

30 Oct 2020 |

# What COVID Spotlight Means For Pharma – In Their Own Words

*Observers Weigh In On The Impact Pandemic Response Will Have On Industry's Reputation*

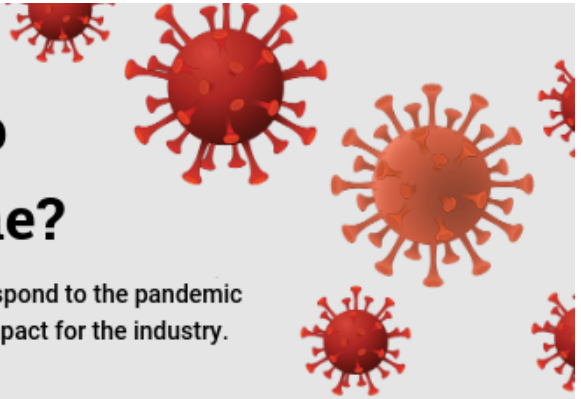
by **Jessica Merrill**

Several experts spoke with *Scrip* about their take on how the biopharmaceutical industry's efforts to respond to COVID-19 might help industry's image problem.


The biopharmaceutical industry has more commonly been seen as a villain in recent years, but it has played a heroic role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic – rising to meet challenges from research and development to manufacturing, all in unprecedented timelines with new levels of collaboration and virtually unrestricted budgets. As new treatments reach patients and vaccines get closer, will there be a goodwill benefit for the industry? *Scrip* spoke with several industry execs and outside observers about the potential for pharma to reset its reputation. (Also see "[Can Pharma Rebuild Its Reputation? COVID-19 Means A Big Responsibility, And Opportunity](#)" - *Scrip*, 30 Oct, 2020.) Below are some of their responses.

## Will COVID Spotlight Help Pharma's Reputation Shine?

*Scrip* spoke to several experts about how biopharma's efforts to respond to the pandemic could shift public perception and whether that will have a lasting impact for the industry.



### PUBLIC AWARENESS & PERCEPTION



**Lori Reilly**  
chief operating officer for PhRMA

The eyes of the world are watching right now in terms of what the industry can do to combat this global pandemic and if that leads to people viewing us more positively that is a good thing, but I think quite honestly this is what we do every day.




**Greg Rotz**  
principal at PwC

It is a great opportunity for the industry to showcase living its mission of innovative treatments to solve problems for patients. Most pharmaceutical companies have a mission that circles around that type of mission and this is a great opportunity to showcase for the public, for physicians and patients, for policy makers, the impact that the industry can have in serving that mission.



**Elliott Levy**  
senior VP for global development at Amgen

The value, the benefit, that the industry provides has been somewhat obscured over the last 20 years, and I'm quite hopeful that if we can get to the end of 2020 with an array of promising therapeutics, including antibody therapeutics and one or more vaccines with demonstrated activity, that will bring about a reassessment of the value that the industry provides to the US society and to the world.




**Peter Bach**  
director of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Center for Health Policy and Outcomes

If it wants a better reputation, [the industry] should probably earn it and that would begin, from my perspective, by charging prices that are justifiable based on the benefits of the products.

### HAZARDS AHEAD

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**Steve Pearson**  
president of the Institute for Clinical

At least right now there seems to be limited thinking that the companies are going to be rushing [vaccines] in order to make a dime. People are much more focused on the political reasons to rush, so in some