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April 16, 2020

Dr. Francis Collins
Director, National Institutes of Health
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Collins,

We are writing today to urge you to make accessibility, affordability and open science key elements of your national strategy for developing COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.

Earlier today, *The Washington Post* reported that you were working to launch “an unprecedented, public-private partnership” to guide the development of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. The framework is expected to involve pharmaceutical corporations, government agencies, and academic research organizations. We urge you to implement safeguards to protect the public interest.

There should be no monopolies on COVID-19 medicines. Awarding exclusivities could throttle supply and allow companies to profiteer from a pandemic. We ask that you commit to nonexclusive licensing of treatments and vaccines, so that qualified manufacturers may produce them in exchange for reasonable royalties.

At minimum, you should require manufacturers benefiting from federal funds to commit to reasonable pricing. Your latest effort builds on significant taxpayer investment. In a report published earlier this year, we found that the National Institutes of Health alone had spent nearly \$700 million on coronavirus research and development since the 2002 SARS epidemic. Since then, Congress has appropriated an additional \$1.8 billion to the NIH for coronavirus research. Finally, we encourage you to work with the World Health Organization (WHO) to pool knowledge and resources for rapid development and global deployment of effective medicines. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently called for a new global collaboration against COVID-19, asking “countries, companies and research institutions to support open data, open science and open collaboration so that all people can enjoy the benefits of science and research.”

The COVID-19 response has already benefited significantly from open science. Scientists publicly shared the genome of the virus within weeks, paving the way for the development of new diagnostic tests and new therapeutic candidates. Many scientists around the world continue to share research data at record speed. This open collaboration should extend to all stages of developing and deploying new COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. Sharing scientific knowledge, licensing rights and manufacturing know-how

could accelerate our response. The global consequences of withholding this vital knowledge could be unconscionable.

We urge you to support medicine access.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Maybarduk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" being more prominent and the last name "Maybarduk" following in a similar style.

Peter Maybarduk
Access to Medicines Director
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