

Coronavirus: we're all involved!

The pharmaceutical industry, which employs around 100,000 people in France, is fully committed to combating the coronavirus. From the very beginning of the pandemic threat, pharmaceutical companies and their industry body - Leem - have been working closely with central government on two fronts: securing supplies of drugs and finding therapeutic solutions.

As the pandemic accelerates, pharmaceutical companies intend to step up the support they are already giving to the national effort, and facilitate voluntary participation in the French Health Reserve by their medical, pharmaceutical and healthcare-qualified employees.

The absolute priority is to ensure that patients, whether inpatients or outpatients, continue to have access to the drugs they need

As soon as the first warning signals came from China, our pharmaceutical companies put in place the necessary measures to ensure security of medicine supplies in France. Leem is in permanent contact with our health authorities, providing them with information regarding the origin of raw materials and the supply stress risks resulting from containment measures implemented in other countries.

No shortages have yet been reported, but Leem is monitoring developments extremely closely in the knowledge that the situation may change depending on how long the global health crisis continues and the rate at which it expands. Our members are continually monitoring their supply chains and working hard to identify risks and the measures that need to be implemented in order to ensure security of supplies in the market. Most of these companies have backup drug production facilities in Europe or hold enough stocks to cope with containment measures.

A race against time to identify and design therapeutic solutions

At the same time, pharmaceutical companies are taking part in, and supporting the development of, research programmes in conjunction with the health authorities and international academic teams to accelerate the development of Covid-19 therapies, diagnostics and vaccines.

Infectious disease specialists are currently testing a number of drugs, including molecules that have already proven their efficacy for other viral diseases, such as the antivirals already used to treat HIV/AIDS, and those that have been used to combat Ebola. Whether in partnership with the authorities or as part of public/private research consortia, our members have announced the launch of several Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine development

programmes. The aim here is to provide a virus gene sequence that will enable clinical trials to be conducted within 16 weeks, and to fund research and development programmes on candidate vaccines.

Normally, the vaccine development cycle can take several years. But given the circumstances we now find ourselves in, pharmaceutical companies are accelerating the pace of their research and shortening development lead times. They are working with the relevant European and global public health authorities, including the European Union, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) and the Chinese public health authorities. They are stepping up their involvement in public/private research consortia, such as the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

Leem is providing support for those pharmaceutical company doctors and pharmacists who join the French Health Reserve.

Leem commends the commitment shown by all the health professionals who are working tirelessly alongside public authorities to stem the spread of the virus.

Given the very rapid acceleration of the pandemic, Leem and its 260 member companies unreservedly support those among the approximately 10,000 doctors and pharmacists who work in the pharmaceutical industry and make the commitment to work with the French Health Reserve to boost the treatment capacity of the health services and guarantee that the entire population receives the best-possible care.

Lastly, Leem calls on every member of the French population, regardless of gender or age, to scrupulously respect the instructions given to push back effectively and collectively against the pandemic.

“From the quest to find a therapeutic solution to ensuring ongoing supplies of drugs for the entire population of France and the unprecedented mobilisation of their employees to reinforce front line medical teams, our pharmaceutical companies are working hand in hand with central government to lead this exceptionally large-scale battle to protect the health of an entire nation,” says Leem President Frédéric Collet.

Links for further information:

The website of the French pharmaceutical companies association: www.leem.org

The website of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA): <https://www.efpia.eu/>

The website of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (IFPMA): <https://www.ifpma.org/>

The website of the French Ministry for Social Affairs and Health:
<https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/soins-et-maladies/maladies/maladies-infectieuses/coronavirus/coronavirus-questions-reponses>

Press contacts:

Stéphanie Bou - Tel.: +33 (0)1 45 03 88 38 - e-mail: sbou@leem.org/ Virginie Pautre - Tel.: +33 (0)1 45 03 88 87

– e-mail: vpautre@leem.org / Elisa Mahdadi - emahdadi@leem.org