

Bayer Is Donating Its Malaria Drug That Could Help Coronavirus Patients In The U.S.

Early studies have shown the decades-old drug holds promise for treating the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

Mark Prvulovic
(TMFmarkprvulovic)
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With no vaccines or treatments for COVID-19 on the market, many healthcare companies are evaluating existing drug treatments to see if they could be effective in helping COVID-19 patients. **Bayer** (OTC:BAYRY) is preparing to donate a large supply of an older malaria drug to the U.S. government, according to *Axios*.

While there's still plenty of testing that would need to be done, Bayer's anti-malarial treatment, chloroquine, is relatively inexpensive while possibly being just as effective as other antiviral COVID-19 treatments being developed right now. The most prominent of which is remdesivir, **Gilead Sciences'** (NASDAQ:GILD) former Ebola drug that's now in late-stage testing as a COVID-19 treatment.

One study published in *Nature* found that remdesivir and chloroquine are both effective in suppressing COVID-19 in vitro (in test tubes). While it's just one study, these initial results are promising enough for healthcare authorities to further investigate chloroquine as a potential treatment in the future.

Remdesivir had a similar start, with clinical testing for the drug having begun shortly after it was used on a compassionate use basis for a COVID-19 patient showing severe symptoms.

Global pandemic

At the moment, there are almost 210,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases around the world. Chinese outbreaks have stabilized around 81,000, although the U.S. is seeing the number of infected people grow to more than 7,000. Europe has been affected far worse than North America at this point, with Italy alone having almost 36,000 confirmed outbreaks.

President Trump formally declared a state of national emergency last week, with the Senate passing a coronavirus stimulus package to help Americans that was just signed by the President.