

Netflix buys into Goop hooley with deal to make a wellness docuseries

Enlarge / Gwyneth Paltrow attends the In Goop Health Summit on June 9, 2018 in Culver City, California.

reader comments

210 with 125 posters participating

Share this story

If you're one for Netflix bingeing, you may want to grab a bucket.

Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle and "contextual commerce" venture, Goop, has signed a deal with Netflix to produce a wellness "docuseries"—despite the brand's sordid history of making unsubstantiated and abhorrent health claims.

The deal was first made public in an article on Variety.com on Monday. The outlet interviewed Goop's chief content officer, Elise Loehnen, who said the series will contain 30-minute episodes and "utilize experts, doctors, and researchers to examine issues relating to physical and spiritual wellness."

Netflix and Goop have since both confirmed the news to Ars. But neither partner would provide additional details. Netflix said that it is keeping mum because the series is not in production yet and its content is not final. But Netflix declined to answer Ars' questions regarding how it would handle Goop's health claims, including if it would require substantiation or fact-checking.

In 2017, a similarly high-profile deal between Goop and publisher Condé Nast fell through over the issue. The partnership would have led to a glossy, goopy magazine for the aspirational lifestyle brand. But it failed to materialize, in part because Condé Nast insisted on having the publication fact-checked—something Goop refused to do. (Disclaimer: Condé Nast is the parent company of Ars.)

It was a bad choice on Goop's part. Last year, Goop settled a lawsuit brought by 10 state prosecutors, who accused Paltrow's brand of peddling products using unsubstantiated health claims. These included suggesting that the infamous jade egg could treat gynecological health issues when jammed into a vagina and that a blend of essential oils could prevent depression. Goop paid \$145,000 in civil fines and agreed to stop making claims "regarding the efficacy or effects of any of its products without possessing competent and reliable scientific evidence that substantiates the claims."

In a subsequent interview with the BBC, Paltrow showed no remorse at the possibility that unsubstantiated health claims made by her company could harm people. "We just wanted to settle it and put it behind us," she said of the lawsuit. She emphasized that Goop did not have to admit any wrongdoing in the settlement. Instead, she blamed practitioners of evidence-based medicine for not "believing" in her unsubstantiated treatments, and she suggested that it was inevitable to face such resistance when trying to "empower women."

While Paltrow's explanations may cause rage strokes, her business is thriving. Its valuation reached \$250 million last year and is expanding in all directions, with brick-and-mortar stores on multiple continents and even into the troposphere. In addition to the Netflix series, Variety.com reported that Goop also signed a distribution agreement with Delta Airlines for the Goop podcast.

One bright spot for advocates of fact-based reality: Dr.

Jennifer Gunter—obstetrician-gynecologist and vocal critic of Goop and pseudoscience that threatens women's health—is producing her own health-related series. Gunter told Ars that she can't reveal details yet of the project, but she noted on Twitter that she has already “shot my first season,” which is in editing now.

“It will be interesting to see what resonates more with people, authenticity in health or aspirational health,” she tweeted.

<https://arstechnica.com/?p=1451653>