
The Private Sectors' Response to COVID-19

Center Forward Basics

March 2020

Overview

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread, the United States federal government has passed three economic relief bills and state and local governments are implementing various safety measures to help the American public. Many companies also are offering services to help their employees, the American workforce, and local communities as they follow the recommendations of public health organizations. In this basic, we will explore how the private sector is working to aid small businesses, develop a treatment and vaccine for the coronavirus, and help vulnerable Americans.

Small Businesses

Because cities and states have placed restrictions on dining in restaurants, many small, local restaurants will experience a reduction in business and a negative cash flow. In order to help these restaurants, Uber Eats has introduced initiatives that include eliminating all delivery fees for small, independent restaurants and creating a daily payment option to create an immediate source of cash flow. Uber Eats has also committed 300,000 free meals to health care workers and first responders in the U.S. and Canada. Additionally, Credit Unions across America are offering loan modifications and fee waivers, creating new loan products to help small businesses, and making donations to community organizations.

Larger corporations are also introducing programs to help small businesses retain their employees and stay afloat. For example, Facebook plans to roll out a \$100 million small business grants program to support up to 30,000 eligible small businesses in 30 countries that have been impacted by the coronavirus. Target also plans to commit \$10 million to expand relief and assistance to team members, local communities, national organizations and global response organizations helping respond to the coronavirus. Specifically, these funds will go to team members who are most impacted by the virus, local community foundations focused on assisting vulnerable populations, national nonprofits such as Feeding America, and organizations such as UNICEF that are providing critical medical equipment to regions around the world. Takeda will donate \$4 million to the American Red Cross to help ensure the organization can deliver support and services nationwide and maintain a sufficient supply of blood to help patients.

Health Care

Across the United States, many health care, pharmaceutical, and insurance companies are offering a wide range of services to aid their employees and Americans. Bayer is donating one million health and wellness products, including over-the-counter medications and multivitamins, to underserved communities. Health insurance providers are activating emergency plans to ensure that Americans have access to the prevention, testing, and treatment needed. For example, Anthem, Aetna, Cigna, UnitedHealthcare, and Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's (BCBSA) affiliated health plans will waive copays, coinsurance, and deductibles for the diagnostic tests related to the coronavirus. Additionally, Cigna is waiving all patient cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatment, including those covered under Medicare or other applicable state regulations. Many insurance companies and all 36 locally based, independently operated BCBS companies and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Federal Employee Program® announced expanded coverage for telehealth services, though specifics of coverage vary by company. Many

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Center Forward brings together members of Congress, not-for profits, academic experts, trade associations, corporations and unions to find common ground. Our mission: to give centrist allies the information they need to craft common sense solutions, and provide those allies the support they need to turn those ideas into results.

In order to meet our challenges we need to put aside the partisan bickering that has gridlocked Washington and come together to find common sense solutions.

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insurance plans are also providing free home delivery for 90-day supplies of prescriptions or waiving prescription refill limits on maintenance medications. Specifically, the U.S. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working with more than 180 pharmaceutical manufacturers to evaluate the drug supply chain and ensure that drug shortages are avoided. Additionally, Anthem is working to develop a mobile app to help individuals quickly and safely evaluate their symptoms and assess their risk of having COVID-19.

As a parallel effect, biopharmaceutical companies are developing solutions to help diagnose and treat individuals with COVID-19. Many companies have research and development for potential treatments and vaccines underway or are providing donations of medicines and critical medical supplies. BIO members are working closely with U.S. government agencies, non-governmental entities, and the World Health Organization to identify pressing needs in vaccination, diagnostics, antivirals, and other treatments. Innovative drug developers and biopharmaceutical companies are working to develop a vaccine and launch clinical trials.

Many pharmaceutical companies are working to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, Bayer has donated 3 million tablets of Resochin (chloroquine phosphate) to the U.S. Government. New data from initial preclinical and evolving clinical research conducted in China, while limited, shows potential for the use of Resochin in treating patients with COVID-19 infection. AmerisourceBergen is working with the suppliers of hydroxychloroquine and other treatments being used to treat COVID-19 to secure products and distribute to customers. Lilly has joined efforts with AbCellera to co-develop antibodies for the potential treatment and prevention of COVID-19. Additionally, Lilly scientists are partnering with the Indiana State Department of Health, with support from the FDA, to accelerate testing in Indiana for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Lilly will not accept payment from government agencies, hospitals, insurance companies or patients for conducting or analyzing tests. Lilly also joined a cross-industry collaboration and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate the development, manufacture and delivery of vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments for COVID-19 in response to the pandemic. Novartis has announced a broad range of initiatives to respond to COVID-19 Pandemic. Efforts include the creation of a \$20 million global fund to support impacted communities and entering into new collaborative research efforts such as the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator, coordinated by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and MasterCard, as well as a COVID-19 directed partnership organized by the Innovative Medicines Initiative. The company has also made available a set of compounds from its libraries that it considers suitable for in vitro antiviral testing and is evaluating its existing products to see if any could be repurposed beyond their approved indications. The company will also donate up to 130 million doses of generic hydroxychloroquine to support the global COVID-19 pandemic response if clinical trials for hydroxychloroquine show efficacy with respect to treatment of COVID-19. Takeda is developing TAK-888, a plasma-based therapy that shows promise in treating COVID-19. They will also be studying whether Takeda's currently marketed, and pipeline products may be effective treatments for infected patients. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19.

Many other developers and manufacturers of generic and biosimilar companies are working to help during this crisis. For example, 3M is doubling its global output of N95 respirators, Direct Relief is providing protective equipment and essential medical items to health care workers and organizations in areas with confirmed COVID-19 cases. Amneal, Sandoz, Sun Pharmaceutical, and Teva are donating hydroxychloroquine sulfate to hospitals, ongoing clinical trials, and the Strategic National Stockpile.

Technology

Many technology and social media companies are introducing various programs to support the public. Softbank has donated 1.4 million N95 respirator masks to New York. Apple has also pledged to donate 9 million industrial masks to health care workers in the United States and Europe. Additionally, Apple has released a new COVID-19 website and app that were created in partnership with the CDC, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and FEMA. The COVID-19 app and website allow users to answer a series of questions around risk factors, recent exposure and symptoms for themselves or a loved one. In turn, they will receive CDC recommendations on next steps, including guidance on social distancing and self-isolating, how to closely monitor symptoms, whether or not a test is recommended at this time, and when to contact a medical provider. Facebook also introduced a coronavirus information center that will appear at the top of users' news feeds. The virtual information center will include updates from health organizations and encourage individuals to practice social distancing. Facebook is offering \$1

million in small grants to support local news organizations covering COVID-19 in the U.S. and Canada and \$1 million in grant support for fact-checking organizations around the world.

Telecommunications and Internet

The Federal Communications Commission has introduced The Keep Americans Connected Pledge. This pledge promises not to terminate service to any resident or small business customer, opens Wi-Fi hotspots to Americans, and waives any late fees related to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to signing the FCC's pledge, both Comcast and AT&T have promised to help low-income American families remain connected. Comcast is helping millions of low-income Americans by offering two months of free Internet to new Internet Essentials (IE) customers and by increasing the speed from 15/2 MBPS to 25/3 MBPS for all new and existing IE customers. The company also opened its Xfinity WiFi network nationally for free and is providing unlimited data to its customers at no cost. For eligible university students who live in Comcast service areas and do not have access to the Internet, Xfinity is offering them a Visa prepaid card worth two months of Internet service. In order to provide additional relief and support, AT&T will offer unlimited home internet to customers and Internet access to qualifying limited income families for \$10 a month. AT&T will also offer conference calls and video conferencing with Cisco Webex Meetings for businesses, universities, and schools to stay connected.

Conclusion

Many companies have shifted their production efforts from their usual products to ventilators, hand sanitizer, and masks for health care workers around the United States. For example, 3M and Ford are making 35 million air purifying respirators per month, General Motors is working to make ventilators, Fanatics is using the fabric from MLB jerseys to make one million masks and gowns, and HanesBrands is producing medical masks. OYO is offering free hotel rooms to doctors, nurses, and medical first responders at 300 hotels in the U.S. These are just some examples of American business leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators working to implement programs to help their local communities, provide relief to the most vulnerable, and deploy their resources to combat the coronavirus.

Links to Other Resources

- AAM - [COVID-19: This Week's Initiatives From the Generic and Biosimilars Industry](#)
- AHIP - [Health Insurance Providers Respond To Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Anthem - [Anthem Issues Updates Regarding COVID-19 Testing and Care to Support Affiliated Health Plan Members](#)
- America's Credit Unions - [Credit unions make a difference when they're needed most](#)
- AmerisourceBergen - [AmerisourceBergen Response to COVID-19](#)
- Apple - [Apple releases new COVID-19 app and website based on CDC guidance](#)
- AT&T - [Keeping Americans Connected Pledge](#)
- Business Roundtable - [Business Roundtable COEs are Responding to COVID-19](#)
- Cigna - [Cigna Takes Additional Actions to Protect Customers and Communities Against COVID-19](#)
- Comcast - [Comcast Announces Comprehensive COVID-19 Response to Help Keep Americans Connected to the Internet](#)
- CNBC - [Apple updated Siri to help people who ask if they have the coronavirus](#)

- CNBC - [Facebook is encouraging everyone to take social distancing serious](#)
- CNET - [Apple to donate 2 million masks to US coronavirus response, Pence says](#)
- CVS Health - [CVS Health response to the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- Facebook - [Facebook Small Business Grants Program](#)
- FCC - [Chairman Pai Launches the Keep Americans Connected Pledge](#)
- HHS - [HHS accepts donations of medicine to Strategic National Stockpile as possible treatments for COVID-19 patients](#)
- Lilly - [Lilly's Global COVID-19 Response](#)
- NCTA - [Responding to the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- Novartis - [Novartis announces broad range of initiatives to respond to COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- PhRMA - [The Latest on the Biopharmaceutical Industry's Efforts to Beat Coronavirus](#)
- Softbank - [Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Takeda - [Supporting Our Communities During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- Target - [Target's coronavirus response](#)