

Telehealth Provider

— The groups have made over \$6.7 million for prescribing unproven COVID therapies

by [Ryan Basen](#), Enterprise & Investigative Writer, MedPage Today

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The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis has initiated an investigation into America's Frontline Doctors (AFLDS) and a symbiotic telehealth provider, alleging they are profiting from peddling controversial COVID-19 treatments and spreading misinformation.

AFLDS and the telehealth provider, [SpeakWithAnMD.com](#), "are spreading misinformation and facilitating access to disproven and potentially hazardous coronavirus treatments," a [subcommittee press release](#) claimed. The subcommittee chairman, Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.), is thus requesting documents and other information related to their business practices and profits. Numerous patient consults were set up for SpeakWithAnMD via AFLDS.

Clyburn also requested an investigation in a letter to Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair Lina Khan. "The promotion of falsehoods about coronavirus, questionable treatments, and vaccines is life-threatening. I believe these deceptive practices may also violate the FTC Act, the COVID-19 Consumer Protection Act, or other relevant laws," he wrote.

In a separate letter to AFLDS co-founder Simone Gold, MD, Clyburn wrote, "Attempts to monetize coronavirus misinformation have eroded public confidence in proven treatments and prevention measures and hindered efforts to control the pandemic. Some Americans who have been influenced by misinformation have chosen not to get vaccinated, delayed receiving evidence-based treatment, and ingested unapproved substances in harmful quantities. ... [AFLDS] is reportedly among the top purveyors of questionable treatments nationwide and a prominent source of misinformation related to the coronavirus. ... [I] urge you to stop promoting untested and dangerous claims."

AFLDS and SpeakWithAnMD have earned more than \$6.7 million "for facilitating paid telehealth consultations and off-label prescriptions for the purported coronavirus ~~tr~~ treatments that they promote online," according to the subcommittee press release.

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phone call and some paying \$60 for follow-ups. SpeakWithAnMD's providers then prescribed thousands of doses of "unproven" COVID treatments, including ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine. Most patients paid out-of-pocket.

The subcommittee has asked for details about both entities, including their physicians' training and qualifications, *The Washington Post* [reported](#).

Visitors to SpeakWithAnMD.com can schedule appointments on the site. However, "SpeakWithAnMD does not guarantee that medication will be prescribed by the treating Medical Provider as they may determine medication is not medically necessary," according to the service's refund policy. "Refund(s) for visits will not be provided solely on the basis that medication was not prescribed."

SpeakWithAnMD appeared to also be soliciting providers: "Are you a healthcare professional looking to complete telemedicine consults? JOIN NOW."

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SpeakWithAnMD was founded by Jerome Corsi, who is a conservative author, according to *The Post*. Some reports have said that Corsi is a doctor, but *MedPage Today* could not find any credible physician profile for him online. An [Amazon author page](#) for "Jerome R. Corsi, PhD" includes the following books: *Coup d'État: Exposing Deep State Treason and the Plan to Re-Elect President Trump* and *Framing Flynn: The Scandalous Takedown of an American General*.

Visitors to AFLDS's website [are now greeted](#) by the following message on its home page: "What's freedom worth to you?" Below that message, users can select from one of a few optional donations, ranging from \$30 to \$500 or "other" amount.

then-President Donald Trump. Gold has since seized more control, according to reports, as other AFLDS doctors have dissociated themselves with the organization. Gold [was arrested](#) when she participated in the January 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol.

Hundreds of people have accused AFLDS of failing to deliver ivermectin that they ordered and charging them inflated prices for the drug, according to an August [Time report](#).

"Due to the extraordinarily high demand for AFLDS telemedicine services and medications, the pharmacy has been unable to meet demand as quickly as it would like," according to the site's COVID-19 "How to Obtain Early Treatment" page. "Our physician services are available for payment only because we still have a free market which is allowing you to buy something you want for a fair price. ... Our physicians know that [z]inc plus either HCQ [hydroxychloroquine] and ivermectin are effective both prophylactically and when used early."

Another AFLDS member, Stella Immanuel, MD, was recently fined and warned by the Texas Medical Board for treating a COVID patient with hydroxychloroquine without citing potential health risks, according to [reports](#). Immanuel was fined \$500 and told she needed to provide proof of informed consent for all patients she treats with the drug -- as well as other unapproved COVID medications. In addition, all of her patients must review and sign the forms for off-label treatment.

Neither AFLDS nor SpeakWithAnMD returned requests for comment Tuesday.

[Ryan Basen](#) reports for MedPage's enterprise & investigative team. He often writes about issues concerning the practice and business of medicine, nurses, cannabis and psychedelic medicine, and sports medicine. Send story tips to r.basen@medpagetoday.com. Follow [🐦](#)
