

Moderna sues Pfizer/BioNTech over COVID vaccine

Moderna is suing Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech for alleged patent infringement in the development of the first COVID-19 vaccine approved in the US.

The lawsuit, which seeks undetermined monetary damages, alleges they copied technology that Moderna had developed years before the pandemic.

Moderna chief executive Stephane Bancel said: “We are filing these lawsuits to protect the innovative mRNA technology platform that we pioneered, invested billions of dollars in creating, and patented during the decade preceding the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Moderna Inc and the partnership of Pfizer Inc and BioNTech were two of the first groups to develop a vaccine for COVID.

Just a decade old, Moderna had been an innovator in the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine technology, which works by teaching human cells how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response.

The technology helped to speed up the approval process for the jabs – which usually takes years to complete – and enabled the vaccine to be developed so quickly.

Germany-based BioNTech had also been working in this field when it partnered with the US pharma giant Pfizer.

The US Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorisation for the partnership’s vaccine first in December 2020 – giving the green light to Moderna’s jab a week later.

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