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May 20, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Azar:

On Friday, May 15th, President Trump [announced](#) that Dr. Moncef Slaoui had been appointed chief advisor to the Administration's Operation Warp Speed program to "accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics."

Dr. Slaoui is a drug industry veteran who spent nearly thirty years at GlaxoSmithKline before leaving to join the biotech venture capital firm Medicxi and joining several boards connected to the pharmaceutical industry, including Moderna. He has ties to Lonza, SutroVax, Artizan Biosciences, Brie Biosciences, Intellia Therapeutics, Galvani Bioelectronics, PhRMA, and BIO, and [since 2016 has received over \\$13.5 million](#) from major drug companies.

After [reports emerged](#) that Dr. Slaoui held over \$10 million in stock options from Moderna, a company that has received \$483 million from the federal government to develop its COVID-19 vaccine and that this week [announced](#) promising results that boosted its stock over 20%, Dr. Slaoui initially [claimed](#) in a tweet that "there is no conflict of interest, and there never has been" before he deleted the tweet and [HHS announced](#) that he will, in fact, fully divest from Moderna.

Given the scale of this crisis and magnitude of the potential gains for any drug company that successfully develops a vaccine, we believe that HHS and Dr. Slaoui should take additional steps to maintain public trust, transparency, and public accountability to eliminate the presence or appearance of conflicts of interests that could impact his work.

Specifically, we request that the following information be made public:

- Whether Dr. Slaoui forfeited his unvested options in Moderna, as [industry experts indicate would be expected](#), or if the terms were changed to allow him to sell the full amount;

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- Clarification regarding whether Dr. Slaoui has been brought on as a federal employee, a [Special Government Employee](#), an independent contractor, an advisory committee representative, or some other designation;
- If Dr. Slaoui has been designated a Special Government Employee, whether or not he will be filing a public financial disclosure report;
- If Dr. Slaoui will not be filing a public financial disclosure report, his Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Form 450 and any OGE-approved supplements, with any appropriate redactions;
- The results of any ethics reviews as well as any actions taken by Dr. Slaoui to resolve conflicts of interest beyond what has been released regarding his Moderna stock option divestment, including any conflict of interest waivers granted.

Furthermore, given Dr. Slaoui's close financial and professional ties to the drug industry as well as the unique circumstances, scale of his role, and clear public interest in ensuring that this process is free from even the perception of conflict of interest, we request that Dr. Slaoui commit to a two year cooling off period in which he would be prohibited from receiving financial compensation from pharmaceutical companies with any interests in vaccine development, manufacturing, or distribution.

Sincerely,

Kyle Herrig
President, Accountable.US