

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

At Tuesday's HELP Committee hearing, I asked FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn and Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Brett Giroir a question: When a COVID-19 vaccine is approved will it be made available to everyone in America without cost?

Unfortunately, they were unable to respond with a simple yes or no answer. I believe that the American people know what the answer to that question should be, and that is **YES**.

Making sure that a future COVID-19 vaccine will be provided to all without cost is not only the right thing to do from a moral perspective, it is also good public policy. Public health officials all agree that we will not truly overcome this horrific pandemic until a vaccine is made available to everyone.

With over 80,000 COVID-19 deaths already, and more to come in the future, the vaccine must be made available to every man, woman and child without cost. Nobody in America should unnecessarily die from the virus because they cannot afford a vaccine.

Today, I am writing to ask you the same question that I asked at the HELP hearing: Will the Administration guarantee that once a vaccine is approved by the FDA it will be made available to everyone in this country free of charge?

In my view, it would be morally unacceptable to allow the pharmaceutical industry to use this pandemic as another opportunity to make huge profits on the backs of people who can least afford it. The American people should not be forced to pay obscene prices for a vaccine that is needed to keep them alive.

I look forward to hearing from you on this vitally important issue as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator