

# ‘Medical Gaslighting’: Physicians Speak Out Against COVID Policies, Call for Reform

*The recently launched Global Health Project released a video — “The Oath” — in which physicians describe the effect on doctors, patients and the healthcare system of silencing dissent during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**By [Brenda Baletti, Ph.D.](#)**

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The Global Health Project last week released a video titled “The Oath,” in which physicians describe the effect on doctors, patients and the healthcare system of silencing dissent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The filmmakers also called on doctors to commit to making foundational changes so that what happened during the pandemic never happens again.

The film features six doctors — Elizabeth Lafay, D.O., Steven Klayman, D.C., Timothy Stonesifer, D.O., Molly Rutherford, M.D., MPH, Michael Turner, M.D., and Amy Offutt, M.D. — who said they are “saying what tens of thousands of silenced medical professionals from all over the world have not been able to say.”

Throughout the video, they respond to a series of questions.

Responding to the first question, “When did you begin to have doubts?” they described how they lost faith in institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Lancet and the pharmaceutical companies as they saw well-respected doctors silenced, articles retracted and corrupted clinical trials exposed.

It became clear the agencies were not acting in the public interest, Turner said, because “they’re captured, they’re paid off, they’re corrupt.”

In response to the second question, “How have people been harmed?” they discussed spiking levels of anxiety and depression that began with the fearmongering at the start of the pandemic.

Lafay described working in the ER during the early days of the pandemic when the hospitals emptied out and there were few [COVID-19](#) patients — but many people arriving with “horrible, debilitating anxiety and depression.”

People stuck at home in front of the television absorbed the message “Stay home, don’t be with your family, don’t be with your friends. Isolate, hibernate,” Offutt said. “It’s really taken its toll.”

“People are fearful and I think that was the goal, to make people fearful and be forced into taking this vaccine,” Klayman added.

They said many people no longer trust the medical profession because doctors have been silent

on what happened and that many doctors felt they could not speak out.

As the names of [pharmaceutical giants](#) such as Novartis, [Merck](#), [Pfizer](#), GSK (formerly GlaxoSmithKline), the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and others flashed across the screen, Lafay said:

“It’s really tough because we’re all owned at this point. It’s easier for me to come on camera maybe and say some things like this because I am an independent practitioner now. If you don’t have your [own] practice, then you really can’t help people.

“And I think that is where a lot of [practitioners’] fear comes from, the fear of not being employed.”

But there are larger moral issues at stake, too, Klayman said, adding: “Are you going to give in to what is wrong? Or are you going to fight for what is right?”

Offutt said she thought “fixing the broken system” begins with rebuilding the doctor-patient relationship. Doctors used to spend more time with patients, she said, but then, “It became a business, and I was just one of the employees.”

“There is uniformity and conformity that’s encouraged, and the decision-makers at the top usually are not physicians, and this is a big problem, right?” Turner asked. Instead, they are lawyers looking to minimize risk and accountants looking to maximize profits.

When doctors work for these corporations, Lafay said, insurance and pharmaceutical companies are calling the shots:

“We don’t really have a voice anymore. We’re not really making choices that are best for our patients. We’re checking boxes.

“Unless we fight for the doctor-patient relationship and work to maintain privacy and decision-making that is based on an individual patient scenario, then that will be lost. The art of medicine will be gone, and we may as well be replaced by [artificial intelligence](#).”

The doctors said in order to heal, you should “own your health” — eat well, get sunshine, move around, connect in person and to other people.

“I think doctors who maybe did some things that they regret should come out and acknowledge what they did and assure patients that they’re going to learn from it and change,” Rutherford said. “And then I think we need the truth. We need to [investigate](#), why did all of this happen and how can we keep this from ever happening again?”

Turner said people from across the political spectrum and all walks of life are starting to come together around principles such as “accountability, honesty, respect, self-determination, bodily autonomy, freedom.”

“There’s an awakening going on, so it’s exciting and we’re gonna come out the other side,” he said.

The video closes with the oath:

“I solemnly swear to listen to my patients, respect their wishes, and together make the best choices for that individual and to do no harm.”

## Video marks launch of Global Health Project

The video release marked the launch of the [Global Health Project](#), an organization hoping to raise awareness of the coercive power exerted on society by global health agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic and to build a movement to create a better system.

The group began as a conversation among physicians and health researchers about what happened during the pandemic and how to make sure it doesn't happen again, [Andrea Nazarenko, Ph.D.](#), a spokesperson for the organization, told [The Defender](#).

The group hopes the video will open the door for conversation, [Katarina Lindley, D.O.](#), family physician and another group spokesperson, said.

A doctor might hear the physicians' stories and say, “That's exactly how it happened to me,” she said. Or, patients can go to their doctors and raise these issues with them.

Lindley also said that statements by global leaders, the [World Health Organization's](#) proposed [pandemic treaty](#) and amendments to the International Health Regulations, and other evidence point to the fact something like the COVID-19 pandemic can happen again, and if it does, the Global Health Project wants to build an informed and connected public. She continued:

“So our hope is that by sharing these stories, by empowering the public as well, we want them to question things ... when new things come along. And if they feel in their gut something is wrong, they need to trust their gut, then they really become advocates for themselves, for their family, for their friends.

“And I'm hoping that physicians will remember why they took the Hippocratic oath ... And there's lots of things that we need to start questioning that maybe we didn't question before.”

While the changes they are talking about are systemic, Lindley said it starts in the doctor-patient relationship.

When someone's car breaks down, she said, they usually try to find a good mechanic by asking friends and shopping around.

“I think when it comes to medicine and healthcare, we kind of almost need to do the same thing. Shop around ... interview your doctor. Even if you have insurance and you're assigned to a doctor, you don't have to accept the doctor.”

People can find doctors who are independent, who have “stepped away from the matrix, as I call it,” Lindley said, so they can build great relationships with patients.

Nazarenko added:

“Ultimately, what we experienced during the pandemic was traumatic. We are suffering from collective trauma at a societal level. Just like any other trauma, this trauma will not

disappear by 'moving on' and 'forgetting about it.' Trauma must be processed.

"Unfortunately, what we are facing right now is the mainstream narrative telling us to 'forget about it,' to 'just move on,' and to ignore our feelings ('just let it go'). This is medical gaslighting at a population level. In any other relationship, we would identify this as the behavior of an abuser.

"If we want to move on and create a world of togetherness, we need to talk about it. We don't all need to agree on everything — but we need to have the conversation.

"Silence leaves us vulnerable to this happening again. They separated us for a reason. This video is about bringing people together again and engaging in authentic conversations."

## Watch here:



THE OATH- Q&A

Global Health Project

08:34

## SUGGEST A CORRECTION

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### Brenda Baletti, Ph.D.

Brenda Baletti Ph.D. is a reporter for The Defender. She wrote and taught about capitalism and politics for 10 years in the writing program at Duke University. She holds a Ph.D. in human geography from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's from the University of Texas at Austin.

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