

## Deadly coalition: Anti-vaxxers merging with anti-mask advocates

Opponents of vaccine requirements have found common ground during the pandemic with people suspicious of drug companies, business shutdowns and other government restrictions, many of whom embrace nontraditional health practices and are worried about the safety of Covid-19 vaccines.

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At an online conference held by an antivaccine organization in October, Sherri Tenpenny, an osteopathic physician who runs a health business, called on attendees to “get behind” antimask and anti-social-distancing groups, urging them to “get rid of their masks, go hug people and absolutely say ‘no’....We need all hands on deck.”

In an interview, Dr. Tenpenny said: “You need to take care of your health by just not following blindly.”

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Public-health officials say [wearing masks and getting Covid-19 vaccines are essential to stopping the virus’s spread](#). Officials are concerned that antivaccine activists, including some state legislators, are peddling misinformation about vaccine side effects and conspiracy theories about the gene-based technology used for the vaccines that are impeding their efforts.

“These movements are gaining influence that could seriously undermine our recovery from Covid-19,” said Lawrence Gostin, faculty director of Georgetown University’s O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law. “It is no use having an effective vaccine if there is such distrust.”

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