October 15, 2020

VIA EMAIL AND FOIA.GOV

Brandon Gaylord
FOIA Officer
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
Room 729H
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201
FOIARequest@hhs.gov

Robin Schofield
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
5601 Fishers Lane, Room 6G51
Rockville, MD 20892
foia@niaid.nih.gov

FOIA Officer
OSD/JS FOIA Requester Service Center
Freedom of Information Division
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155
whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.osd-js-foia-requester-service-center@mail.mil

DHA Freedom of Information Service Center
7700 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 5101
Falls Church, Virginia 22042-5101
Via FOIA.gov

Steve Lusher
FOIA Officer
Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense
Department of Defense
Steven.y.lusher.civ@mail.mil

U.S. Army
Freedom of Information Act Office
Records Management and Declassification Agency
9301 Chapek Rd., Bldg. 1458
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5605
usarmy.belvoir.hqda-oaa-ahs.mbx.rmda-foia@mail.mil

FOIA Officer
Chief of Naval Operations, DNS-36
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000
DONFOIA-PA@navy.mil

Defense Threat Reduction Agency
OGC (FOIA/Privacy Office)
8725 John J. Kingman Road, STOP 6201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6201
dtrafoiaprivacy@mail.mil

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officers:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and the implementing regulations of your agency, American Oversight, Lower Drug Prices Now, and Accountable Pharma, a project of Accountable.US, make the following request for records.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes, COVID-19, has been declared a public health emergency at both the national and international levels. Since late 2019, the virus has spread across the globe, sickened more than 38 million people, and resulted in more one million deaths worldwide.[1] Of particular concern to the public is whether any treatments or vaccines will be safe,[2] and affordable for all who need them.[3] These questions have taken particular prominence in the context of decisions regarding federal investment in coronavirus drug and vaccine development,[4] and the federal government's willingness to fast-track the approval of coronavirus vaccines.[5] Concerningly, however, recent reports indicate that the federal government has routed recent vaccine funding awards through an intermediary—Advanced Technology International, Inc.—thus bypassing traditional contracting transparency and oversight mechanisms.[6]

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[1] *Coronavirus Map: Tracking the Global Outbreak*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 14, 8:20 AM), https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/world/coronavirus-maps.html.
[2] *See, e.g.*, Bill Chappell, *9 Drugmakers Sign Safety Pledge in Rush to Develop Coronavirus Vaccine*, NPR (Sept. 8, 2020, 12:37 PM), https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/09/08/910671322/9-drugmakers-sign-safety-pledge-in-race-to-develop-covid-19-vaccine.
[3] *See, e.g.*, Sarah Karlin-Smith, *How the Drug Industry Got Its Way on the Coronavirus*, Politico (Mar. 5, 2020, 5:28 PM), https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/05/coronavirus-drug-industry-prices-122412; Nicholas Florko, *Progressives Push Trump Administration to Ensure a Future Coronavirus Vaccine Is Affordable*, Stat, Mar. 5, 2020, https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/05/progressives-trump-coronavirus-vaccine-affordable/; Isabel Togoh, *Health Secretary Alex Azar Refuses to Guarantee Coronavirus Vaccine Would Be Affordable for All*, Forbes (Feb. 27, 2020, 8:30 AM), https://www.forbes.com/sites/isabeltogoh/2020/02/27/health-secretary-alex-azar-refuses-to-guarantee-coronavirus-vaccine-would-be-affordable-for-all/#f772d54490c3.
[4] *See, e.g.*, Mariana Mazzucato & Azzi Momenghalibaf, *Drug Companies Will Make a Killing from Coronavirus*, N.Y. Times, Mar. 18, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/opinion/coronavirus-vaccine-cost.html.
[5] Sarah O'Brien, *FDA Willing to Fast Track Coronavirus Vaccine Before Phase Three Trials End*, CNBC (Aug. 30, 2020 10:37 AM), https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/30/fda-willing-to-fast-track-coronavirus-vaccine-before-phase-three-trials.html.
[6] Sydney Lupkin, *How Operation Warp Speed's Big Vaccine Contracts Could Stay Secret*, NPR (Sept. 29, 2020, 3:40 PM), https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/09/29/917899357/how-operation-warp-speeds-big-vaccine-contracts-could-stay-secrets.

American Oversight, Lower Drug Prices Now, and Accountable Pharma (Requesters) seek to shed light on the administration's handling of these issues.

Requested Records

We request that your agency produce the following records within twenty business days:

> Complete copies (including any attachments) of the contract(s), amendment(s), memorandum of understanding(s), or other written agreement(s) between (a) Advanced Technology International, Inc. (ATI) and (b) the entities listed below regarding the development of coronavirus vaccines or therapeutics:
>
> 1. Novavax, Inc. (including but not limited to the approximately $1.6 billion agreement announced by HHS on July 7, 2020[7])
> 2. Pfizer (including but not limited to the approximately $1.95 billion agreement with Pfizer and/or BioNTech announced by HHS on July 22, 2020[8])
> 3. BioNTech (including but not limited to the approximately $1.95 billion agreement with Pfizer and/or BioNTech announced by HHS on July 22, 2020[9])
> 4. Sanofi Pasteur and/or its subsidiary Protein Sciences (collectively, Sanofi) (including but not limited to the approximately $2.04 billion award to Sanofi in conjunction with GlaxoSmithKline announced on

[7] Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., HHS, DOD Collaborate with Novavax to Produce Millions of COVID-19 Investigational Vaccine Doses in Commercial-Scale Manufacturing Demonstration Projects (July 7, 2020), https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/07/07/hhs-dod-collaborate-novavax-produce-millions-covid-19-investigational-vaccine-doses-commercial-scale-manufacturing-demonstration-projects.html.

[8] Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., U.S. Government Engages Pfizer to Produce Millions of Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine (July 22, 2020), https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/07/22/us-government-engages-pfizer-produce-millions-doses-covid-19-vaccine.html#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20Health,vaccine's%20successful%20manufacture%20and%20approval.

[9] *Id.*; *see also* Press Release, Business Wire, Pfizer and BioNTech Announce an Agreement with U.S. Government for up to 600 Million Doses of mRNA-based Vaccine Candidate Against SARS-CoV-2, https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200722005438/en/.

July 31, 2020,[10] and any related awards or agreements with Sanofi that preceded this announcement[11])
5. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) (including but not limited to the approximately $2.04 billion award to GSK in conjunction with Sanofi announced on July 31, 2020[12])
6. Johnson & Johnson and/or its subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals Companies (including but not limited to the approximately $1 billion award announced on August 5, 2020[13])

Although reports indicate that your agency may not be a party to these contracts, instead relying on ATI as an intermediary, the Requesters believe that your agency may nonetheless possess copies of any contracts or agreements between ATI and the listed companies above, as your agency is ultimately funding the awards provided to the listed companies. To the extent that the agency does not presently possess the contracts, that indicates that ATI is performing essential government functions and your agency has control over the contracts for purposes of FOIA.

At a minimum, a search for responsive records should include a search of the records of officials within the offices listed below:

U.S. Department of Defense

a. Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense (JPEO-CBRND; JPM CBRN)[14]
b. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Research and Development branch within Chemical/Biological Technologies Department (DTRA-RD-CBM)
c. U.S. Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground

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[10] Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., HHS, DOD Partner With Sanofi and GSK on Commercial-Scale Manufacturing Demonstration Project to Produce Millions of COVID-19 Investigational Vaccine Doses (July 31, 2020), https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/07/31/hhs-dod-partner-sanofi-gsk-commercial-scale-manufacturing-demonstration-project-produce-millions-covid-19-investigational-vaccine-doses.html.

[11] *See BARDA and Sanofi Prepare for Studies of COVID-19 Vaccine*, MedicalCountermeasures.gov, https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/newsroom/2020/psc-sanofi-recombinant/.

[12] Press Release, *supra* note 10.

[13] Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., HHS, DOD Collaborate with Johnson & Johnson to Produce Millions of COVID-19 Investigational Vaccine Doses (Aug. 5, 2020), https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/08/05/hhs-dod-collaborate-with-johnson-and-johnson-to-produce-millions-of-covid-19-investigational-vaccine-doses.html.

[14] American Oversight believes JPEO-CBRND is best positioned to determine where responsive records may reside. However, we believe that responsive records may be found in the office of Dr. Matthew Hepburn, and so an adequate search would include, among other locations, Dr. Hepburn's office.

d. U.S. Army Contracting Command – New Jersey
e. U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Fleet Supply Operations and Services[15]
f. Any offices for lead agency points of contact on vaccine contracts, as reflected in the Operation Warp Speed organizational chart published by *STAT*, or more recent organizational charts[16]

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

a. Office of the Director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)
b. Office of the Deputy Director of BARDA's Division of Manufacturing, Facilities, and Engineering
c. Office of the Director of BARDA's Influenza and Emerging Infectious Diseases Division
d. Office of the Director of the Dale and Betty Bumpers Vaccine Research Center within the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
e. Any offices for lead agency points of contact on vaccine contracts, as reflected in the Operation Warp Speed organizational chart published by *STAT*, or more recent organizational charts[17]

Please provide all responsive records from June 1, 2020, through the date of the search.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Requesters seek a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public in a significant way. Moreover, the request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes.

We request a waiver of fees because disclosure of the requested information is "in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of operations or activities of the government."[18] The public has a significant interest in the

[15] American Oversight believes U.S. Fleet Forces Command is best positioned to determine where responsive records may reside. However, we believe that responsive records may be found in the office of Mr. Mark Runstrom, Director, Fleet Supply Operations/Services, and so an adequate search would include, among other locations, Mr. Runstrom's office.

[16] Nicholas Florko, *New Document Reveals Scope and Structure of Operation Warp Speed and Underscores Vast Military Involvement*, STAT, Sept. 28, 2020, https://www.statnews.com/2020/09/28/operation-warp-speed-vast-military-involvement/. The organizational chart published here identifies individuals by last name who appear to be the point of contacts for specific vaccine manufacturers receiving funding under Operation Warp Speed.

[17] *Id.*

[18] 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii).

federal government's response to the coronavirus, particularly its efforts to ensure the development and distribution of a safe, effective, and affordable vaccine. Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the federal government, including whether and to what extent it is requiring drug and vaccine developers to ensure products developed with taxpayer dollars are safe, accessible, and affordable to everyone who needs them.[19] Furthermore, Requesters will make the responses agencies provide to FOIA requests publicly available, and the public's understanding of the government's activities would be enhanced through the Requesters' analysis and publication of these records.

This request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes.[20] As explained below, none of the Requesters have a commercial purpose and the release of the information is not in their financial interest.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, American Oversight does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in American Oversight's financial interest. American Oversight's mission is to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.[21]

American Oversight also has demonstrated its commitment to the public disclosure of documents and creation of editorial content through numerous substantive analyses posted to its website.[22] Examples reflecting this commitment to the public disclosure of documents and the creation of editorial content include the posting of records related to an ethics waiver received by a senior Department of Justice attorney and an analysis of what those records demonstrated regarding the Department's process for issuing such waivers;[23] posting records received as part of American Oversight's "Audit the Wall" project to gather and analyze information related to the administration's proposed construction of a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, and analyses of what those

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[19] *See supra* notes 2–5.
[20] *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii).
[21] American Oversight currently has approximately 15,600 page likes on Facebook and 105,400 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/ (last visited Oct. 14, 2020); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, https://twitter.com/weareoversight (last visited Oct. 14, 2020).
[22] *News*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/blog.
[23] *DOJ Records Relating to Solicitor General Noel Francisco's Recusal*, AMERICAN OVERSIGHT, https://www.americanoversight.org/document/doj-civil-division-response-noel-francisco-compliance; *Francisco & the Travel Ban: What We Learned from the DOJ Documents*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/francisco-the-travel-ban-what-we-learned-from-the-doj-documents.

records reveal;[24] posting records regarding potential self-dealing at the Department of Housing & Urban Development and related analysis;[25] posting records and analysis relating to the federal government's efforts to sell nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia;[26] and posting records and analysis regarding the Department of Justice's decision in response to demands from Congress to direct a U.S. Attorney to undertake a wide-ranging review and make recommendations regarding criminal investigations relating to the President's political opponents and allegations of misconduct by the Department of Justice itself and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.[27]

Lower Drug Prices Now is a project of the Sixteen Thirty Fund, a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization with no commercial purpose. The release of the information requested is not in Lower Drug Prices Now's financial interest. Its mission is to educate the public about the importance of affordable and accessible prescription drugs and about the role federally funded research plays in the development of new drugs. Any information gathered through this request will be used to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media.

Accountable Pharma is a project of Accountable.US. In May 2020, Accountable.US was recognized as a not for profit, 501(c)(3) organization, with the Internal Revenue Service. Accordingly, Accountable.US does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in Accountable.US's financial interest. Accountable.US's mission is to ensure public officials are advancing policies in the public's interest, not for special interests.

Accordingly, the Requesters qualify for a fee waiver.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

In connection with its request for records, we provide the following guidance regarding the scope of the records sought and the search and processing of records:

- Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics.

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[24] *See generally Audit the Wall*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/audit-the-wall; *see, e.g.*, *Border Wall Investigation Report: No Plans, No Funding, No Timeline, No Wall*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/border-wall-investigation-report-no-plans-no-funding-no-timeline-no-wall.

[25] *Documents Reveal Ben Carson Jr.'s Attempts to Use His Influence at HUD to Help His Business*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/documents-reveal-ben-carson-jr-s-attempts-to-use-his-influence-at-hud-to-help-his-business.

[26] *Investigating the Trump Administration's Efforts to Sell Nuclear Technology to Saudi Arabia*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/investigating-the-trump-administrations-efforts-to-sell-nuclear-technology-to-saudi-arabia.

[27] *Sessions' Letter Shows DOJ Acted on Trump's Authoritarian Demand to Investigate Clinton*, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/sessions-letter.

- In conducting your search, please understand the terms "record," "document," and "information" in their broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions.

- Our request for records includes any attachments to those records or other materials enclosed with those records when they were previously transmitted. To the extent that an email is responsive to our request, our request includes all prior messages sent or received in that email chain, as well as any attachments to the email.

- Please search all relevant records or systems containing records regarding agency business. Do not exclude records regarding agency business contained in files, email accounts, or devices in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts or text messages. Records of official business conducted using unofficial systems or stored outside of official files are subject to the Federal Records Act and FOIA.[28] It is not adequate to rely on policies and procedures that require officials to move such information to official systems within a certain period of time; we have a right to records contained in those files even if material has not yet been moved to official systems or if officials have, by intent or through negligence, failed to meet their obligations.[29]

- Please use all tools available to your agency to conduct a complete and efficient search for potentially responsive records. Agencies are subject to government-wide requirements to manage agency information electronically,[30] and many agencies have adopted the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Capstone program, or similar policies. These systems provide options for searching emails and other electronic records in a manner that is reasonably likely to be more complete than just searching individual custodian files. For example, a custodian may have deleted a responsive email from his or her email program, but your agency's archiving tools may capture that email under Capstone. At the same time, custodian searches are still necessary; agencies may

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[28] *See Competitive Enter. Inst. v. Office of Sci. & Tech. Policy*, 827 F.3d 145, 149–50 (D.C. Cir. 2016); *cf. Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Kerry*, 844 F.3d 952, 955–56 (D.C. Cir. 2016).
[29] *See Competitive Enter. Inst. v. Office of Sci. & Tech. Policy*, No. 14-cv-765, slip op. at 8 (D.D.C. Dec. 12, 2016).
[30] Presidential Memorandum—Managing Government Records, 76 Fed. Reg. 75,423 (Nov. 28, 2011), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/28/presidential-memorandum-managing-government-records; Office of Mgmt. & Budget, Exec. Office of the President, Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments & Independent Agencies, "Managing Government Records Directive," M-12-18 (Aug. 24, 2012), https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/m-12-18.pdf.

not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in personal email accounts.

- In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically why it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

- Please take appropriate steps to ensure that records responsive to this request are not deleted by the agency before the completion of processing for this request. If records potentially responsive to this request are likely to be located on systems where they are subject to potential deletion, including on a scheduled basis, please take steps to prevent that deletion, including, as appropriate, by instituting a litigation hold on those records.

Conclusion

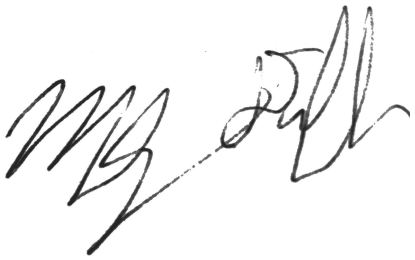
If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request for records or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss this request. We welcome an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, we can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email. Alternatively, please provide responsive material in native format or in PDF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

We look forward to working with your agency on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, please contact Christine Monahan of American Oversight at

foia@americanoversight.org or (202) 869-5244. Also, if our request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making such a determination.

Sincerely,



Myles Duffy
Deputy Director
Lower Drug Prices Now

Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight

Kyle Herrig
President
Accountable.US