



# statement

## BIOPHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO 2019-NCOV ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASE

**Geneva, 31 January 2020:** The research-based biopharmaceutical industry (IFPMA and its members) is deeply concerned by the coronavirus (2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease) epidemic. Outbreaks of novel virus infections for which there is no known effective antiviral therapy present a serious threat to public health.

IFPMA and its members stand together in support with the global community and the World Health Organization (WHO) to the current outbreak of 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease. Our industry welcomes the decision taken by the WHO to declare it as a public health emergency of international concern and believes the measures taken reflect the serious nature of this public health threat.

Many research-based biopharmaceutical companies with a presence in China have already donated funds, medicines, diagnostics and medical protective products to the Chinese authorities in an effort to support their health system.

The spread of the epidemic is a major public health threat for all affected countries; although it could disproportionately impact those countries with weaker health systems.

The declaration of the novel coronavirus as an international emergency signals the fundamental need for epidemic preparedness. This should further galvanise global collaboration with the private and public sector required for timely development of vaccines and treatments.

From our industry's perspective, there are three reasons to feel cautiously optimistic that the scientific community can respond quickly to the challenges this epidemic faces. Firstly, rapid access to the virus can speed up the process of kick starting the search for solutions, secondly, there is global recognition, funding and structures in place to share the burden of R&D. Last but not least, there are tried and tested sharing platforms in place for influenza that can be leveraged.

For example, [the GISAID Initiative](#), set up twelve years ago has played an essential role in the sharing influenza virus sequences to help researchers understand how the viruses evolve, spread and potentially become pandemics among the WHO Collaborating Centers and National Influenza Centers. This open access platform, partly funded by the private sector, is going to play an important role in centralizing the collection of the novel coronavirus sequences and will be critical in speeding up the sharing of information among scientists as well as public health authorities.

Now that the WHO has declared the coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern, their continued leadership will be crucial in helping ensure an effective and appropriate response to this public health threat. As a science-driven industry that aims to address some of the world's biggest health care challenges, the research-based pharmaceutical industry clearly has a role to play in developing new and improved medicines and vaccines to help respond to this epidemic.

### About IFPMA

[IFPMA](#) represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's 2 million employees discover, develop, and deliver medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

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