Coronavirus Pandemic Requires Rejecting Pharma's Business As Usual
#NoPandemicProfiteering

The government has already committed over $10 billion in taxpayer funds to cover the research, development and manufacturing for promising coronavirus treatments. That's our taxpayer dollars at work. It's unacceptable that Health and Human Services Secretary Azar refuses to promise American families an affordable vaccine.

Time and again we've seen drug corporations use their monopoly power to set prices sky high, putting their profits before public health. That's why when it comes to finding a coronavirus vaccine, the Trump Administration should reject business as usual.

Instead of giving these drug corporations monopoly power to set the price for lifesaving drugs, we need clear guard rails on any licensing agreement to ensure affordable access for all who need the vaccine.

Big Pharma may not care about public health, but elected officials and government agencies should. The world needs a coronavirus vaccine now – one that is accessible to everyone and prioritizes saving lives over Big Pharma's bottom line.

- The current coronavirus pandemic is already shaking the economy, threatening to disrupt supply chains, shut down workplaces and put our health and our economy at risk. President Trump, HHS Secretary Azar and elected officials at all levels need to take action to prioritize our health and safety, not default to politics or business as usual.
- American taxpayers fund billions of dollars in research and development of vaccines and other medicines through National Institutes of Health. It's a good investment, but only if that research then results in affordable medicines that we can all access. Our taxpayer research should not just be handed over to large drug corporations with no strings attached so that they can decide how much to charge and who gets access to vaccines and treatments.
- Lawmakers in the House have already sent a letter to the Trump Administration and Secretary Azar specifically requesting that in the case of coronavirus, no drug corporation be granted an exclusive patent that would give that company monopoly power to set prices without any check on affordability.
- Secretary Azar's public comments and his response to the letter have been disappointing: it's clear he is more committed to helping the drug companies profiteer--business as usual--than to protecting public health.

- The coronavirus doesn't care about profit margins or recouping investment. The illness, which public health experts are already saying is more [dangerous than flu](#), will continue to spread unfettered until the administration takes responsible action to stop it.
- This is not a partisan issue. [Polling](#) is already showing that a majority of the public supports free testing and free vaccines to stop the spread of coronavirus.
- Rather than downplaying the potential impact, trying to silence public health officials or contradicting experts, elected officials could avoid alarm by proposing transparent measures that protect workers, contain the spread of illness and prepare the country for a pandemic.
- That should start with reassuring the public that elected leaders and the Administration will not abandon responsibility for an affordable vaccine by turning over public money to Big Pharma with no strings attached.
- [Pharma is the least popular industry](#) in the country for a reason: Americans know we can't trust the drug corporations to prioritize patients or public health.
- For decades we've seen drug companies gouge us on everything from insulin to HIV/AIDS treatments to cancer drugs. The corporations have profited while the rest of us have paid the price--funding innovation, funding tax breaks to the biggest corporations, subsidizing their marketing, CEO pay and the harm caused by their predatory profit making off of opioids.
- A global pandemic calls for a different approach that ensures that medicines taxpayers pay to develop are readily accessible to us. Americans everywhere will be watching.