# Pfizer CEO defends Moderna amid vaccine funding cuts and highlights cancer treatment progress



In a pronounced show of unity within the pharmaceutical industry, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla has publicly defended rival Moderna in the wake of mounting tensions surrounding vaccine funding. The Trump administration’s recent decision to withdraw a substantial $766 million grant from the Health and Human Services (HHS) intended for Moderna's bird flu vaccine has ignited considerable debate. The withdrawal was justified by HHS officials, who stated that the project failed to meet the necessary scientific and safety standards. Critics, however, speculate that this decision aligns with the health policies advocated by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the newly appointed HHS Secretary, who has been vocal in his scepticism regarding vaccines.

At a recent conference, Bourla characterised Moderna's new mRNA-1018 vaccine as "extremely well tested" and affirmed that the underlying science is robust. He noted that mRNA technology has already proven effective, with over 1.5 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses administered globally—a testament to their credibility and safety. Bourla warned that a decline in vaccination rates could lead to a resurgence of preventable diseases, reflecting his commitment to public health.

The mRNA-based vaccines, including the one developed by Moderna, are now being explored for use beyond infectious diseases; researchers are investigating their applications in oncology. A paper from Penn State College of Medicine highlights mRNA vaccines as highly effective and adaptable tools for cancer immunotherapy, citing their rapid development capabilities as a significant advantage. This research builds upon early investigations that show mRNA vaccines can effectively elicit immune responses against cancer cells.

Bourla has reiterated Pfizer's strategy of continuing to invest in vaccine development without the need for government funding, positioning the company to counter both internal and external pressures in the healthcare landscape. His assertion that recent government policy changes seem to stem more from belief than scientific evidence underscores the contentious atmosphere surrounding vaccine discourse in the United States.

Moreover, while Bourla has expressed disagreement with certain public health narratives, he acknowledges that there are "several topics" where collaboration is possible, particularly in the fight against cancer. This sentiment is underscored by Pfizer's recent advancements with its drug Braftovi, which has shown promising results in treating patients with metastatic colorectal cancer harbouring a specific genetic mutation. The Phase 3 BREAKWATER trial reported significant improvements in both progression-free survival and overall survival, a critical development given the alarming rise in colorectal cancer incidence among younger populations.

The Braftovi regimen, which received accelerated approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in late 2024, combines multiple therapeutic agents to enhance treatment efficacy while maintaining safety across known profiles. Bourla praised these findings, highlighting their potential to substantially impact cancer care, particularly at a time when public health challenges loom large.

As the conversation around vaccines evolves amid political and social challenges, Bourla's insights reflect a broader narrative. The interplay between scientific innovation and governmental policy continues to reshape the landscape of public health in the U.S., making collaboration between pharmaceutical giants and regulators essential in addressing pressing health concerns and future-proofing against emerging threats.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14772249/pfizer-ceo-war-rfk-Jr-mrna-vaccines-colon-cancer.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-ceo-built-good-relation-rfk-jr-highlights-trumps-pride-vaccine-work)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14772249/pfizer-ceo-war-rfk-Jr-mrna-vaccines-colon-cancer.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-significantly)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14772249/pfizer-ceo-war-rfk-Jr-mrna-vaccines-colon-cancer.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-ceo-built-good-relation-rfk-jr-highlights-trumps-pride-vaccine-work)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14772249/pfizer-ceo-war-rfk-Jr-mrna-vaccines-colon-cancer.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-significantly), [[4]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/us-fda-approves-pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-first)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-ceo-built-good-relation-rfk-jr-highlights-trumps-pride-vaccine-work), [[6]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/us-fda-approves-pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-first)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-significantly), [[6]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/us-fda-approves-pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-first)
* Paragraph 7 – [[2]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-significantly), [[4]](https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/us-fda-approves-pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-first)

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1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14772249/pfizer-ceo-war-rfk-Jr-mrna-vaccines-colon-cancer.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-significantly> - Pfizer's BRAFTOVI® combination regimen has demonstrated significant improvements in progression-free survival and overall survival in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer harbouring a BRAF V600E mutation. The Phase 3 BREAKWATER trial showed that the combination of BRAFTOVI, cetuximab, and mFOLFOX6 significantly improved progression-free survival compared to chemotherapy with or without bevacizumab. The regimen received accelerated approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December 2024 for treatment-naïve patients with BRAF V600E-mutant metastatic colorectal cancer. The safety profile remained consistent with known profiles of the individual agents, with no new safety concerns identified.
3. <https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-ceo-built-good-relation-rfk-jr-highlights-trumps-pride-vaccine-work> - Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla has developed a positive relationship with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who was nominated to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bourla confirmed a recent dinner with President-elect Donald Trump and RFK Jr., stating that they developed a good relationship and, if confirmed, Pfizer would work with him to advance the right policies. Bourla emphasised that Pfizer is interested in policies, not politics, and highlighted the company's role in delivering a vaccine through Operation Warp Speed that saved millions of lives.
4. <https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/us-fda-approves-pfizers-braftovir-combination-regimen-first> - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted accelerated approval to Pfizer's BRAFTOVI® combination regimen for the treatment of patients with metastatic colorectal cancer harbouring a BRAF V600E mutation. The approval was based on a clinically meaningful and statistically significant improvement in confirmed objective response rate observed in the Phase 3 BREAKWATER trial. The combination regimen includes BRAFTOVI, cetuximab, and mFOLFOX6. Pfizer plans to discuss these data with global health authorities to bring this treatment to more patients worldwide as soon as possible.
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