

Sanofi expands US vaccine venture in COVID-19 race

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French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi said Tuesday that it would invest \$425 million to expand its vaccine development venture with US start-up Translate Bio as they aim to find a COVID-19 vaccine by next year.

The companies have been working together since 2018, hoping to leverage Translate Bio's work on new messenger RNA (mRNA) drugs that cause cells to create a specific protein for treating a range of diseases.

Their work has taken on greater urgency with the coronavirus pandemic, as pharma groups race to be the first to offer a vaccine to halt an outbreak that has killed nearly 470,000 people worldwide since December.

In a statement, Sanofi said they have "multiple COVID-19 [vaccine candidates](#)" in the works and hope to start a clinical trial with humans in the fourth quarter of this year.

"We believe that adding this mRNA platform to our vaccines development capabilities will help us advance prevention against current and future infectious diseases," said Thomas Triomphe, executive vice president at Sanofi Pasteur, the firm's vaccines unit.

Sanofi CEO Paul Hudson told journalists on Monday that his firm's most promising COVID-19 treatment is "the only vaccine in the race which is offering a proven platform which works at scale."

"We are a little bit slower but we are much more likely to have success," he said at a briefing ahead of Sanofi's investor day Tuesday.

Hudson drew the ire of French officials last month when he suggested that any COVID-19 vaccine would be offered first to the US government, which has invested millions in its development by the company.

Under pressure, he later indicated that it would be available to everyone at the same time and he announced a new 490 million euro [vaccine](#)

production site in France last week while touring a facility with President Emmanuel Macron.

"We're making vaccines in Europe and we're making vaccines in the US, so we anticipate having vaccines simultaneously available in many markets," Hudson said Monday.

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