





Discover & Deliver: Following the Science to a Vaccine

All signs point to the discovery of a coronavirus vaccine soon.

There are currently 10 vaccines in the clinical stage of development, with trials proceeding at warp speed. Last week, Moderna dosed the first patients in its Phase 2 study of its mRNA vaccine candidate. It's just one of many positive developments.

Still, a broader, larger question looms: When will we be able to vaccinate the entire population against the coronavirus?

Scientists, physicians, and industry leaders agree that the world may

need more than one coronavirus vaccine to meet global demand and adequately control the virus. Fortunately, plenty of companies have stepped up to the challenge.

Just last week, two of the world's leading biopharmaceutical companies – Novartis and Merck – announced plans to begin trials to identify potential vaccine candidates.

In partnership with two Massachusetts hospitals and the University of Pennsylvania, Novartis will investigate whether a novel genetic vaccine will adequately immunize patients against the coronavirus. While safety and efficacy testing is still underway, Novartis subsidiary AveXis will begin manufacturing the vaccine, so it's ready to distribute as soon as possible.

On the other hand, Merck will leverage its long-standing leadership in vaccine development to investigate whether two previously developed vaccines for measles and Ebola can be re-engineered to immunize against the coronavirus. Clinical trials for one of the vaccine candidates are set to begin as early as next month.

Recognizing the potential of both companies' research, the White House has selected the Novartis and Merck vaccine candidates as two of the five leading immunizations currently under development.

Although the two companies are taking different paths to product, they each embody industry expertise: Any company developing a vaccine must first and foremost follow the science. We remain confident that soon, the science will lead us where we need to go.

-Jonathan Weinberger, Executive Vice President, U.S. Chamber's Global Innovation Policy Center