



United States of America
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
Southwest Region

1999 Bryan St., Ste. 2150
Dallas, Texas 75201

June 12, 2020

WARNING LETTER

VIA EMAIL TO drgafford@covidocors.com

Dr. Blake Gafford
CoviDoctors
3711 20th Street, Suite B
Lubbock, Texas 79410

Re: Unsubstantiated Claims for Coronavirus Prevention or Treatment

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to advise you that FTC staff reviewed your website at <https://covidocors.com/> on June 9, 2020. We have determined that you are unlawfully advertising that certain products or services treat or prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Some examples of Coronavirus treatment or prevention claims on your website include:

- On your homepage, you claim:
 - “GET THE SAME HERBAL FORMULAS USED IN CHINESE HOSPITALS FOR TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF COVID-19”;
 - “Intense herbal strategies have been used to treat COVID-19 in Chinese hospitals.... If you are told to self quarantine and let the virus ‘run its course,’ the latest research from China says this may be a great option for you.”;
 - “10 minutes CONSULT FOR PREVENTATIVE HERBAL RX \$35...we will make a professional assessment to find the best preventative formula for you. China has used many preventative herbal formulas during their history in pandemics, as well as in recent times with COVID-19. Please check out the research on the Prevention page for more information. After the initial consult, you can receive unlimited refills of your herbal prescription as long as your condition has not changed”; and

- “20 minutes CONSULT FOR TREATMENT HERBAL RX \$65... we will professionally assess and treat using the same herbal strategies used in Chinese hospitals. Please note, this is a dynamic option that will likely require multiple visits. Chinese Medicine treats every stage of illness with a different strategy.... Because of the strength of these formulas as well as the dynamic nature of illnesses like COVID-19, they are only available by prescription after consulting with a Chinese Medicine practitioner.”
- In marketing materials titled “RESEARCH FROM CHINA ON ADVANCED FORMULAS FOR PREVENTION OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION,” accessible from your homepage by selecting “Research” and then “PREVENTION” from your website navigation menu:
 - You describe three “Prevention Formulas” and state that “when immune stimulating herbs are combined with strong antiviral herbs, like Guan Zhong, you have a broad spectrum formula that attacks viruses in a multitude of ways. If, however, patients have an underlying autoimmune issue, or latent pathogenic factors, boosting the immune system in this way would be most unwise! Again, it is necessary to have the proper diagnosis. These herbs are powerful and can’t be used indiscriminately”; and
 - You describe a “Formula Strategy #2,” and state that, “In essence, these strategies bring more immune power to various vulnerable places, such as the lungs. Dr. Ying’s hospital reported zero COVID-19 infections amongst hospital staff following this protocol. Employees were given herbal formulas based on their level of exposure. Low level exposure warranted a formula called Gancao Ganjiang Tang, whereas a high level of risk warranted a formula like Gui Zhi Tang plus Gancao Ganjiang Tang. The former formula protects the lungs only, whereas the latter protects the lungs as well as the periphery. Additional strategies were to add cardio and adrenal tonics to formulas for exhausted hospital workers. Overall, this was a dynamic strategy, and one I have adopted in many of my patients, when the pattern fits. Even stronger, is a combined approach, with herbs to prophylactically treat the main areas the virus enters: the lungs, the nose, the ears, and the eyes.”
- In marketing materials titled “HERBAL TREATMENT OF COVID-19 IN CHINESE HOSPITALS,” accessible from your homepage by selecting “Research” and then “TREATMENT” from your website navigation menu:
 - You claim, “The drug, hydroxychloroquine, has shown great promise in COVID-19’s treatment, but, interestingly enough, in China, one of the top strategies has been the use of a classic antimalarial herbal formula called Xiao Chai Hu Tang. It has to be modified for cough, according to the classical parameters, however. The exciting aspect is that, according to the experience of some doctors in China, the results have been better than that of drug treatment”; and

- You list a variety of protocols “on how COVID-19 is treated using Chinese herbal medicine,” with descriptions such as:

“Diagnosis: Damp Heat Afflicting the Lung...

Clinical Manifestations: Low-grade fever or absence of fever, dry cough, scanty sputum, dry and sore throat, fatigue, weakness, poor appetite, chest stuffiness, epigastric distention, nausea or vomiting, loose stool.

Examination: CT scan reveals both lungs to have multiple scattered or large pieces of ground-glass opacity (GGO). Pale or pink, puffy tongue with teeth marks. White or greasy white coating. Soft or slippery pulse.

Treatment Strategy: Transform Dampness, Detoxify; Disperse the Lungs and Expel Pathogens

Herbal Formula: 麻杏薏甘汤小陷胸汤草果知母汤 (*Ma Xing Yi Gan Tang (Ephedra, Apricot Kernel, Coicis, and Licorice Decoction), Xiao Xian Xiong Tang (Minor Sinking into the Chest Decoction) and Cao Guo Zhi Mu Tang (Tsaoko and Anemarrhena Decoction).*”

It is unlawful under the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 41 *et seq.*, to advertise that a product or service can prevent, treat, or cure human disease unless you possess competent and reliable scientific evidence, including, when appropriate, well-controlled human clinical studies, substantiating that the claims are true at the time they are made. For COVID-19, no such study is currently known to exist for the products or services identified above. Thus, any Coronavirus-related prevention claims regarding such products or services are not supported by competent and reliable scientific evidence. You must immediately cease making all such claims.

You are also advised to review all other claims for your products and services and immediately cease making claims that are not supported by competent and reliable scientific evidence.

Within 48 hours, please send a message to James E. Elliott via electronic mail at jelliott@ftc.gov describing the specific actions you have taken to address the FTC’s concerns. If you have any questions regarding compliance with the FTC Act, please contact Zachary A. Keller at zkeller@ftc.gov.

Very truly yours,

Dama J. Brown

Regional Director
Southwest Region