“Latino Anti-Disinformation Lab” Will Combat COVID-19 Falsehoods

The effort will create counterresponses to false COVID-19 messaging.

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To fight disinformation about COVID-19 vaccines as well as false conservative messaging targeting Latinos, nonprofit organizations Voto Latino and Media Matters have teamed up for a new anti-disinformation effort, reports NBC News.

Titled “Latino Anti-Disinformation Lab,” the $22 million project will work to identify disinformation and then develop an effective response in the form of communications campaigns. It will begin with addressing COVID-19 disinformation, which has led some Latinos to express disinterest in being vaccinated against the new coronavirus.

According to Maria Teresa Kumar, founding president of Voto Latino and an MSNBC contributor, disinformation specifically targeting Latinos spreads via both traditional and social media platforms.

“It has come down to a matter of literally life and death when disinformation is targeting a community to the point that they don’t take care of themselves and don’t get vaccinated,” Kumar told NBC News.

In addition, because Latino voters could play a significant role in both House and Senate races the anti-disinformation lab will take on false right-wing messaging before the midterm elections in 2022. In the 2020 presidential election, disinformation campaigns suggested that Democrats illegally harvested ballots and that President Joe Biden supported the defunding of the police.

A dozen Media Matters staff members will monitor television, radio and internet forums for disinformation, while Voto Latino will communicate responses to specific disinformation memes and other propaganda through its network of Spanish-speaking surrogates.

For related coverage, read “COVID-19 Has Galvanized Blacks and Latinos to Become Doctors” and “What Do Latinos Want the Biden Administration to Tackle First?”

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