

Why U.S. cities are enlisting micro-influencers to fight vaccine disinformation and hesitancy | Coda Story

By Erica Hellerstein

August 13, 2021

Mike Morea had just filmed his latest makeup tutorial when I arrived at his home in San Jose, California. In the video, the 26-year-old beauty and lifestyle influencer told his followers, while dabbing lotion onto his cheeks, that his aesthetic goal for the day was a subtle “a no makeup look.” He showed me the video shortly after I walked through his door. When I complimented his skin, Morea grinned and opened a cabinet full of his favorite makeup products.

This is the type of interaction that dominates Morea’s social media feeds, where he offers intimate, casual tips in Spanish on everything from home improvement projects to the perfect eyeliner. Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, Morea posts prolifically to his 41,000 followers on Instagram and nearly one million on TikTok. His chatty videos and photos usually cover lifestyle topics, but a few months ago, he took on a subject his followers hadn’t yet seen him engage with: Covid vaccine hesitancy.

On May 19, Morea posted a photo on Instagram; in the picture, he wore a black face mask and stood in the aisle of a pharmacy.

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