

Beyond COVID-19: The top vaccine programs to watch in 2020



Pharma companies are advancing a range of novel and next-gen vaccines. (Getty Images)

With a pandemic spreading globally, vaccines are suddenly big news. While the focus rightfully centers on COVID-19 vaccine candidates moving at record speeds, biopharma companies haven't given up on their other promising programs.

With that backdrop, FiercePharma is highlighting the top late-stage vaccine programs to watch in 2020, outside of COVID-19. Analytics group Avalere helped with initial research to produce the list.

The list includes candidates in diseases entirely without vaccines, such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and *C. difficile*, plus next-gen versions of existing immunizations, such as combination meningitis shots and pneumococcal vaccines that cover a broader list of serotypes.

We're also featuring a late-stage HIV vaccine—a field where scientists have been trying for decades to develop a safe and effective shot, but have instead faced setback after setback.

Most of the vaccines reside at global pharmaceutical companies, but two late-stage flu programs from smaller companies, BiondVax and Novavax, also made the cut.

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Beyond this list, there's plenty more innovation in biopharma pipelines around the globe. Cytomegalovirus vaccines from Merck & Co., Fortress Biotech, Hookipa and Moderna are in phase 2 testing, and Moderna recently said it plans to start a phase 3 study in that disease next year.

Behind the phase 3 RSV programs highlighted in this report, GlaxoSmithKline, J&J and Bavarian Nordic are advancing midstage candidates.

Elsewhere, GeoVax has an earlier-stage HIV vaccine, while Valneva is working on a phase 2 *C. diff* shot. Plus, new Ebola vaccines from Merck and Johnson & Johnson have recently won regulatory approvals, marking a milestone in the fight against that disease.

Please enjoy the report and let us know your thoughts. — Eric Sagonowsky

