

IFPMA Covid-19 Update - 6 April

Top news:

- Very first preliminary findings from the Gates Foundation's Therapeutics Accelerator initiative show that hydroxychloroquine could be a good agent for COVID-19 prophylaxis.
- WHO and Costa Rica are finalizing a proposal to create a pool of rights to tests, medicines and vaccines, with free access or licensing on reasonable and affordable terms for all countries AND thank the Medicines Patent Pool and UNITAID for the initiative they announced last Friday to include medicines and diagnostics for COVID-19 in their licensing pool. Statement by Dr Tedros [here](#) and IFPMA statement [here](#); NGOs increasingly trying to make their voice heard in the discussion around IP & access, inc South Centre to WHO/ WTO/ WIPO
- The WTO has released a new report on trade in medical products critical for the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- GSK enters two new partnership to accelerate efforts to find a COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutic; Gilead is providing the entirety of this existing supply of remdesivir at no cost, to treat patients with the most severe symptoms of COVID-19. 1.5 million individual doses are available for compassionate use, expanded access and clinical trials; Pfizer and the Pfizer Foundation today announced the commitment of \$40 million in medical and charitable cash grants to strengthen health systems.

VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT

IFPMA members

- **Fierce Biotech:** [GSK allies with Inovax for COVID-19 vaccine R&D project](#). GlaxoSmithKline has [teamed up](#) with Xiamen Inovax Biotech to evaluate a vaccine against the novel coronavirus behind the COVID-19 pandemic. The agreement gives Inovax access to a GSK adjuvant to enhance the immune response triggered by its recombinant protein-based vaccine.
- **GSK:** [GSK and Vir Biotechnology enter collaboration to find coronavirus solutions](#). The collaboration will use Vir's proprietary monoclonal antibody platform technology to accelerate existing and identify new anti-viral antibodies that could be used as therapeutic or preventative options to help address the current COVID-19 pandemic and future outbreaks.
- **Gilead:** [An Update on COVID-19 from our Chairman & CEO](#). In the letter, Gilead's CEO Daniel O'Day states that Gilead is providing the entirety of this existing supply of remdesivir at no cost, to treat patients with the most severe symptoms of COVID-19. 1.5 million individual doses are available for compassionate use, expanded access and clinical trials and will be donated for broader distribution following any potential future regulatory authorizations.
- **CNN Money Switzerland:** [Novartis 'hopeful' of a coronavirus vaccine](#). While Novartis continues to work on solutions to reduce complications due to coronavirus, it remains hopeful the wider industry will develop a vaccine in a year or so. Chief Medical Officer John Tsai also reveals how the pharma giant is managing to continue clinical trials despite nationwide lockdowns and says the new procedures are the way of the future.

- **The Conversation:** [Head lice drug Ivermectin is being tested as a possible coronavirus treatment, but that's no reason to buy it](#). Researchers testing the head lice drug Ivermectin as a possible treatment for COVID-19 have seen promising results in lab studies. But the research is in its early stages and the drug is yet to be tested on people with COVID-19. The drug is manufactured by MSD/ Merck.
- **Science Alert:** [Small Trial Suggests Antimalarial Drugs Not Effective For Treating Coronavirus](#). A study published in a French medical journal provides new evidence that hydroxychloroquine does not appear to help the immune system clear the coronavirus from the body.
- **Forbes:** [Researchers Warn Possible Coronavirus Treatment Hydroxychloroquine May Be Toxic When Combined With Diabetes Drug](#). Results of a new study show that 30-40% of mice treated with a combination of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine, and the diabetes drug metformin, died.

Others

- **Gates Foundation:** [Three Weeks, Two Drug Trials: An update on the Therapeutics Accelerator with Trevor Mundel](#). Key preliminary findings: From the existing data, which need validation in a trial, it looks like hydroxychloroquine could be a good agent for prophylaxis. Additional funding has come into the Accelerator from a range of governments, philanthropies and individuals.
- **STAT News:** [This tiny federal agency was built to respond to a crisis like coronavirus. Now that it's here, is BARDA ready?](#). While BARDA has had early successes in responding to Covid-19, drug industry officials are pressing the agency to move even faster, and to use every tool at its disposal — including controversial contracting authorities that bypass a number of government safeguards — to get money flowing to industry as soon as possible.
- **Global Citizen:** [Canada Just Announced a \\$40 Million Investment in COVID-19 Vaccine Development](#). Canada is making an urgent pledge of CA\$40 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to fund internationally coordinated research to develop a coronavirus vaccine.

DIAGNOSTICS

- **Bloomberg:** [GSK, AstraZeneca in Talks to Help U.K. Government on Virus Tests](#). U.K. pharmaceutical giants GlaxoSmithKline Plc and AstraZeneca Plc are in talks to set up a lab to explore new ways of testing for the coronavirus to help overcome shortages of diagnostic materials, according to a person with knowledge of the plans.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & ACCESS

- **South Centre:** [Covid-19 Pandemic: Access To Prevention And Treatment Is A Matter Of National And International Security](#). In an open letter to Dr Tedros, the WHO DG, Francis Gurry, the WIPO DG and Roberto Azevêdo, the WTO DG, NGO South Centre invoke 'Security Exceptions' contained in the TRIPS Agreement, by any WTO Member in order to address the current health emergency is fully justified. South Centre appealed to the DGs of the three organizations, to support countries, especially LMICs, to make use of this TRIPS provision to suspend the enforcement of any IP rights that may pose an obstacle to the procurement or local

manufacturing of the products and devices necessary to protect their populations from COVID-19.

- **EPHA:** [Will pharma commit to delivering affordable therapeutics against COVID-19?](#) Opinion by Yannis Natsis. Mr Natsis argues that the COVID pandemic offers pharma companies the possibility to restore for public trust in them. It remains to be seen if they will grasp this chance. More importantly, COVID-19 offers a real opportunity to reset and improve the way we do things such as biomedical R&D completely. The progress observed today in terms of the massive public support, steps towards progressive IP reform, open science alliances, research consortia sharing know-how etc. should not be part of COVID-19 exceptionalism but should become the new normal.
- **NZZ:** [There is no goldmine waiting for the inventors of a vaccine against COVID-19](#) (in German)
It will be at least 12 months before the first vaccine against Covid-19 will receive marketing approval (quoting T Cueni) and it is expected that government will support the development and production of a Covid-19 vaccine. The United States and Singapore have already announced such investments. The pharmaceutical industry does not expect big profits from the corona virus vaccine.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

- **Pfizer:** [Pfizer and the Pfizer Foundation](#) today announced the commitment of \$40 million in medical and charitable cash grants to help combat the global health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. and around the world. The donation addresses the urgent needs of partners who are working to slow the spread of the virus within communities and strengthen vulnerable healthcare systems against future public health threats.
- **WHO EURO:** [WHO/Europe works with European Commission to fight COVID-19 in countries across eastern Europe and the Caucasus](#). WHO/Europe is working with countries in the European Region, to ensure they have the necessary medical supplies and that the health workforce is trained to respond to COVID-19.

MANUFACTURING & SUPPLY OF MEDICINES

- **FiercePharma:** [Bill Gates is able—and willing—to lose big money funding factories for COVID-19 vaccines](#) The foundation is picking the seven “most promising” vaccine constructs and will help fund factories for all seven, he added, “even though we’ll end up picking at most two” to actually deploy. Gates said, “we need to do safety and efficacy and build manufacturing” simultaneously. He acknowledged the plan will result in the loss of “a few billion dollars” on projects that don’t pan out.
- **EMA:** [EU authorities agree new measures to support availability of medicines used in the COVID-19 pandemic](#). To help mitigate supply disruptions, the EU Executive Steering Group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events, which provides strategic leadership for urgent and coordinated action on shortages within the EU in this pandemic, is currently setting up, with the pharmaceutical industry, a system, the i-SPOC (industry single point of contact) system, to fast-track interaction on shortages between industry and the EU Executive Steering Group.

- **Financial Times:** [African health officials warn of chronic medical shortages](#). African health officials have warned of a chronic shortage of the critical care equipment needed to fight coronavirus as the outbreak gathers pace on the continent.
- **Time:** [India Has Cut Off Half the Supply of a Potential Coronavirus Treatment Touted by Trump](#). Nearly half the supply of hydroxychloroquine to the U.S. comes from makers in India, a flow that has now been abruptly stanching after the Asian nation banned exports of all forms of the malaria drug touted by President Donald Trump as a “game changer” for treating the coronavirus.

GLOBAL TRADE & ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **WTO:** [WTO issues new report on worldwide trade in COVID-19 medical products](#). The WTO Secretariat has released a new report on trade in medical products critical for the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report traces trade flows for products such as personal protective products, hospital and laboratory supplies, medicines and medical technology while providing information on their respective tariffs. Commitments made under various WTO negotiations and agreements have helped slash import tariffs on these products and improve market access, with the average tariff on COVID-19 medical products standing at 4.8%. The report also identifies markets where tariffs remain high.
- **Barrons:** [Global Trade Is in Sharp Decline. Open Supply Lines Will Be Vital to Fighting the Pandemic](#). Opinion by Roberto Azevêdo, director-general, World Trade Organization. The WTO is doing its part to help governments with the economic impact of COVID-19. Transparency about trade policies will help governments and businesses plan sourcing and production decisions. This is why I have been urging WTO members to promptly share information about Covid-related trade policies.
- **Bloomberg:** [Jamie Dimon Sees ‘Bad Recession’ and Echoes of 2008 Crisis Ahead](#). Jamie Dimon, CEO of JOPorgan, said the coronavirus pandemic will lead to a major economic downturn and stress mirroring the meltdown that nearly brought down the U.S. financial system in 2008.
- **Financial Times:** [Emerging economies set to struggle to meet debt obligations](#). As the coronavirus crisis deepens in emerging economies around the world, collapsing currencies, commodity prices, export earnings and tourism revenues threaten to shred the finances of many governments, leaving them scrambling to avoid default.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **WHO PAHO:** [PAHO Director calls for private sector cooperation in COVID-19 response in the Americas](#). The Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Carissa F. Etienne, today called for the collaboration of the private sector with countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Speaking at WEF’s COVID Action Platform Virtual Meeting for Latin America, Dr. Etienne said, “We must draw on the capacities and resources of the private health sector, including commercial and not-for-profit providers of health products and services.”
- **UN SDG Advocates:** [Statement by the Secretary-General’s SDG Advocates and SDG Advocate Alumni](#). The SD SDG Advocates and Advocates Alumni are calling for urgent global action to protect and support the most vulnerable countries. Leaders, policymakers, and the international community, in particular the G20 and

G7, must act quickly and decisively to mobilise the resources needed to stop the spread of COVID-19 in these areas, while also scaling up healthcare support and strengthening social safety nets.

- **Forbes:** [Can We Reimagine Global Health In The Post-Pandemic World?](#) No need to make a case for investing in health & calls for universal health coverage may become more and more compelling,” said [Seye Abimbola](#), Editor of *BMJ Global Health*, and professor at the University of Sydney.

PANDEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

- **Bloomberg:** [Spain’s New Virus Infections Fall as Austria Eases Lockdown](#). Spain reported the lowest number of new coronavirus cases in more than two weeks and German infections were the fewest in six days, tentative signs that the spread of the deadly disease is slowing in Europe’s worst-hit countries. While most leaders pleaded for patience, Austria became the first country in Europe to ease restrictions and Denmark may follow later.
- **The Guardian:** [Japan poised to declare state of emergency over coronavirus](#). Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe, is poised to declare a state of emergency in Tokyo and six other prefectures as early as Tuesday in an attempt to stem a sharp rise in coronavirus cases in the capital and other major cities.

WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 6 April

Statement by Dr Tedros [here](#):

- WHO has been evaluating the use of medical and non-medical masks for COVID-19 more widely. Today, WHO is issuing guidance and criteria to support countries in making that decision.
- I want to thank the Medicines Patent Pool and UNITAID for the initiative they announced last Friday to include medicines and diagnostics for COVID-19 in their licensing pool.
- I also want to thank the President of Costa Rica, President Carlos Alvarado, and the Health Minister, Daniel Salas, for their proposal to create a pool of rights to tests, medicines and vaccines, with free access or licensing on reasonable and affordable terms for all countries. Muchas gracias, Mr President. I support this proposal, and we are working with Costa Rica to finalize the details.

IFPMA statement in response to MPP/Unitaid announcement [HERE](#)

WHO: [#BeActive for the UN International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#). FIFA has joined forces with the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in supporting the #BeActive campaign launched on the UN International Day of Sport for Development and Peace to encourage people to be #HealthyAtHome as the world comes together in the fight against COVID-19, today and every day.