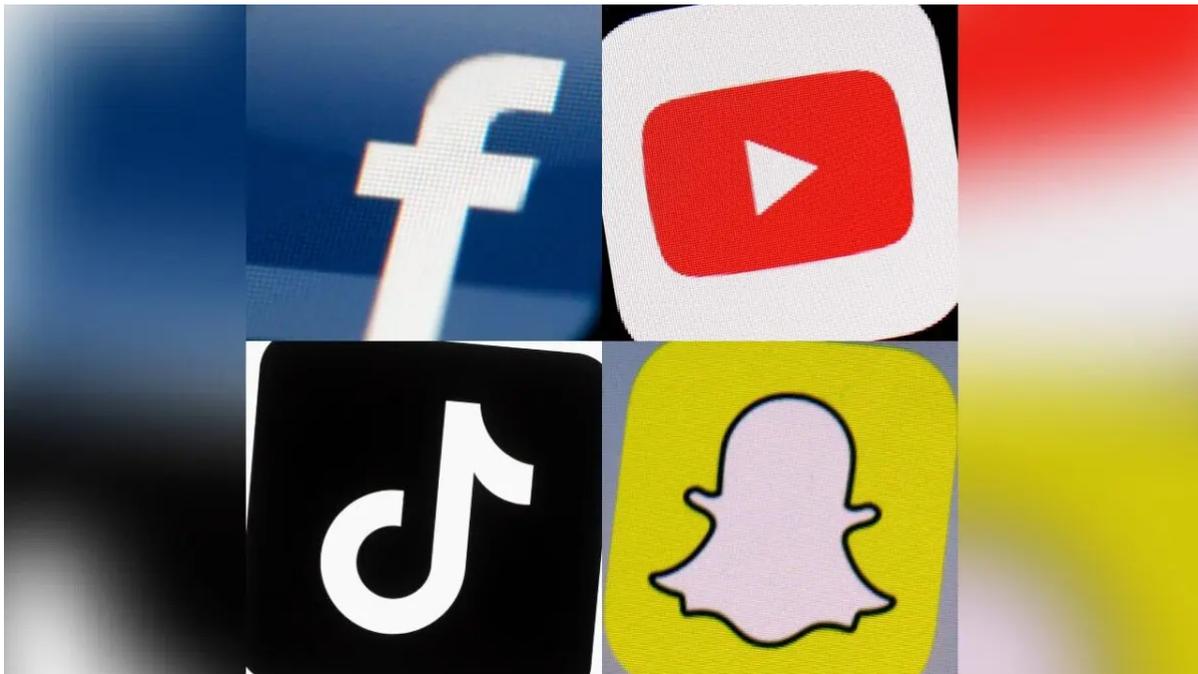
Influencers Still

Part of what may have led to Team Halo's demise is that the narrative surrounding vaccines and their safety and efficacy fell apart, Ms. Sirotek said. "When even CNN and Fox News, legacy media, admits there's some truth to what we've been saying, they can't claim the same stupid nonsense.

"Nobody is listening to them anymore. They have absolutely no validation and no authority anymore."

Dr. McCullough agreed and told The Epoch Times, "America and the world are looking to top-tier physicians with hundreds of publications and an understanding from the very beginning that SARS-CoV-2 was treatable and the vaccines were not conceptually sound having been shown to be unsafe and ineffective.

"Project Halo and its former members could help by shedding more light on how censorship and promotion of the government's false narrative worked from the inside and why it should never come into formation again."



The logos of Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat on mobile devices in a combination of 2017–2022 photos. (AP Photo)

Ms. Sirotek said that while previous members can't continue claiming to be part of Team Halo and receive special algorithm treatment from platforms like TikTok, they can still act as vigilantes on social media. She added that many of Team Halo's ex-members are working as healthcare professionals with a deep bias against those who chose to remain unvaccinated for COVID-19.

Additionally, Ms. Sirotek pointed out that many ex-Team Halo members, like Mr. Kuhk and Dr. Laxton, are part of other social media influencer groups like [Shots Heard Round the World](#), and they will continue to push the vaccine narrative.

In response to Dr. McCullough's post celebrating the demise of Team Halo, Dr. Laxton posted on [X](#), "Hi Peter! I'm not going anywhere and will continue to provide science(sic)-based critiques and debunks of your vaccine claims and supplements until the end of time. I hope that helps!"



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Katie Spence covers various topics, focusing mainly on energy and politics for The Epoch Times. She has also covered medical industry censorship and collusion with government. Before starting her career as a journalist, Katie proudly served in the Air Force as an Airborne Operations Technician on JSTARS. She can be reached at: katie.spence@epochtimes.us



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