



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

September 13, 2021

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

In recent months, Facebook has taken important steps to address the spread of misinformation on your platform. While much more needs to be done, I have appreciated your efforts to combat dangerous lies about vaccines, as I believe efforts to stop medical misinformation can help save lives.

In that context, there is another critical medical issue that is the subject of rampant falsehoods and misinformation – and it is one that is equally dangerous to the health and safety of our communities if left unchecked. Each day, posts are liked and shared on your site that make false claims about abortion procedures and reproductive health legislation, and this misinformation has hit close to home. An analysis of Facebook engagement between January 1 and March 20, 2019, found that four of the top 10 stories receiving the most engagement on the platform were articles about the New York State Reproductive Health Act from anti-choice news sources that misrepresented the bill.

These articles, memes, and other shared posts often describe horrific procedures that have no basis in reality, cite entirely made-up studies, and purposefully inflate or misrepresent public health data. The goal behind these posts is clear: to sow fear, confusion, and shame, and to advance an agenda to control women's bodies.

With the recent abortion ban in Texas and associated widespread interest, I am increasingly concerned that more and more of these posts will be created and shared across Facebook. At a time when women in Texas and other states with restrictive laws are looking for guidance, these posts can make women in need of abortion care feel unsafe and alone.

I am therefore urging you to:

1. Provide information on any and all existing efforts to combat misinformation regarding abortion laws, procedures, and their availability.
2. Take additional action to curb the spread of this misinformation, as Facebook has with information related to COVID-19, vaccines, and voting rights.

The truth is that abortion is a safe, common medical procedure. One in four women will undergo an abortion in her lifetime. I am proud that New York is leading the fight to ensure that every woman and birthing person has access to abortion care.

Sincerely,


Kathy Hochul
Governor

cc: Members of the Facebook Oversight Board