TOP OF MIND

Discover & Deliver: An Injection of Hope with Pfizer's Promising Vaccine Announcement

As the United States surpassed 10 million COVID-19 cases, the innovative life sciences community just provided Americans with one thing they desperately need: hope that we are on the cusp of an effective immunization against COVID-19.

On Monday, Pfizer and BioNTech released the results of the first efficiency analysis by the independent Data Monitoring Committee for their COVID vaccine candidate. The data illustrates the vaccine's efficacy rate exceeded 90% at seven days after the second dose.

Why this is a big deal: To apply for an emergency use authorization (EUA), the FDA only requires that a vaccine be 50% effective in immunizing against COVID-19. At a time when there is much to disagree about, scientists concur that the preliminary results on the vaccine – which uses a previously unproven mRNA technology – vastly exceeded expectations.

What's more: The committee did not report any serious safety concerns.

What happens next: While this announcement is promising, two more milestones must be reached before Pfizer can apply for an EUA:

1. Pfizer must produce manufacturing data to demonstrate the vaccine can be produced with consistency and quality.
2. The company must provide a median of two months of safety data following the second dose. The company anticipates that data will be available by the third week of November, a mere two weeks away.

Responding to positive data for the their vaccine candidate, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla underscored just how high the stakes have become stating, "If we're not successful, we are going to lose the billion dollars. But if we're not successful, the world is losing hope."

On the contrary, we believe the company is giving us an injection of the hope we very much need.

–Kelly Anderson Senior Director of Health and Drug Policy, Global Innovation Policy Center

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