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Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Mr. Lee's Commentary and Dairy

Inside C2

What monopoly case? DOJ lawsuit unlikely to knock Google from pole position

A Google sign is pictured on a Google building in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Department of Justice and 11 states filed their long-awaited competition lawsuit against Google on Tuesday - the most momentous antitrust showdown since Washington took on Microsoft Corp MSFT.O more than two decades ago - but experts warn that anyone expecting a major shake-up of the tech industry is likely to be disappointed.

A Google sign is pictured on a Google building in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri

Antitrust specialists see the upcoming action as more of a tremor than an earthquake. Even if the Justice Department takes the case to trial and wins, which is not guaranteed, any changes to the role played by Alphabet Inc's GOOGL.O Google in people's lives are likely to be incremental - and years away.

"They shouldn't see this as 'the beginning of the end,'" said Eleanor Fox, a professor of trade regulation at the University of New York's law school. "It certainly wouldn't go to the guts of what some people think is wrong with Google."

Critics have argued for years that Google and other Big Tech companies such as Amazon.com Inc AMZN.O and Facebook Inc FB.O have too much power and routinely abuse their dominant market positions.

But government efforts to rein in powerful technology companies have historically proven challenging.

In Europe, regulators have filed three different antitrust actions against Google over the past decade and imposed more than 8 billion euros ($9.46 billion) in fines in response to complaints over Google's price comparison service, its Android mobile operating system, and its AdSense platform.

Christian Bergqvist, a professor of law at Denmark's Copenhagen University, said the U.S. antitrust action showed the U.S. government was belatedly adopting the more tech-skeptical European approach.

"I think we are converging in some positive ways," Bergqvist said.

Still, he said the European example held cautionary lessons. In a study published last month, an academic advising Google's European competitors said the company's price-comparison service was still flouting the EU rules.

Google denies the allegation. But it is clear that years of hefty fines have had limited impact on the market dynamics in Europe, where Google's Chrome browser has an even larger share of the market than in the United States and Android remains dominant.

Previous U.S. antitrust lawsuits against Big Tech companies have also yielded mixed results. Microsoft largely prevailed in its 1990s showdown with the government, though many industry analysts believe the company's troubles in the 2000s stemmed in part from the pressures and distractions of the antitrust case.

Similarly, the government ultimately dropped a 1980s antitrust lawsuit against IBM IBM.N, though the company subsequently struggled. The government breakup of AT&T in 1984 is the counterpoint: that case brought a wholesale restructuring of the U.S. telecoms business that had broad impact on consumers and businesses alike.

FINE AND FORGET

The perceived failure of the fine-and-forget approach to Big Tech regulation has some critics pushing for solutions that look more like the AT&T breakup.

Ryan Shores, a U.S. Justice Department official, said on Tuesday that "nothing is off the table" when asked on a conference call what specific action should be taken. But legal observers were skeptical that government lawyers would go so far as to push for a breakup and in any case Bergqvist doubted the solution was workable.

"What is there to break up?" he asked. "Everything is free."

Bergqvist said Google's services were organized like a series of money-losing trenches protecting advertising, the company's "cash cow." Even if a couple of those trenches were taken over by competitors or transformed into a standalone business - such as YouTube or the Chrome browser, for example - Bergqvist said it was hard to see how they would survive on their own.

Absent an aggressive dismemberment of the company, experts believe a government victory or a settlement would likely lead to changes in how Google search works. But odds are they will not be sufficiently far-reaching for most people to notice a lot of difference.

"Google won't be unaffected by this, but it's unlikely that there's going to be substantial shifts in market position – in any of its markets," said Jonathan Rubin, whose Washington-based firm, MoginRubin LLP, specializes in antitrust law.

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

10/20/2020 CORONAVIRUS DIARY

President Trump Openly Criticizes Dr. Fauci

President Trump openly criticized top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci Monday saying that, "people are tired of hearing Fauci and all these idiots. These people that have gotten it all wrong. Fauci is a nice guy and he's been here for 500 years. But he's called every one of them wrong," Trump told campaign staffers.

"Every time he goes on TV there's always a bomb. But there is a bigger bomb if you fire him. But Fauci is a disaster. I mean this guy, if I listened to him, we would have had 500,000 more deaths."

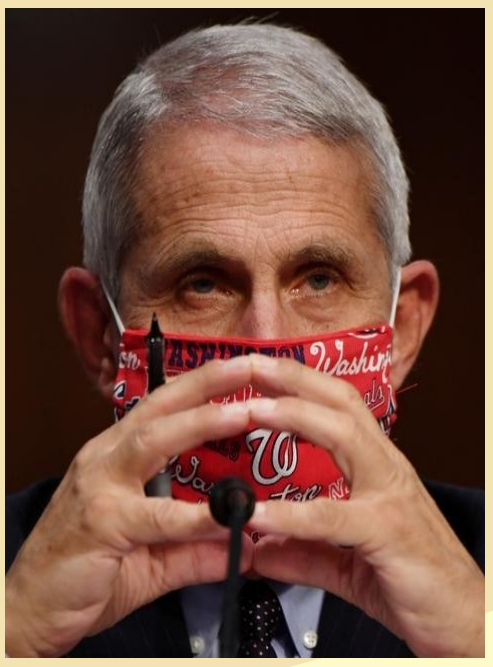
The president's comment followed Dr. Fauci's statement in an interview with "World News Tonight" anchor David Muir in which Fauci stated he was not surprised Trump contracted the coronavirus after the White House event announcing Trump's Supreme Court nominee during which guests were not wearing masks or practicing social distancing.

We so much regret these comments at this time of national crisis. Our president just can't seem to agree with a top medical specialist. With the presidential election just two weeks away, the medical community has already warned that the darkest period of the coronavirus is still to come.

There have now been more than 8.1 million COVID–19 cases in the U.S. with more than 219,000 deaths.

If our political leaders can't accept the truth from our specialists, how can we fight with the virus?

At the bottom of our society, many people are still suffering. When will the stimulus package pass in the Senate and get it to the President Trump to sign it? This is so very urgent to help all our citizens.



Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Chairman of International District Houston Texas

Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home! **BUSINESS** *Wear Mask!*

Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Rolls Off Production Line With Hopes For Emergency Approval

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Pfizer has already made "several hundred thousand doses" of a potential coronavirus vaccine as it prepares to seek emergency use in the US by November. The drugmaker told the Mail on Sunday that scientists in its main British lab have also unearthed drugs that could provide a potential complete cure for COVID-19, as opposed to merely a preventative vaccine.

The firm's UK boss, Ben Osborn, said the company is manufacturing the huge stockpile of its current vaccine candidate in Belgium "at risk and at scale," calling it "tremendously exciting."

"The hope here is that we essentially come up with a medicine that disrupts the virus and ultimately prevents it worsening the condition of a patient," he told the Mail's financial site, This Is Money.

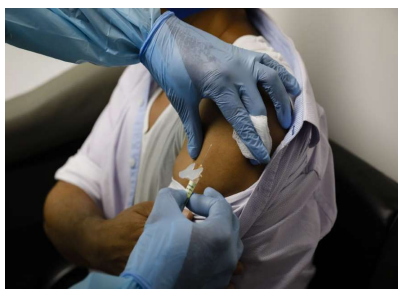
"It was great to see the first vial coming off the manufacturing line. It just brought a tremendous smile to my face to see all of this work actually result in a product," he said. But "we can only go as fast as the science allows us to," he stressed.

Pfizer expects to know whether the vaccine works by the end of this month, but the company still has to prove the shot is safe and can be manufactured properly to seek a so-called emergency use authorization, CEO Albert Bourla said Friday. If it's safe, he expects his company to seek emergency use in the US in the third week of November.

Related

FDA Slows Down COVID-19 Vaccine Approval. Good for Public Health

New U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidance means a COVID-19 vaccine likely will not be approved by Election Day—which could actually be a good thing for public health.



A health worker injects a person during clinical trials for a Covid-19 vaccine at Research Centers of America in Hollywood, Florida on Sept. 9, 2020. (Photo/ Eva Marie Uzcategui/ Bloomberg—Getty Images)

On Oct. 6, the agency posted an industry guidance document on its website asking pharmaceutical companies applying for emergency-use authorization of a COVID-19 vaccine to monitor study subjects for at least two months after vaccination, so they can look for side effects that may arise over time and get a better sense of the shot's efficacy. That means it's unlikely any manufacturer will receive authorization before Election Day on Nov. 3, as President Donald Trump has repeatedly pushed for. Despite reports to the contrary, White House representatives told ABC News they never tried to block the FDA's policy. Still, Trump tweeted his displeasure on Tuesday night.

"New FDA Rules make it more difficult for them to speed up vaccines for approval before Election Day," he wrote, tagging FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn. "Just another political hit job!"

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Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Oct 6

New FDA Rules make it more difficult for them to speed up vaccines for approval before Election Day. Just another political hit job!

@SteveFDA

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Also on Oct. 6, Moncef Slaoui, co-chair of the Trump Administration's Operation Warp Speed vaccine development project, said the group urged pharmaceutical companies not to apply for emergency-use authorization until they have enough supply to widely distribute a vaccine. That will likely also contribute to a longer vaccination timeline. However, and perhaps counterintuitively, these moves may serve to improve public health. A slower pace of approval may boost public trust at a critical time.

Polls have shown that many Americans are concerned about the safety of a COVID-19 vaccine—62% percent of U.S. adults surveyed in early September by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they were at least somewhat worried political pressure would lead the FDA to rush out a vaccine before one is ready. And in a mid-September Pew Research Center poll, 77% of respondents said they thought U.S. regulators were very or somewhat likely to approve a COVID-19 vaccine before its safety and efficacy are fully understood. Just 51% said they would definitely or probably get vaccinated if one were available immediately.

Dr. Kelly Moore, the associate director for immunization education at the Immunization Action Coalition, says that's perfectly reasonable, since researchers don't yet have answers to the public's questions about vaccine safety and efficacy. She adds that the government hasn't done a great job of communicating that, while COVID-19 vaccines are being developed on an accelerated timeline, they are still undergoing rigorous review.

"People shouldn't feel badly about having reservations right now," Moore says, though she says those concerns will hopefully be put to rest once safety data from the drug trials are reviewed.

It's crucial that a majority of Americans feel confident in COVID-19 vaccines once they're approved and deemed safe. The majority of Americans will need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity—the threshold at which enough people are immune to a disease that it stops spreading widely. In June, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told CNN that if two-thirds of the U.S. population received a COVID-19 vaccine that was about 75% effective, it still might not be enough to achieve herd immunity.

"A fantastic vaccine that is not used will not be successful in ending the pandemic," says Dr. Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. "There needs to be a lot of work to convince the public that vaccines are safe and effective. That starts with the data."

Moore thinks clear communication and dedication to scientific rigor, as the FDA has demonstrated with its new review policy, will help with that. "This new guideline and [scientists'] communication that we are going to go through the routine review and approval process… should help reassure the public that we are using our normal, robust safety processes, we're just doing it at an accelerated pace," Moore says. (Courtesy /www.msn.com)

UK Launching Controversial Vaccine Trials, Volunteers To Be Infected With COVID-19

In a bid to speed up the race to find a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, the U.K. government announced Tuesday morning that it will be launching some controversial vaccine trials

known as challenge trials.

A medical syringe is inserted into a small bottle labeled "Vaccine COVID-19" in this illustration taken April 10, 2020. (© Dado Ruvic/Reuters)

In a world first for COVID-19, young healthy volunteers will be vaccinated, then intentionally exposed to the potentially deadly virus in order to test vaccines in a controlled environment. Although some medical experts view them as ethically questionable, the benefit of challenge trials is that they can be completed in a much shorter timeframe than typical late-stage studies. The experiment will take place in a quarantine ward of a north London hospital. After inhaling a diluted dose of the virus, the trial participants will be closely monitored, thus enabling scientists and doctors to better understand the disease and how a vaccine can fight it.

"Human challenge studies can increase our understanding of COVID-19 in unique ways and accelerate development of the many potential new COVID-19 treatments and vaccines," explained Dr Chris Chiu, from the Department of Infectious Disease at Imperial College London and lead researcher on the human challenge study. (Courtesy /www.msn.com)

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice

Ruby Lenora casts her in-person vote on her 73rd birthday at a polling site at the Milwaukee Public Library's Washington Park location in Milwaukee, on the first day of in-person voting in Wisconsin, October 20, 2020. Wisconsin's early voting period, known as absentee in-person voting, began October 20. REUTERS/Bing Guan

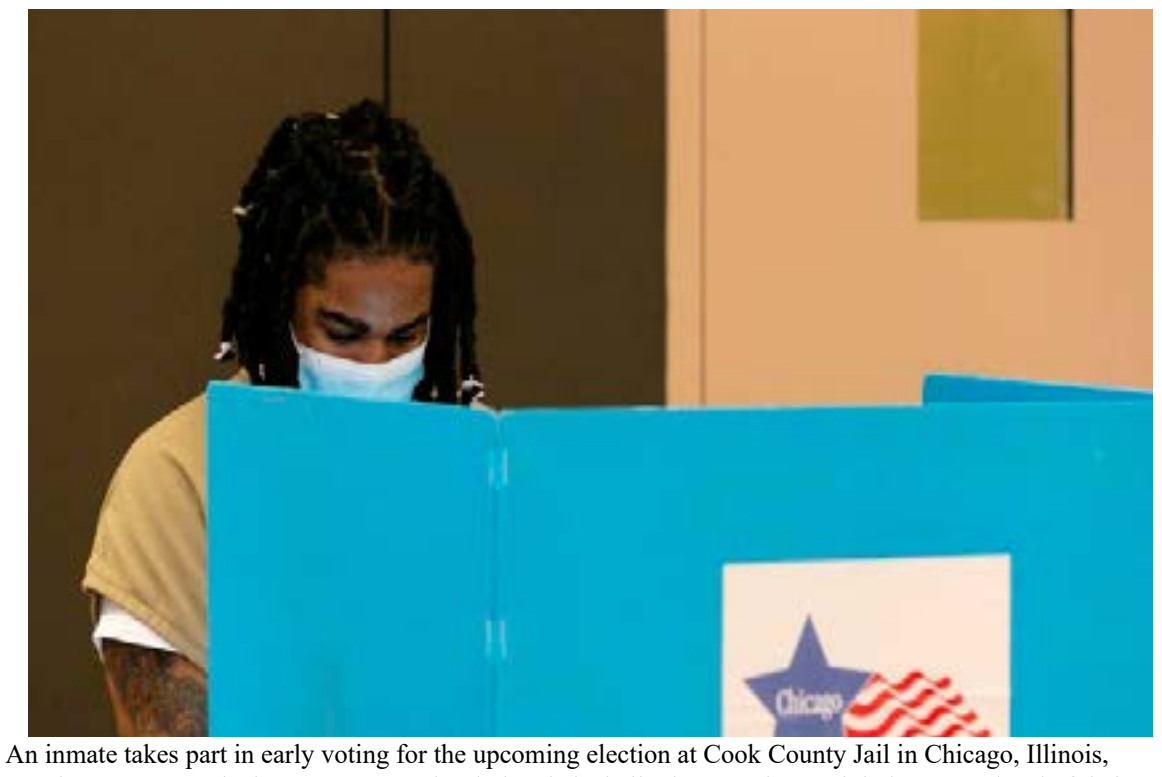
Democratic poll observers Mark Brandfonbener and Valerie Vidal observe early voting at a polling site at the Milwaukee Public Library's Washington Park location in Milwaukee, on the first day of in-person voting in Wisconsin, October 20, 2020....MORE

Demonstrators remove a counter-demonstrator during a rally in support of President Donald Trump sponsored by Super Happy Fun America, in Boston, Massachusetts, October 18. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

An inmate takes part in early voting for the upcoming election at Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois, October 17, 2020. Cook County Jail launched early voting over the weekend from inside the facility, saying it expects some 2,000 of its pre-trial detainees to cast ballots. That's a roughly 50% turnout and much higher than the 400-500 absentee ballots that would normally be submitted from the jail, said Sheriff Tom Dart. "It's great," one inmate awaiting trial said on Saturday. "I'm able to voice my opinion and let everyone know that we're still humans and it still counts." Cook County Sheriff's Office/Thomas G Quinn/Handout via REUTERS

Election official Mary Jo McDonald helps a voter at a at a polling site at the Milwaukee Public Library's Washington Park location in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Bing Guan

Inmates take part in early voting for the upcoming election at Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois, October 17, 2020. The in-jail voting stations were made possible by legislation signed a year and a half ago which mandated that pre-trial detainees...MORE



An inmate takes part in early voting for the upcoming election at Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois, October 17, 2020. The inmates are not simply handed a ballot but are given "civic lessons" ahead of their vote that help make them among the the "most educated voters" in the county, Sheriff Tom Dart said. Cook County Sheriff's Office/Thomas G Quinn/Handout via REUTERS

People wait in line to cast their ballots as early voting for the upcoming presidential election begins in Green Bay, Wisconsin, October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Gabriela Bhaskar

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

U.S. Army Pools Resources To Aid In Race For Coronavirus Vaccine

A research assistant with the Emerging Infectious Disease Branch (EIDB), at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), studies coronavirus protein samples, June 1, 2020. The EIDB is part of WRAIR's effort to produce a COVID-19 vaccine candidate. (Photo/Mike Walters/U.S. Army)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A supply cart rolls down the long corridors at the institute just outside Washington, D.C, past labs and displays picturing nineteenth century scientists, letters and artifacts. There are closed doors with small signs on the wall. One says "Viral diseases." Another simply, "Malaria." Inside one of these offices is the scientist heading Army efforts to aid in the race for a vaccine for the current pandemic: Kayvon Modjarrad, a civilian doctor. He's a large man, with wireless glasses and an easy-going manner. His parents came from Iran to New York City back in the 1970s. He became interested in vaccines after taking a class as a medical student.

"I decided that I wanted to work on vaccines," he says, "because it is the most cost effective and impactful public health tool that we have to saving lives." Modjarrad says he knew he was interested in medicine early on, "I got my first Fisher-Price doctor's kit when I was four for the Persian New Year." Modjarrad is developing the Army's coronavirus vaccines, but is also part of Operation Warp Speed, the government's efforts to help private companies in the U.S. and internationally create coronavirus vaccines.

Agi Hajduczki is a research scientist at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Infectious Diseases. She is part of a team working on a COVID-19 vaccine. (Photo/Tom Bowman/NPR)

"The most cost effective and impactful public health tool"

"So our institution and our network of sites here in the US and internationally are involved with many different companies," he says.

That means sharing the Army's expertise. Labs. Research animals. Locations for human trials, in Washington, D.C., San Diego and San Antonio. The Army also has partners and labs in Europe, Asia and Africa. Modjarrad and other officials liken the vaccine effort to a horse race, with multiple companies coming out of the gate at the same time. "Sort of whole of government approach has been putting our bets on multiple horses because we're not interested in one particular horse," he says. "We're interested in a horse, at least one horse, making it across the finish line as fast as possible and being safe and effective and accessible for our entire public and population."

"It's not like after the Phase three trial, 'Hey, the vaccine is ready for everyone,'" Modjarrad says. "We start to phase it into the population and we still collect information on how people are responding to that vaccine until we get to a point where it becomes broadly available to the entire population."

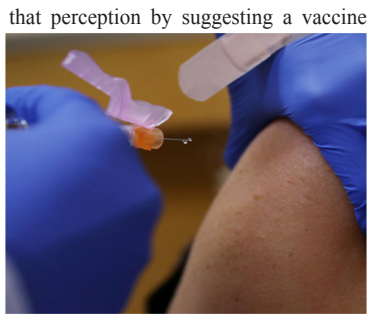
Kayvon Modjarrad is the scientist heading Army efforts to aid in the race for a vaccine for the current pandemic. (Photo/Samir Deshpande/Walter Reed Army Institute of Infectious Diseases)

Modjarrad says that this pandemic will pass, there will be multiple vaccines and people will be protected from this going on in the future, "but we have to be prepared" for future pandemics, he says, "these emerging infectious threats, Zika, Ebola coronavirus, a new strain of influenza. It's not going away." The Army has a long history of producing vaccines. Modjarrad worked on vaccines for Zika and MERs. And one recently approved for Ebola. And then there's Walter Reed, the namesake. He was an Army major in the early 1900s who discovered that yellow fever was spread by mosquitos, not poor sanitation as some believed at the time. The virus had a devastating effect on soldiers and those working in tropical climates.

"So we sprayed and killed all mosquitoes," Modjarrad says. "People weren't dying. They built the Panama Canal."

Diversity and inclusion

Modjarrad's boss, Nelson Michael, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research, is in a nearby office. There are colored maps of Africa and the world in Michael's office. A picture of him in his uniform, when he was an Army colonel. He's often on the phone talking with participants of Operation Warp Speed, a name that has caused some to worry the speed has more to do with politics than science. President Trump himself has fed that perception by suggesting a vaccine



could be ready before Election Day, a view scientists say is unlikely.

"There's been a lot of concern about what's being sacrificed by moving so quickly," he acknowledges. "And I can tell you, one thing is very clear it's being sacrificed and it's money." Michael says in the past vaccine development would take so long — often years — in part because companies and governments were wary of making an investment. A vaccine would be manufactured only after all approvals were done. The coronavirus changed all that. "Now, everyone's throwing financial caution to the winds and billions of dollars are in play," Michael says. "But now you have, of course, a worldwide pandemic that's costing trillions of dollars and impacting, you know, millions of people's lives." Michael is also concerned about another controversy: Are human trials getting to a good cross section of the population, especially by race? "If you look at the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 infection and the disease it causes, COVID-19, there is a disproportional impact on people of color in the United States," he says. "So you are at much greater risk if you're over 65, if you have comorbidities, hypertension, obesity."

All those working on the vaccine, whether private or government efforts "want to do better. I can tell you that."

Nelson Michael, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research, says a strong public health campaign will be needed to convince Americans the vaccine is safe and effective. (Photo/Tom Bowman/NPR)

Michael acknowledges the suspicions especially in the Black community, who have been victims of government studies. The most horrific was the Tuskegee Experiment, which from the 1930s in the 1970s followed hundreds of Black men with syphilis over the course of their lives, failing to tell them about the diagnosis and refusing to treat them. For this vaccine, says Michael, the government has created community engagement groups to reach out to African American and Native Americans in particular. "I'd say Native populations are also very mistrustful because of the history," Michael adds. "And you know there are lots of issues, of course, that are hitting our country right now all at the same time, systemic racism."

But he says there likely to be an even greater challenge once a vaccine is approved. "I am more concerned about how we're going to execute a vaccine campaign than I am about how we're going to test this vaccine," he says. "How are we going to convince Americans that they should sign up for their vaccine?" Some polls show at least 30% of Americans say they won't take the vaccine. There are scientists who say at least 40% of Americans must take the vaccine. Michael puts that percentage even higher. "What we really need is to have somewhere between 70% and 90% of Americans that either have been vaccinated and have immunity that way or have been exposed and survived and have immunity because of natural infection," he says. A vaccine from at least one of the private companies is expected earlier next year. The Army also continues to work on its own vaccine that can target future coronaviruses. No matter what, a strong public health campaign will be needed, Michael says, to convince Americans the vaccine is safe and effective. One part of that is to reach out to those people Americans tend to trust most: Their family doctor. (Courtesy https://www.npr.org/)