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CDC Vaccine Safety Monitoring: A Tale of 'Broken Promises, Stonewalling and Double Standards'

Newly obtained emails shed more light on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's false COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring statements.

By The Epoch Times

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By Zachary Stieber

Newly obtained emails show the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) made a false statement on COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring in 2021, months before agency officials gave false statements on the matter to The Epoch Times.

The emails also show top officials in the agency discussing performing safety monitoring on a key database for myocarditis, a form of heart inflammation that has been linked to the vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna.

The CDC promised in 2021 in a set of operating procedures to perform a type of analysis called Proportional Reporting Ratio (PRR) on reports of adverse reactions following [COVID-19](#) vaccination.

The reports are submitted to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), which officials have described as "the nation's early warning system" for post-vaccination [adverse events](#). The CDC also said in an updated set of operating procedures in 2022 that it would perform the analysis.

But the [CDC](#) has made [false statements three times](#) this year on PRRs, initially saying such analysis was outside the agency's purview, then saying the analysis was performed starting in 2021, then saying the analysis did not begin until 2022.

The newly obtained emails show that an official falsely said the CDC does not perform PRR analysis to an editor in 2021.

John Gregory, a health editor at NewsGuard, wrote to the CDC on Oct. 19, 2021, asking for a comment regarding a claim that the CDC's PRR analysis cannot accurately identify when a vaccine causes adverse events, one of the emails shows.

Martha Sharan, a CDC spokeswoman, sent the query to Dr. John Su, who leads the CDC's VAERS team, and Dr. Tom Shimabukuro, who also works on vaccine safety.

Their responses were redacted apart from a comment on NewsGuard. Sharan then wrote that she'd spoken to Gregory.

"I spoke to the reporter and explained that CDC does not do PPR analysis. The reporter is not going to pursue this any further!" [she wrote](#), adding later that she meant PRR.

That contradicts the [operating procedures](#), which state that the CDC "will perform Proportional Reporting Ratio (PRR) analysis" on VAERS reports.

"We let our published content speak for itself," Gregory told The Epoch Times in an email when notified that the CDC does actually perform PRRs.

'That's a new one to me'

In June, the CDC falsely told [Children's Health Defense](#), a nonprofit, that [PRR analysis](#) is "outside of th[e] agency's purview." An Associated Press reporter, Angelo Fichera, flagged a Children's Health Defense article on the statement to the CDC, asking whether the CDC had ever performed the analysis, according to the newly obtained emails.

Kristen Nordlund, another CDC spokeswoman, forwarded the query to Sharan.

"Martha — thoughts on this one?" she asked.

"That's a new one on me — proportional reporting ratios' — I need to send this one to John," Sharan [responded](#).

Sharan later sent a statement about PRRs to The Associated Press and the Washington Examiner.

The Associated Press and NewsGuard never published stories on the topic. After The Epoch Times reported on contradictory statements from the CDC, the Examiner published [an article](#) about the developments.

Fichera, Sharan and Su did not respond to requests for comment for this article.

The emails were obtained by The Epoch Times and an independent researcher through FOIA requests.

"The CDC claims to be vigilantly and transparently monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, but when it comes to Proportional Reporting Ratio (PRR) analysis, the CDC's broken promises, inconsistent statements, stonewalling, and double standards tell a different story," Mary Holland, president and general counsel of Children's Health Defense, told The Epoch Times via email.

Holland said:

"When asked about PRR analysis in connection with COVID vaccines — through FOIA, media, and congressional requests — CDC has made conflicting statements, some of them false. When confronted about the statements, the CDC claimed, essentially, that PRR analysis is not worth doing. And for the few months of PRR the CDC now says it has completed, the CDC has failed to make the results public, despite requests from multiple sources."

"Children's Health Defense calls on the CDC to do the right thing: do the analysis, and make the results available," she added.

Timeline of CDC emails and statements. Some are being reported for the first time in this story, which continues below.

- "I spoke to the reporter and explained that CDC does not do PPR analysis. The reporter is not going to pursue this any further!" — Martha Sharan to CDC colleagues, Oct. 19, 2021. (source: FOIA response to independent researcher)
- "Correction — that should say PRR." — Martha Sharan to CDC colleagues, Oct. 19, 2021. (FOIA response to independent researcher)
- "[P]rogram staff within the Immunization and Safety Office inform me that no PRRs were conducted by CDC. Furthermore, data mining is outside of th[e] agency's purview." — Roger Andoh, June 16. (letter to Children's Health Defense)

- “That’s a new one on me – proportional reporting ratios’ — I need to send this one to John.” — Martha Sharan to CDC colleagues, June 22. (FOIA response to The Epoch Times)
- “[P]rogram staff within the Immunization and Safety Office inform me that no PRRs were conducted by CDC. Furthermore, data mining is outside of the agency’s purview.” — Bruno Viana to Roger Andoh, June 30. (FOIA response to The Epoch Times)
- “CDC has been performing PRRs since Feb 2021, and continues to do so to date.” — Dr. John Su, July 18. (statement to The Epoch Times)
- “CDC has revisited several FOIA requests and as a result of its review CDC is issuing corrections. ... In reference to Proportional Reporting Ratios (PRRs) — CDC performed PRRs from March 25, 2022 through July 31, 2022.” — Martha Sharan, Aug. 8. (statement to The Epoch Times)
- “CDC performed PRR analysis between March 25, 2022, through July 31, 2022. CDC also recently addressed a previous statement made to the Epoch Times to clarify PRR were not run between February 26, 2021, to September 30, 2021.” — Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Sept. 12. (letter to Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis.)

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Other emails

Several other messages add to the timeline of the CDC’s internal and external statements regarding PRR.

Two weeks after Andoh falsely told Children’s Health Defense that data mining is outside of the CDC’s purview, Bruno Viana, a CDC records employee, [sent emails](#) to Andoh about the response.

Viana quoted word-for-word portions of the letter that Andoh sent to the group.

The context of the emails is unclear.

An email to Viana requesting more information returned an away message. The CDC records office declined to comment, saying a new FOIA request would be necessary to obtain the information.

Another [set of internal emails](#) showed Su and Shimabukuro involved in responding to The Associated Press and the Washington Examiner.

“With the above background, I might suggest the following response,” Su said in one heavily redacted email.

“John’s edits look fine to me. Thanks,” Shimabukuro later wrote.

And other [emails](#) featured Su and Sharan talking to and about The Epoch Times’ queries, including a follow-up query noting that an initial response did not make clear whether the CDC had, in fact, performed PRRs.