

## IFPMA Covid-19 Update - 17 March

### Top news:

- Race for vaccine and treatment development is on, with several biotechs and big pharmaceutical companies working together in critical effort to getting these vaccines from trial to market.
- UN expert estimates impact of COVID-19 on Africa's economy and health systems might put the attainment of the SDG goals at risk, Ghana Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association membersto put aside their normal production schedules and bring up products that will be used to support the COVID-19
- India curbed exports of its own APIs, antivirals, and some common OTC drugs temporarily as American health organizations are advising patients to secure 30- or 90-day supplies of maintenance medications
- [Chilean Chamber of Deputies approves resolution for compulsory licenses for patents relating to coronavirus](#)
- Knock on effect of COVID-19 on other diseases/treatments (TB) as well as the economies of India and Africa.

## VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT

### IFPMA members

- **Bloomberg:** [Drugmaker Takeda Sees Speedy Approval of Coronavirus Treatment](#) - Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. said its blood plasma-derived therapy against coronavirus currently in development has the potential to be among the first approved treatments for the deadly pathogen, as the treatment involves a process that already has approval from regulators.
- **Reuters:** [Pfizer, BioNTech to co-develop potential coronavirus vaccine](#). The companies have agreed to a letter of intent regarding the co-development and distribution (excluding China) of a potential mRNA-based coronavirus vaccine aimed at preventing COVID-19 infection, which is expected to enter clinical testing by the end of April 2020. The rapid advancement of this collaboration builds on the research and development collaboration into which Pfizer and BioNTech entered in 2018 to develop mRNA-based vaccines for prevention of influenza.
- **Novartis:** [Broad range of initiatives to respond to COVID-19 Pandemic announced](#), including joining collaborative R&D efforts with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and Mastercard -supported COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator and a partnership with the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and commitments build on Sandoz pledge to maintain price stability of essential medicines and strong support of patients and healthcare systems. The company has also announced the creation of a COVID-19 Response Fund to provide USD 20 million in grants to support public health initiatives designed to help communities manage challenges posed by the pandemic.
- **Modern Ghana:** [Coronavirus: Pharmaceutical Industry Battle Ready](#). The Ghana Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association is supporting the governments' quest to end the spread of COVID-19, asking members to put aside their normal production schedules and bring up products that will be used to support the COVID-19 and also make sure those products are easily available.

### Non-IFPMA members

- **CNBC:** [Hopes of a coronavirus vaccine mount as three key biotech players make progress](#). BioNTech, CureVac and Moderna are firms specializing in messenger RNA (mRNA)

therapeutics. These mRNA molecules are used to instruct the body to produce its own immune response. As evidenced by these companies, partnerships are key to developing and manufacturing vaccines for the public. Both public-private partnerships as well as partnerships between the traditional pharmaceutical giants and smaller biotech players can be critical to getting these vaccines from trial to market.

- **CNBC:** [Regeneron aims to have coronavirus antibody treatment ready for human testing by early summer](#). The approach involves creating antibodies to the virus that could be used to treat the disease and to prevent it, Regeneron said in a statement Tuesday. The approach, which was successful in creating a drug to treat Ebola, is to expose mice with genetically altered human-like immune systems to proteins in the virus so they create antibodies.
- **The Mainichi:** [Development of coronavirus treatment advancing in Japan with existing meds](#). Researchers are expected to see results as early as the end of April of clinical research being undertaken. Drugs that are reported as being tested are: Ciclesonide (also known as Alvesco, a type of steroid used in inhalers to treat asthma), Remdesivir, Hydroxychloroquine (also known as Plaquenil, developed to treat malaria), Favipiravir (also known as Avigan, used to treat influenza), Lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra).
- **Gazette:** [Crescent Pharma Limited \(UK\) is trying to develop life-saving Covid-19 vaccine](#). Their substance is an antimalarial drug derived from quinolone called chloroquine phosphate. Quinolones are chemotherapeutic bacterial drugs that remove bacteria by interfering with DNA replication. The therapy is being used in 10 COVID-19 trials in China.

## SUPPLY CHAIN

- **Fierce Pharma:** [Sanofi joins drugmakers pledging no COVID-19 shortages](#). By relying upon ingredients from a variety of global sources, Sanofi has safeguarded against shortages from major suppliers in China, India and smaller countries in Asia, its official [COVID-19 response](#) states. Meanwhile, India curbed exports of its own APIs, antivirals, and some common OTC drugs temporarily, [according](#) to Mansukh Mandaviya, India's minister for chemicals and fertilizer.
- **The Guardian:** [US prescription drug supply chains face coronavirus stress test](#). American health organizations are advising patients to secure 30- or 90-day supplies of maintenance medications. Merck stated it was not aware of any significant near-term impacts on the availability of its medicines and vaccines. Rena Conti, health economist at Boston University, stated that potential supply shortfalls should be expected, but that it not necessarily leads to shortages. Ronald Piervincenzi, CEO of US Pharmacopeia stated that there is a trustworthy and reliable supply of medicines in the US which has not changed the past two months.

## DIAGNOSTICS

- **FierceBiotech:** [Roche begins shipping 400,000 coronavirus test kits per week in the U.S.](#) Last Friday, Roche Diagnostics received the FDA's first emergency use authorization for a commercially developed COVID-19 test. The company has begun deploying its newly authorized cobas coronavirus diagnostic to hospitals and reference laboratories, with a wave of 400,000 swab-testing kits expected to arrive this week. The company also said it plans to ship an additional 400,000 per week to U.S. test sites, including from its global distribution center in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- **Businesswire:** [FDA policy change to allow rapid domestic expansion of Co-Diagnostics Inc. \(USA\) COVID-19 test](#). The company claims it is the first U.S. company to obtain a CE

marking for a COVID-19 test, and states that international shipments have continued to escalate.

- **Euractiv:** [New rapid test kit to detect COVID-19 soon available in EU](#). The test kit, which has been developed and is manufactured by Curetis' (Germany) strategic partner BGI (China), enables diagnostic laboratories to test for SARS-CoV2, the virus causing COVID-19. The kit contains enough reagents and controls to test up to 48 patients in just a few hours. The test will now be made available to diagnostic laboratories in Europe through Curetis' network of distribution partners.
- **BioSpace:** [Labrador Diagnostics LLC \(USA\) Will Grant Royalty-free Licenses for COVID-19 Testing](#). It hopes that more tests will be created, disseminated, and used to quickly and effectively protect our communities. Labrador, an entity owned by investment funds managed by Fortress Investment Group LLC, filed a patent infringement lawsuit which focuses on activities over the past six years that are not in any way related to COVID-19 testing. The defendants issued a press release announcing that they were developing tests for COVID-19 after which Labrador offered them a royalty-free license for such tests.

## PREPAREDNESS/ CONTAINMENT

- **New York Times:** [Africa Braces for Coronavirus, but Slowly](#). Dr. John Nkengasong, director of the Africa C.D.C., explains that the Ebola outbreak was a wake-up call for the entire continent that public health systems and health systems as a whole were weak. This vulnerability, along with crowded conditions and poor sanitation in cities, and the unpredictable movement of populations, could make outbreaks impossible to control.
- **ABC News:** [Coronavirus experts call for random blood testing to slow the spread](#). There are growing calls in Australia to introduce serological testing. The test would help health officials know if people have been exposed and developed antibodies against the virus. Dr Meru Sheel, an epidemiologist and research fellow at the Australian National University said that the current PCR test only tells you whether a person has the virus at this moment. Such tests have been introduced in other countries like Singapore, the US and China.
- **Forbes (opinion by Madhukar Pai):** [COVID-19 Coronavirus And Tuberculosis: We Need A Damage Control Plan](#). Healthcare workers fighting TB have growing anxiety about what this pandemic will do to tuberculosis (TB). China and South-Korea standard TB care was disrupted due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **Economic Times:** [Coronavirus outbreak will set back India's growth recovery](#), early estimates by the government suggest. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked top verticals within the government, including the Niti Aayog, the Economic Advisory Council to the PM and finance ministry to assess the economic impact of the novel coronavirus. The "supply side contagion effect" will impact manufacturing, agriculture and the pharmaceutical industry, said Bornali Bhandari, an economist at the National Council of Applied Economic Research.
- **Voice of America:** [Coronavirus will slam African economies, experts say](#). The United Nations said it estimates Africa's GDP rate will fall from 3.2 percent to 1.8 percent this year. Stephen Karingi, the director of the trade division at the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, says the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's economy and health systems would be devastating, putting the attainment of the SDG goals at risk.

## TRANSPARENCY AGENDA EXTENDS TO COVID-19

- **KEI:** [Chilean Chamber of Deputies approves resolution for compulsory licenses for patents relating to coronavirus](#)
- Today, with an overwhelming 127 votes in favor and 0 votes against, the Chilean Chamber of Deputies approved a strong resolution asking the Chilean Government to declare that there is justification for compulsory licenses for vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, devices, supplies, and other technologies useful for the surveillance, prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of people infected by the coronavirus virus in Chile. The resolution also has a strong transparency mandate, asking the Minister of Health to request the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Observatory on Health R&D to collect information on the costs associated with health technologies related to COVID-19.

## **WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 17 March:**

- [WHO EURO livestream](#)
  - Hans Kluge, regional director for Europe at WHO, said Tuesday that European countries must triple their efforts to prevent the spread, saying there must be no exceptions when taking robust action to stop or slow down the virus threat. Boldest action should include community action.
  - Member states must keep testing, contact tracing, promote social distancing, and properly equip health workers to protect health systems.
  - Surveillance and information sharing is the best way for all regional member states.
  - Essential medicines for diabetes HIV, TB painkillers will be monitored heavily to get ahead of shortages.
  - Regional offices are working with WHO global, EU commission and private sector to meet the growing demand of medical products and medicines.
  - Dr. Richard Pebody (Public Health England): WHO has been working with all member states to ensure that they're prepared as countries move into the community transmission stage. Countries have made a decision to reserve testing to those who have severe symptoms. Quarantine is a great way stop the spread. Samples from the respiratory tract are tested to see if the virus is detected. The gold standard is having tests done in labs not self-testing.