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**ADAM B. SCHIFF**

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April 29, 2020

Sundar Pichai  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alphabet Inc.  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Susan Wojcicki  
Chief Executive Officer  
YouTube, LLC  
901 Cherry Avenue  
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Mr. Pichai and Ms. Wojcicki:

As we all work to control the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to thank you for the actions you have taken to ensure Google's users are provided with timely, authoritative, and factual sources. I was encouraged to see your early commitment to working closely with other social media companies to jointly combat fraud and misinformation during this societal challenge that transcends any one platform or service.

As we face this public health crisis, Americans want and need to receive the best information possible so that they can keep themselves, their families, and their communities healthy. I commend you for steps you have already taken to highlight information from official health sources and to remove or limit content that promotes harmful medical misinformation. YouTube's commitment to remove videos with information that is medically unsubstantiated or contradicts World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations is an important action to protect the health and safety of billions of users. The recently announced policy of adding links to fact-checking sources for certain searches is a further step towards directing users to accurate health information.

Despite your best efforts, however, users will continue to see and engage with harmful medical content on your platforms, whether by intentionally seeking it out or otherwise. Among the harmful misinformation currently on YouTube, recent reporting has shown that it is easy to find videos spreading false and dangerous statements about the coronavirus or treatments,<sup>1</sup> including conspiracy theories linking the virus to 5G towers, anti-vaccine messages suggesting the virus was engineered, and videos suggesting that drinking or consuming bleach may cure the disease.

Though the best protection is removing or downgrading harmful content before users engage with it, that is not always possible. As you are likely aware, Facebook recently announced plans to display messages to any users who have engaged with harmful coronavirus-related misinformation that has since been removed from the platform and connect them with resources from the World Health Organization. I urge you to adopt a similar practice for YouTube users and others who

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Heilweil, "How the 5G coronavirus conspiracy theory went from fringe to mainstream," *Recode*, Vox Media, April 24, 2020.

engage with harmful information on your platform, to proactively inform them and direct them to authoritative, medically accurate resources.

While taking down harmful misinformation is a crucial step, mitigating the harms from false content that is removed requires also ensuring that those users who accessed it while it was available have as high a likelihood of possible of viewing the facts as well.

I recognize the complex challenges that misinformation presents to online platforms such as Google, in this and many other contexts. As we all grapple with this unprecedented health situation, I hope you will consider this suggestion for keeping users better informed. Thank you for your attention to my concerns, and I look forward to continuing our ongoing dialogue on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Adam B. Schiff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Adam" and last name "Schiff" clearly legible.

Adam B. Schiff  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS