

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Robert M. Califf, M.D., MACC  
Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.  
Director  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., MPH  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Dear Secretary Becerra, Dr. Califf, Dr. Fauci, and Dr. Walensky:

To date, I have written 35 letters to the Executive Branch asking questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the federal government's response to it. The grossly inadequate response to my legitimate oversight demonstrates a level of arrogance toward the American public that is unacceptable. In particular, the lack of transparency from federal health agencies has eroded public confidence in the agencies you represent which will take years, and probably a complete restructuring of them, to repair. Nevertheless, I write again to request a response to developing events.

Data from a number of sources should be raising concerns regarding adverse events connected with the global mass COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The extent to which federal health agencies have ignored the vaccine safety signals coming from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is mind-boggling. As of March 18, 2022, VAERS has received 1,183,495 worldwide reports of adverse events and 25,641 death reports. Of those deaths, 7,382 (28.8%) occurred on day 0, 1, or 2 following vaccination.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to understand how this growing number of adverse event reports has not resulted in health agencies conducting

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<sup>1</sup> See VAERS Database query: United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Public Health Service (PHS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) / Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) 1990 - 03/11/2022, CDC WONDER On-line Database. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/vaers.html> on Mar 18, 2022 11:41:45 AM. Query Criteria – Event Category: Death. State/Territory: The United States/Territories/Unknown. Vaccine Product: COVID19 VACCINE (COVID19). Group By: Onset Interval, Age. Show Total: TRUE. Show Zero Values: FALSE.

significant investigation, taking action, and providing detailed explanations to the American people. Instead, we have gotten the Mad Magazine Alfred E. Neuman response, “What, me worry?”<sup>2</sup>

In February 2022, Andreas Schofbeck, a board member of BKK ProVita (BKK), a health insurance company that insures almost 11 million in Germany, reported that BKK customers experienced more than 216,000 adverse reactions following vaccination in the data that was available for 2021.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Schofbeck estimates that across the entire German population of 83 million, as many as 3 million Germans received medical treatment due to adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination.<sup>4</sup> These figures were significantly higher than the Paul Ehrlich Institute’s (Germany’s public health agency) figures, which only reported 244,576 vaccine adverse events for the entire country in 2021.<sup>5</sup> In other words, Mr. Schofbeck is estimating that the true number of vaccine adverse events is 12 times higher than the number reported by the German public health agency. The data prompted Mr. Schofbeck to notify the Paul Ehrlich Institute about the potential significant underreporting of COVID-19 vaccine adverse reactions.<sup>6</sup> However, it appears the data presented by Mr. Schofbeck were ignored and shortly after raising these concerns, Mr. Schofbeck was dismissed from BKK.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Schofbeck’s experience is similar to what I have heard from many individuals, physicians and medical professionals across the U.S.<sup>8</sup> Those individuals who have offered a different opinion and perspective have paid a very high price professionally. Not only have they been vilified and censored, they have been terminated like Mr. Schofbeck for questioning and speaking out against the COVID-19 groupthink.

Similarly, disconcerting information was presented in January 2022 by Scott Davison, the Chief Executive Officer of OneAmerica, an insurance company headquartered in Indiana. Mr. Davison reported a 40% increase in the death rates of working-age people ages 18 to 64 in the third quarter of 2021.<sup>9</sup> He stated, “[w]e are seeing, right now, the highest death rates we have seen in the history of this business – not just at OneAmerica.”<sup>10</sup> Prior to the pandemic, Mr. Davison stated a 10% increase was a “one-in-200-year catastrophe” so the 40% increase is “unheard of.”<sup>11</sup> Despite this data signaling an unprecedented increase of non-COVID-19 deaths

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<sup>2</sup> Marc Tracy, *Mad Magazine, Irreverent Baby Boomer Humor Bible, Is All but Dead*, NY Times, July 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/05/business/media/mad-magazine-publication-demise.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Andreas Schofbeck, Board Member, BKK ProVita, to Klaus Cichuetk, President, Paul Ehrlich Institute, Feb. 21, 2022, [https://www.welt.de/bin/brief%20PEI\\_bin-237107021.pdf](https://www.welt.de/bin/brief%20PEI_bin-237107021.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Crawford, *German Insurance Executive Fired Over Quasi-Vaccine Data Analysis*, Substack (Mar. 2, 2022) available at [https://roundingtheearth.substack.com/p/german-insurance-executive-fired?r=bkpk4&s=r&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web](https://roundingtheearth.substack.com/p/german-insurance-executive-fired?r=bkpk4&s=r&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web).

<sup>8</sup> See *COVID-19: A Second Opinion: Roundtable Before the U.S. Senate* 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Menge, *Indiana life insurance CEO says deaths are up 40% among people ages 18-64*, WFMZ (Jan. 4, 2022), available at [https://www.wfmz.com/health/indiana-life-insurance-ceo-says-deaths-are-up-40-among-people-ages-18-64/article\\_b5f123e4-7c45-5308-bc31-b50dee76b4b7.html](https://www.wfmz.com/health/indiana-life-insurance-ceo-says-deaths-are-up-40-among-people-ages-18-64/article_b5f123e4-7c45-5308-bc31-b50dee76b4b7.html).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

coinciding with the mass vaccination campaign, the mainstream media and public health officials appear to have largely ignored this danger signal.

Additionally, in November 2021, Department of Defense (DoD) whistleblowers raised concerns regarding an apparent significant increase of registered medical diagnoses in service members.<sup>12</sup> On January 24, 2022, these whistleblowers presented data from the Defense Medical Epidemiology Database (DMED) that showed a considerable increase of medical diagnoses in 2021 compared to the previous five years.<sup>13</sup> According to the physicians, their superiors ignored the DMED findings.<sup>14</sup> I have raised these concerns to Secretary Austin in multiple letters and he has not responded.

The reported DMED data and the OneAmerica and BKK ProVita insurance data should heighten the concern over adverse events reports in VAERS that are currently being ignored. Even though reports of adverse events following vaccination continue to grow, federal health officials continue to ignore or downplay these alarming indicators.

The American people deserve complete transparency about the extent to which public health officials are aware of and responding to reports of adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination. Accordingly, please provide the following information:

1. Is your agency aware of Mr. Schofbeck's February 2022 letter and BKK ProVita data regarding the potential significant underreporting of COVID-19 vaccine adverse reactions in Germany?
2. Has your agency assessed whether the BKK ProVita data on potential significant underreporting of COVID-19 vaccine adverse reactions is accurate?
3. There are generally two shortfalls cited for VAERS: 1) VAERS does not prove causation; and 2) VAERS dramatically underreports the number of adverse events (a Harvard study estimated only 1% of adverse events get reported to VAERS).<sup>15</sup> The data out of Germany would indicate their public vaccine safety signal system is only capturing 8.2% of adverse events.<sup>16</sup> What is your current estimate for the percentage of adverse events captured by VAERS?
4. What has your agency undertaken to determine whether U.S. insurance companies have seen increases in claims filed relating to COVID-19 vaccine adverse events over the last year? What has your agency found? If your agency has not made any determination, please explain why not.

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<sup>12</sup> See *Expert Panel on Vaccine Mandates and Vaccine Injuries: Roundtable Before the U.S. Senate* 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

<sup>13</sup> *Supra* note 6.

<sup>14</sup> Leada Gore, *Alabama-based Army surgeon says she warned of COVID 'vaccine injuries,' was ignored*, AL (Nov. 4, 2021), available at <https://www.al.com/news/2021/11/alabama-based-army-surgeon-says-she-warned-of-covid-vaccine-injuries-was-ignored.html>.

<sup>15</sup> See Ross Lazarus, *Electronic Support for Public Health-Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (ESP:VAERS)*, available at <https://digital.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/docs/publication/r18hs017045-lazarus-final-report-2011.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> *Supra* note 13 Letter from Andreas Schofbeck.

5. What has your agency undertaken to determine whether U.S. insurance companies have seen increases in claims filed relating to non-COVID-19 deaths among 18 to 64 year olds over the last year? What has your agency found? If your agency has not made any determination, please explain why not.
6. Are you concerned by the adverse events reported in VAERS associated with COVID-19 vaccination? If so, please explain what steps, if any, you taking to address those reports. If not, why are 1,183,495 reports of adverse events associated with vaccination not a concern to you?
7. Why is the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recruiting volunteers to participate in a study on allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>17</sup> What safety signals or data prompted the NIH to undertake this study? When did NIH become aware of these allergic reactions?

Please provide this information as soon as possible but no later than April 6, 2022.  
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
United States Senator

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<sup>17</sup> NIH launches trial to study allergic reactions to COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, National Institutes of Health, Mar. 9, 2022, <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-launches-trial-study-allergic-reactions-covid-19-mrna-vaccine>.