

Moderna rebuked over plan to hike COVID vaccine to \$130

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Moderna's chief executive on Wednesday defended the US company's plan to quadruple the price of its lifesaving COVID vaccine to as much as \$130 per dose as soon as government stockpiles run out.

Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders lashed out at the price hike, denouncing the "unprecedented level of corporate greed" in the [pharmaceutical industry](#). "And that is certainly true with Moderna," Sanders said.

Moderna has so far charged between about \$15 and \$26 for doses of its vaccine, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The US government subsidized \$1.7 billion of Moderna's research at the start of the pandemic and then purchased \$10 billion worth of vaccine, Sanders said at a Senate hearing where the company's CEO Stephane Bancel was testifying.

Sanders said Moderna was "thanking the taxpayers of the United States" by more than quadrupling the vaccine's price "at a time when it costs less than \$3 to manufacture."

Sanders noted several times at the hearing that Moderna conducted buybacks of its own stock and paid its own executives at its Cambridge, Massachusetts, headquarters handsomely.

Bancel defended Moderna, saying the distribution system will change completely when the US government lifts a state of health emergency, perhaps as soon as May.

Up until now, Moderna had only one [customer](#), distributed its vaccine to only a few warehouses and did not have to pay for the cost of expired doses.

By switching to a more traditional marketing approach, "we're going to have 10,000 customers" and have to "manage to deliver to 60,000 pharmacies, doctors' offices and hospitals," he added.

Currently distributed in multidose vials, the [vaccine](#) will be sold mostly in single-dose vials or directly in prefilled syringes. And Moderna will have to take care of the unsold doses.

The company expects a "90 percent reduction in demand," Bancel said. "We are losing economies of scale. We must assume the wastage risk and cost that the US government used to assume."

Moderna also pledged to set up a program so that the uninsured or underinsured would not have to pay anything.

When pressed by Sanders about the possibility of the company lowering its price for [government](#)-run health insurance programs, Bancel said discussions were underway with all customers.

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