

## **A New Way For Kids to Learn About Health**

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VaxTeen, according to information posted on its website, is an organization that “communicates directly with teenagers and young adults to counter the dangerous tide of misinformation, encouraging those who are unvaccinated to catch up on vaccines as soon as they can by helping them to find out what immunizations they need and how they can get them.”

Kelly Danielpour, a recent high school graduate in Los Angeles, is ostensibly the founder. According to the website, she was inspired by the number of teens who were looking to find out if they could get vaccinated without their parents’ permission, so she decided to start the online platform, and also to advocate for legislation allowing teenagers to consent to all vaccines in all states without parental permission. The website leads one to believe that Kelly is a bright, precocious teen who just wants to help kids. But it appears that young Kelly is actually a pawn who is being used by vaccine makers and vaccine advocacy groups to market their products to kids, and to encourage them to defy their parents’ authority.

Partners listed on the site include UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, and the Meningitis B Action Project.<sup>1</sup> Another VaxTeen partner, Keep Up the Rates, was launched by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) and dozens of other public health organizations, for the purpose of raising awareness about the importance of getting routine vaccines during the COVID-19 debacle.<sup>2</sup> NFID’s strategic partners include AstraZeneca, Janssen Therapeutics, Moderna, Merck, Sanofi Pasteur, Bavarian Nordic, and Takeda Pharmaceuticals.<sup>3</sup>

Yet another VaxTeen partner is Stronger, is a national advocacy campaign whose goal is to “stop the spread of harmful misinformation by advocating for facts, science and vaccines.”<sup>4</sup> This organization is supported by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, whose sponsors include Merck, Johnson & Johnson, Avantor, Amgen, Bristol Myers Squibb, Pfizer, Lilly, Abbvie, Genentech, Samsung Biologics, and Twist Biopharma.<sup>5</sup>

The Stronger site features instructions on how to report “misinformation” about vaccines anonymously to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; and also how to report to Stronger, since “reporting misinformation helps to prevent others from being exposed.” Stronger promises to “report it to the appropriate platform” too.<sup>6</sup>

Danielpour is a member of the Unity Consortium’s Teen Advisory Council, whose members include Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline, Merck, and Sanofi Pasteur.<sup>7</sup>

TeenVax features a list of vaccination laws by state. Parental consent remains the norm in the U.S., but 16 states allow teenagers to get vaccinated without parental permission.<sup>8</sup> I clicked on the link to Ohio, one of the states that still requires parental consent. The site suggests that teens use “our suggested materials to discuss why you want to get vaccinated with your parents to see if you can change their minds.” The “suggested materials” link leads to “Common Vaccine Myths: Dispelling and debunking misinformation.” This portion of the site includes statements such as:

Myth #1: Vaccines cause autism.

Myth #2: Natural immunity is better than vaccine-acquired immunity

Myth #3: Vaccines contain unsafe toxins<sup>9</sup>

This statement also appears: “Regardless of state vaccine consent laws, minors can receive some healthcare services without parental consent in Title X-funded Family Planning clinics.”<sup>10</sup> A link is provided to find a clinic nearby. The Title X program provides grants to 90 organizations which in turn provide funding to 4008 clinics in throughout the U.S.<sup>11</sup> This makes it easy for young teens to seek healthcare on their own without their parents knowing about it.

The “resources section” features information about “How to Talk Your Parents About Vaccination.” In addition to fact sheets, a “Conversation Coach” is available to simulate a real conversation and to make sure that the teen has “accurate talking points to help promote vaccination.” to parents and others.<sup>12</sup>

Other helps include a link to “How to Handle Interactions with Anti-vaxxers,”<sup>13</sup> “How to Accept That Your Parents Don’t Understand You,”<sup>14</sup> and “How to Cope With Mean Parents in the Long Term (includes a statement suggesting that parents may not be mature and the importance of recognizing that “you will most likely never win your parents’ approval”).<sup>15</sup>

The site is everything a teen needs to know to feel confident about defying his parents and provides great tools for undermining the parent/child relationship. I find it difficult to believe that young Kelly assembled this all on her own while finishing high school. The website is elaborate and looks like it was expensive to build – and to maintain. And while I’ve met some savvy teens, I’ve not met one that would be capable of soliciting all of the partners listed on the site. Most likely Kelly is enjoying the attention she is getting, and has no idea that she is being used by vaccine makers to enrich themselves further. These companies have sunk to a new low with this one

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vaxteen.org/about>

<sup>2</sup> New Campaign Encourages All to “Keep Up The Rates” and Get Vaccinated Amidst COVID-19. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-campaign-encourages-all-to-keep-up-the-rates-and-get-vaccinated-amidst-covid-19-301113536.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nfid.org/about-nfid/strategic-partners/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://stronger.org/about>

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- 5 <https://www.bio.org/>
  - 6 <https://stronger.org/resources/how-to-report-accounts>
  - 7 <https://www.unity4teenvax.org/about-us/#leadership>
  - 8 <https://www.newsnationnow.com/health/coronavirus/which-states-allow-teens-to-get-vaccinated-without-parental-consent/>
  - 9 <https://www.vaxteen.org/common-vaccine-myths>
  - 10 <https://www.vaxteen.org/ohio>
  - 11 <https://www.kff.org/interactive/the-status-of-participation-in-the-title-x-federal-family-planning-program/#:~:text=The%20Title%20X%20program%20has,4%2C008%20clinics%20across%20the%20country.>
  - 12 <https://www.vaxteen.org/how-to-talk-to-your-parents>
  - 13 <https://www.wikihow.com/Deal-with-Anti-Vaxxers>
  - 14 <https://www.wikihow.com/Accept-That-Your-Parents-Don%27t-Understand-You>
  - 15 <https://www.wikihow.com/Cope-with-Mean-Parents-in-the-Long-Term>