



MEDIA RELEASE

National Coalition Of Independent Scientists and Communicators Launch Campaign To Fight Vaccine and COVID-19 Misinformation

JANUARY 25, 2021 (TORONTO, ONTARIO) - A coalition of scientists, communicators and health experts have come together in a nationwide initiative to empower Canadians to work together against misinformation about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. [**#ScienceUpFirst**](#) is a digital awareness and engagement campaign that will flood and disrupt social media, in an effort to debunk misinformation, and amplify best-in-class science-based content.

This initiative emerged from conversations between Senator Stan Kutcher of Nova Scotia, and Professor Timothy Caulfield, who assembled a growing team of experts. Led by the Canadian Association of Science Centres, COVID-19 Resources Canada, and the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta, [**#ScienceUpFirst**](#) is powered by dedicated volunteers and renowned experts in fields such as infectious disease, biological science, genetics, epidemiology and science communications. “Effectively countering the COVID-19 misinformation infodemic is essential to improve the health of all Canadians,” says Senator Kutcher.

There is a marked rise in misinformation and conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 vaccines, virus transmission, and government response. The World Health Organization has classified this rise in misinformation as a global infodemic, and it represents a threat to the health and safety of Canadians.

“Misinformation is a dire, imminent threat to the lives of all Canadians and is proven to be one of the factors fueling COVID-19 infections, and dissuading Canadians from getting vaccinated,” says Timothy Caulfield, Canadian Research Chair in Health Law & Policy, University of Alberta. “The *#ScienceUpFirst* initiative seeks to help fill an urgent need to beat back misinformation with the truth, and save lives.”

#ScienceUpFirst provides support for all Canadians working together against misinformation. Following [proven guidelines](#) to tackle misinformation, the coalition will evaluate the best available science-based content already being shared on many platforms and in many languages, and amplify through their channels. As well, with expert input from renowned scientists and researchers, the *#ScienceUpFirst* initiative will create unique science-based content to share via their social media channels.

“In addition to tackling COVID-19 misinformation, the *#ScienceUpFirst* initiative will build enduring bridges between scientists, science communicators, community organizations, and local audiences,” says Marianne Mader, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Science Centres. “We envision this framework to be used beyond the COVID-19 pandemic to address other types of science misinformation.”

“We’re calling on all Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, to come together and join us in building a movement that supports science and truth,” says Tara Moriarty, Associate Professor of Infectious Disease at University of Toronto, and Co-lead of Covid-19 Resources Canada. “This initiative ensures that all Canadians are empowered to share the best science-based information, knowing that *#ScienceUpFirst* is here to amplify their dedication and hard work.”

There are three distinct ways to join the movement: follow @scienceupfirst on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#), and engage and share with your networks using the hashtag #ScienceUpFirst; Tag @scienceupfirst in COVID-19 science-based posts AND misinformation posts on all social media channels; and visit [#ScienceUpFirst](#) to sign up for a weekly newsletter.

END

For further information, images and interviews, please contact amanda@scienceupfirst.com

QUICK FACTS

- #ScienceUpFirst is a national awareness and engagement initiative that creates, distributes and amplifies best-in-class science-informed content surrounding COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The purpose of this campaign is to debunk misinformation and conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 vaccines, virus transmission, governments' response, etc.
- The World Health Organization has declared the rise in misinformation as a global infodemic, and it represents a threat to the Health and Safety of Canadians.
- According to a recent study by [Carleton University](#), Almost half of Canadians may believe one or more COVID-19 related conspiracy theories.
- Canadians can participate in #ScienceUpFirst on all social media channels, and by registering at www.ScienceUpFirst.com
- Over 1200 Canadians have already signed up to volunteer. They include scientists, health workers, science communicators and concerned Canadians.
- Recent studies show that by and large, citizens heed factual information even when it refutes their ideological standpoint. See [Does Debunking work?](#) Timothy Caulfield et al.

#ScienceUpFirst Partner Organizations



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE CENTRES
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