**Headline:** The So-Called Moderna Vaccine Is a Publicly Funded Miracle

By Alex Lawson

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**[Article Body:]**

The so-called “Moderna” vaccine is a miracle of science. It is [nearly 100 percent](https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/moderna-covid-19-vaccine-frequently-asked-questions) effective at preventing serious illness and death. By vaccinating the world, we can end the COVID-19 pandemic and save millions of lives.

The only problem? We don’t have nearly enough doses. But there’s a solution: If the Biden administration allowed generic manufacturers, not just Moderna, to manufacture the vaccine at scale, the United States would no longer suffer from a vaccine shortage.

This step is entirely appropriate, because the “Moderna” vaccine wasn’t developed by Moderna. The research and development of the vaccine were [paid for](https://www.citizen.org/news/statement-moderna-vaccine-belongs-to-the-people/) by our U.S. taxpayer dollars, to the tune of $2.5 billion. In fact, Dolly Parton put more money into the vaccine than the company it is named after when she donated $1 million to the effort.

This isn’t Modern’s vaccine. It is the people’s vaccine, and it’s time for the law to reflect that.

Currently, Moderna has a government-granted monopoly on the vaccine. That means that they are the only company allowed to manufacture it. The only reason there is a shortage of vaccines is that we allow this one company to create that shortage. It is a nonsensical and corrupt situation.

That needs to change immediately.

There’s no need for the Biden administration to grant generic licensing on every vaccine, although legally they certainly could. Pfizer, and any other vaccines like Johnson & Johnson that ultimately get approved by the FDA, can keep their monopolies. But we need a public option, and that’s the so-called Moderna vaccine that we funded with our public dollars.

Just vaccinating everyone in the United States isn’t good enough. Vaccinating the entire world is both a moral imperative and necessary to end the pandemic. There’s no other way to produce vaccines at the scale we need.

Biden administration officials say that they are “[actively exploring](https://twitter.com/ddayen/status/1354475081733292033)” using the Defense Production Act to license the vaccine to generic manufacturers. That is encouraging, but with the new and more contagious COVID-19 variants quickly gaining steam, time is of the essence.

We could face another global shutdown from a new vaccine-resistant variant of the virus unless we successfully arrest the pandemic with an effective vaccine today.

The government should never have granted Moderna a monopoly over our vaccine. The best time to license the people’s vaccine to generic manufacturers was months ago. The second best time is right now.