

Protesters disrupt COVID vaccination site in Los Angeles

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Protesters hold placards near the entrance of vaccination center at Dodger Stadium. (Photo: Twitter @DAVEEDKAPOOR / Reuters)

Los Angeles, January 31 (RHC)-- Demonstrators briefly disrupted a coronavirus vaccination distribution center at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, calling the jabs part of a conspiracy by elites to control the population.

Several dozen people carrying signs demanding the end of lockdowns and promoting anti-vaccination conspiracy theories gathered on Saturday at the entrance to the vaccination site, one of the largest in the United States, social media posts showed.

Officials shut the site down for nearly an hour, citing fire department officials – though the Los Angeles police department later insisted it was not closed and all the vaccines would be distributed. The incident represents the latest challenge to the vaccine roll-out in the US, which has the highest number of cases and deaths in the world from COVID-19.

The Los Angeles Daily News spoke to protester Jairo Rodriguez, 26, who said most of the protesters were supporters of former president Donald Trump who deliberately chose not to wear pro-Trump attire or carry U.S. flags in order to “better communicate their anti-vaxxing message.” He also said they did not wear masks.

On social media, protesters were shown holding signs reading “Covid = scam,” “99.96 survival rate,” and “Tell Bill Gates to Vaccinate Himself.” The latter in reference to a conspiracy theory that vaccines were being used to implant microchips in the population in order to control them by a New World Order.

Others chanted “This is not a vaccine,” “Sheep led to their slaughter” and “This is a treatment. You are submitting to be a lab rat in real-time.” A post on social media described the demonstration as the “SCAMDEMIC PROTEST/MARCH.” It advised participants to “please refrain from wearing Trump/MAGA attire as we want our statement to resonate with the sheeple. No flags but informational signs only”.

Health officials expect to vaccinate 12,000 people a day at the stadium, thought to be the largest vaccination site in the nation. Videos and photos of the protests were widely shared on social media, drawing ire and outrage from some who highlighted the burgeoning death toll from coronavirus in the country.

More than 26 million people have been infected and 439,000 have died in the country since the start of the pandemic, a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University showed on Saturday.

President Joe Biden has pledged to have 100 million people vaccinated within his first 100 days – but the rollout began slowly under Trump.

Los Angeles County, where COVID-19 cases have surged this winter, is currently only vaccinating front-line medical workers and people aged 65 and over. Even among those groups, appointments are extremely difficult to obtain, with Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna shots in limited supply.

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