

Friday, April 17, 2020

The Honorable Stephen M. Hahn, M.D.
Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

Dear Commissioner Hahn,

As our nation works to defend itself from the deadly Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), we write to express our gratitude to you and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for all of its efforts to combat the virus and to ask for your help to ensure that Americans will have access to vaccines that are free from any connection to abortion.

To be clear, we strongly support efforts to develop an effective, safe, and widely available vaccine as quickly as possible. However, we also strongly urge our federal government to ensure that fundamental moral principles are followed in the development of such vaccines, most importantly, the principle that human life is sacred and should never be exploited.

We are aware that, among the dozens of vaccines currently in development, some are being produced using old cell lines that were created from the cells of aborted babies. For example, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has a substantial contract from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and is working on a vaccine that is being produced using one of these ethically problematic cell lines. Thankfully, other vaccines such as those being developed by Sanofi Pasteur, Inovio, and the John Paul II Medical Research Institute utilize cell lines not connected to unethical procedures and methods.

It is critically important that Americans have access to a vaccine that is produced ethically: no American should be forced to choose between being vaccinated against this potentially deadly virus and violating his or her conscience. Fortunately, there is no need to use ethically problematic cell lines to produce a COVID vaccine, or any vaccine, as other cell lines or processes that do not involve cells from abortions are available and are regularly being used to produce other vaccines.

Commissioner Hahn, we urgently and respectfully implore you to not only ensure that Americans will have access to a COVID vaccine that is free of ethical concerns, but to encourage and incentivize pharmaceutical companies to use only ethical cell lines or processes for producing vaccines.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of Kansas City, KS
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Doctrine

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler
Bishop of Marquette
Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee on Healthcare Issues

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

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Students for Life of America

Lila Rose
President & Founder
Live Action

CC: President Donald J. Trump

Vice President Mike Pence

Alex M. Azar II, Secretary of Health and Human Services