

Trump announces 'halt' in US funding to World Health Organization amid coronavirus pandemic

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President Donald Trump said Tuesday his administration will "halt" U.S. funding to the World Health Organization as it conducts a review of the

global organization's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We have deep concerns about whether America's generosity has been put to the best use possible," the president said in a Rose Garden press conference. "The reality is that the WHO failed to adequately obtain, vet and share information in a timely and transparent fashion."

Trump has accused the organization of not moving quickly enough to sound the alarm over COVID-19 and of being too China friendly. He has attacked the agency for advising the U.S. against banning travel from China to other parts of the world amid the outbreak.

"And the World—WHO—World Health got it wrong," the president told reporters at the White House last week. "I mean, they got it very wrong. In many ways, they were wrong. They also minimized the threat very strongly and—not good."

Trump has previously said he was considering cutting WHO funding, but on Tuesday he accused the organization of "severely mismanaging and covering up" the spread of the coronavirus after the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China.

The U.S. paid \$893 million to the WHO during its two-year budget window, according to the organization's website. That money represents about 15% of the WHO's budget.

Established in 1948, the WHO is an autonomous organization that works with the United Nations and is considered part of the U.N. system.

During Tuesday's briefing, the president asked whether it was appropriate to freeze WHO's funding in the middle of a pandemic that has claimed more than 125,000 lives worldwide with over 2 million cases confirmed, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

"This is an evaluation period, but in the meantime, we're putting a hold on all funds going to World Health," Trump said.

Trump said the review would last between 60 and 90 days. He said the administration would "channel" the money into other areas to combat the coronavirus outbreak, but declined to provide any specifics.

The American Medical Association was quick to criticize the [president's](#) move and urged him to reconsider his decision.

"During the worst public health crisis in a century, halting funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) is a dangerous step in the wrong direction that will not make defeating COVID-19 easier," AMA President Patrice A. Harris said in a statement.

Harris added that battling a pandemic requires international cooperation and data.

"Cutting funding to the WHO—rather than focusing on solutions—is a dangerous move at a precarious moment for the world," she said.

Leslie Dach, chair of the pro-Obamacare group Protect Our Care and the former global Ebola coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services, called the decision an attempt to shift blame for the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S.

"This is nothing more than a transparent attempt by President Trump to distract from his history downplaying the severity of the [coronavirus](#) crisis and his administration's failure to prepare our nation," she said.

"To be sure, the World Health Organization is not without fault but it is beyond irresponsible to cut its [funding](#) at the height of a global pandemic. This move will undoubtedly make Americans less safe."

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