



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 7, 2021

CDC Changed “Vaccine” Definition to Counter “Pandemic Deniers,” E-mails Show

In early September, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed its longstanding public definitions of *vaccine* and *vaccination* to counter “pandemic deniers” who pointed out that the COVID-19 mRNA injections did not qualify as vaccines under the existing definitions, recently released CDC e-mails reveal.

Prior to September, the CDC’s web page on [“Immunization: The Basics”](#) defined *vaccine* as “a product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease.” Thereafter, the definition was [changed](#) to “a preparation that is used to stimulate the body’s immune response against diseases.”



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Similarly, while *vaccination* used to be defined as “the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce *immunity* to a specific disease,” it is now “the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce *protection from* a specific disease.” (Emphasis added.)

In short, the CDC appeared to have altered the definitions to say that vaccines simply provide some measure of protection against a disease rather than keeping a person from contracting it altogether. After all, the definition of *immunity* used on both the old and new pages is “protection from an infectious disease. If you are immune to a disease, you can be exposed to it without becoming infected.” Had the old definitions been retained, the mRNA shots would not qualify as vaccines because they do not prevent infection. At best, they may reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms, and their effectiveness dwindles rapidly.

When the change was discovered, vaccine critics pounced. On September 8, Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) [tweeted](#) about the CDC’s “evolving definition of ‘vaccination,’” quipping, “They’ve been busy at the Ministry of Truth,” a reference to the agency responsible for altering history to conform to present political preferences in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. (Massie also pointed out that the definition of *vaccination* had been even stronger prior to 2015, stating outright that vaccination would “prevent” a disease.)

The CDC, naturally, denied having changed the definitions for nefarious reasons. “Slight changes in wording over time ... haven’t impacted the overall definition,” a CDC spokesperson told [McClatchy News](#) in late September.

In fact, however, the agency did change the definitions for political purposes, reports [Techno Fog](#), which obtained several CDC e-mails related to the matter via Freedom of Information Act requests.

The e-mail that kicked off the whole chain of events came from an unnamed CDC employee in August.



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“Right-wing covid-19 pandemic deniers,” the supposedly apolitical public servant wrote, “are using your ‘vaccine’ definition to argue that mRNA vaccines are not vaccines.”

“The phrase ‘to produce immunity’ was interpreted to mean ‘complete’ or ‘perfect’ immunity,” the employee explained. “This was twisted to claim that the existing covid-19 vaccines were not vaccines because they only prevented severe illness.”

In this bureaucrat’s opinion, applying the CDC’s definitions as written — and, indeed, as they still read in some places, such as the agency’s [vaccine glossary](#), which says vaccines are “administered to induce immunity and prevent infectious diseases” — is “twist[ing]” them, while claiming that injections that do not prevent disease are vaccines is a perfectly plausible reading of the definitions.

Alycia Downs, the CDC’s lead health communications specialist, took over from here, getting suggestions for how best to alter the definitions and then forwarding the consensus to Valerie Morelli, another CDC official, saying the current definitions were “outdated.”

After a week with no response, Downs e-mailed Morelli again, explaining that the definitions needed to be changed because they were “problematic.”

By September 1, Morelli had approved modifying both definitions, writing, “If this is for the general public, I am good with the change.” Henceforth, a treatment need not actually prevent a disease to qualify as a vaccine, as far as the CDC is concerned — at least when it comes to its public pronouncements.

Techno Fog referred to this language shift as “affirmative action for the multinational corporations. Why have them improve their vaccines when you can just change the definition of vaccine to fit their ineffective vaccines?”

Still, Techno Fog viewed the CDC’s move as a victory for “all the skeptics out there” whose scrutiny of the CDC was such that the agency “tried to change reality.”



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