



April 9th 2020

Dear President Trump,

[Lower Drug Prices Now](#) is a coalition of over 60 labor unions, faith networks, grassroots membership and policy organizations working on reforms that would guarantee affordable prescription medicines for everyone - no matter where people live, what they look like or what's in their wallets. Lower Drug Prices Now is urging lawmakers to take on Big Pharma's monopoly power to price-gouge families, deny patients life-saving medicines and put medicines developed with taxpayer-funded research out of reach for millions.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic created the current public health and economic crisis, increased demand for aggressive government action to lower the price of prescription drugs was evident [among voters across the political spectrum](#). Big Pharma's long litany of abuses--everything from price-gouging on insulin to deceptive marketing of opioids and endangering patients with faulty products--has made pharmaceuticals [the least popular industry](#) in the United States.

Pharma's pernicious price-setting power further imperils our country as we combat the coronavirus pandemic. Despite repeated efforts to get commitments from Congress and the Trump Administration that all treatments and vaccines for coronavirus will be affordable for everyone, here and abroad, so far Americans still have no assurances that we will have affordable access to the medicines being developed with billions of our own taxpayer dollars. Instead, we are already seeing drug companies like [Gilead](#) make moves to profiteer by gaming the system that has already made the pharmaceutical industry the most profitable in America.

In a national crisis it's clear that we cannot depend on drug corporations to protect public health or not to profiteer off the pandemic. It is up to our government to intervene to block monopoly control of prices and to ensure that everyone will get the medicines and vaccinations we need. We need not only to flatten the curve, but to get ahead of it so we can be ready to stop this disease in its tracks, get the economy back on track and ensure the health and well-being of our communities long-term.

Lower Drug Prices Now proposes five steps that should be taken immediately:

First, demand no-cost testing, treatment and medicines including a vaccine for coronavirus. Today's crisis is first and foremost a public health crisis that demands much greater access to



affordable health care. Automatic, no cost access to testing, treatment and medicine are the best defense against the disease but that means everyone living in our communities – the insured and the uninsured, citizens and immigrants must have access to these resources, whether they go to an in-network facility or not.

Second, do not allow drug corporations to profiteer off the pandemic. Giving drug corporations business as usual monopoly power to set prices will put vaccines and medicines out of reach for millions. Legislators and the Trump Administration must require fair, affordable prices so that government agencies, providers, public health programs, insurers and other payers can provide no cost or low cost access for all while preventing cost-shifting down the line. Unless the government intervenes to stop Pharma from setting their own prices, ultimately we will see higher premiums, higher costs to businesses, higher costs to state and local governments, and higher costs to taxpayers. War-time profiteering off prescription medicines is wrong.

Third, ensure accountability for taxpayer investments in development of coronavirus treatments. Elected and appointed officials must do their job and stop Pharma from price-gouging off tax-payer funded research into medicines that are critical in winning this war. Pharma corporations have already received billions in tax giveaways from President Trump's 2017 tax law. Over a dozen drug corporations will receive millions more from the recent relief packages in Congress to accelerate work on treatments. We need legislative and administrative action to ensure that America's families and small businesses, not – not Pharma corporations – benefit from new legislation responding to the pandemic. These taxpayer dollars should not be used to increase corporate execs salaries or for stock buy-backs. Instead, public money turned over to drug corporations for research must result in medicines that are affordable.

Fourth, prevent price-gouging on ALL prescription drugs. ALL patients need and deserve affordable drugs – whether they are affected by the pandemic, cancer, diabetes or any other disease. Already, evidence shows that Americans who have pre-existing health conditions like asthma or diabetes are more vulnerable to coronavirus but no one is immune. We need bold, across-the-board action – negotiation, requiring that prescription drugs developed with taxpayer dollars are affordable, and preventing any drug corporation from using its monopoly power to block competition and keep prices exorbitant. Fixing our broken prescription drug business model is part of being better prepared for later stages of this crisis and anticipating future ones.

Fifth, candidates should pledge to refuse Pharma corporate PAC campaign contributions. For far too long, PhRMA corporations have bought political power – protecting their enormous



profits by blocking policies that put patients' needs first. It is time for that to end or for every candidate and elected official to make clear which side he or she is on when it comes to affordable medicines.

Lower Drug Prices Now partners collectively represent millions of people around the nation who care about this issue are eager to hear your plans to ensure that prescription drug companies do not profiteer from the current crisis and that the medicines and treatments we all need will be affordable.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with a representative of your campaign to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

Margarida Jorge

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Our Partners

Lower Drug Prices Now brings together a broad array of state and national partners to fight for transformative policy change that will finally ensure everyone has access to affordable medicine whether they have a sore throat, high blood pressure or an acute illness like cancer. Our national coalition currently includes: *Action Center on Race and the Economy, Alliance for Retired Americans, American Federation of State, Country, Municipal Employees (AFSCME), American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), American Federation of Teachers, American Medical Student Association (AMSA), Center for American Progress (CAP), Center for Popular Democracy (CPD), Faith in Public Life (FPL), Families USA, Health Care for America Now (HCAN), Health Care Voter Affordable Insulin Now, HousingWorks, Indivisible, Kairos Center, MomsRising.org, MoveOn.org, Network Lobby, Other 98%, Oxfam, People's Action, Public Citizen, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Social Security Works, UNIDOS US Action Fund, United Auto Workers (UAW). United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).*

