



The All-Party Parliamentary Group on
Vaccinations for All

Dr Philippa Whitford MP
House of Commons
London
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The Prime Minister,
No. 10 Downing Street,
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CC:

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, First Secretary of State & Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Rt Hon Anne Marie Trevelyan MP, Secretary of State for International Development

Dear Prime Minister,

Equitable access to COVID-19 diagnostics, vaccines and treatments

As the All - Party Parliamentary Group on Vaccinations for All and a cross party group of parliamentarians, we are writing today to urge you to lead the world in ensuring that COVID-19 health technologies, including diagnostics, treatments and vaccines are accessible to all by taking the practical steps suggested in this letter. We welcome the government's commitment of £250 million to fund research and development of a COVID-19 vaccine, but we are, however, concerned that without robust access and supply strategies, there are no guarantees that COVID-19 vaccines that will be available to those who need it - whether they live in the UK or in developing countries.

Monopoly protection granted to pharmaceutical companies for any new vaccines could lead to unaffordable prices and would also severely restrict the diversity of manufacturers that will be required to produce vaccines on a scale needed by the world. Furthermore, monopolies and exclusivities can prevent other researchers and companies from building on the knowledge and technologies that arise from publicly funded research. The government needs to impose public interest conditions on all UK funding committed to develop COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to ensure widespread access and transparency.

The government of Costa Rica has proposed that the World Health Organization (WHO) set up a global pooling mechanism of intellectual property rights, research and data for all COVID-19 related technologies. This would accelerate open innovation, support the scale-up and production of the necessary COVID-19 technologies, including diagnostics that the UK is in urgent need of. This pooling mechanism would also expand global capacity to meet the need for affordable products for all. This proposal has already received support from the WHO, UNITAID and civil society organisations from across the world.

We need to use global governance mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution and supply of health technologies according to public health need. Global collaboration will give us the best chance of stopping the spread of this pandemic across the world.

In the interests of global public health, we ask you to commit to the following steps:

- Impose public interest conditions on all UK funding committed to develop COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and diagnostics. These should ensure the final product is affordable, accessible and available for everyone who needs it, within the UK and developing countries. This can be done by stipulating that there should be no monopolies or exclusivities attached to any medical products developed using UK public funding. Furthermore, conditions should include full transparency in all stages of R&D, including registration and public reporting of clinical trial data, R&D costs, manufacturing costs and product prices. Any contracts agreed with companies and partners using public funds should also be made publicly available.
- Make a public statement in support of the proposal from the President and Minister of Health of Costa Rica for the WHO to create a global pooling mechanism for rights in COVID-19 related technologies for the detection, prevention, control and treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Where patents, monopolies or exclusivities already exist on medical products that are potentially useful for tackling COVID-19, the UK government should issue crown use licenses where necessary to ensure scale up of production and ensure affordable access to these products. COVID-19 is unprecedented as a public health emergency, and access to these medical products cannot be restricted by intellectual property rights.

We urge the government to take these steps, and to lead the world in ensuring equitable access to affordable technologies as we respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Philippa Whitford MP, Chair of the APPG on Vaccinations for All

Lord Crisp, Chair of the APPG on Global Health

Lord Ray Collins

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