

Committee to Protect Medicare: Wisconsin physicians blast U.S. Sen. Johnson for promoting dangerous COVID-19 disinformation at U.S. Senate committee hearing

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Milwaukee, WI — Today, the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and Homeland Security, chaired by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), held a hearing featuring the testimony of [Dr. Jane M. Orient](#). She is the executive director of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, a small fringe group of doctors that has expressed numerous [controversial beliefs](#) including opposition to mandatory vaccination and that Medicare is “evil.” She herself has tried to [cast doubt](#) on the safety of vaccines and has [pushed](#) for the use of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, even though [evidence](#) shows it is not beneficial and can cause harm.

“Senator Johnson’s promotion of conspiracy theories, like those espoused by the AAPS, and unproven methods of treating COVID-19 is downright reckless,” said Dr. Robert Freedland, an ophthalmologist in La Crosse. “With a [record](#) 7-day average of daily deaths in Wisconsin due to COVID-19, our elected leaders should be listening to the epidemiological experts, not putting fringe theories in the spotlight to push a dangerous partisan agenda. I hope that Sen. Johnson will come to his senses and start focusing on real solutions to eliminate this pandemic, like masks, social distancing, and the new vaccine.”

Another [witness](#) invited by Sen. Johnson is an [outspoken](#) critic of masks and social distancing, despite the overwhelming body of evidence that shows that these methods reduce the transmission of the coronavirus. Dr. Orient's [testimony](#) also sought to cast doubt on the efficacy of masks and quarantining, as well as the vaccine. She stated, "Vaccines are touted as a great hope, but have not been shown to prevent contagion."

"It's disappointing that Senator Johnson continues to denigrate the science we have around COVID-19, particularly when so many Wisconsinites have already died from it," said Dr. Ann Helms, a neurologist in Milwaukee. "I see the severity of the pandemic everyday at work in my hospital, and I see my colleagues working hour after hour to save lives using the best medical knowledge available, while others are intent on contradicting the experts, making the pandemic even worse. If we have any hope of eradicating this pandemic, we all need to listen to the facts and employ masks, social distancing, and vaccinations."