Did the Clinton Foundation Deliver “Watered-Down” HIV Drugs?

PolitiFact and Africa Check look into a conservative website’s accusations.

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Recent headlines have claimed that the Clinton Foundation distributed bad HIV/AIDS meds in Africa. But the article originated on conservative website Daily Caller, so you might wonder whether the story constitutes important investigative journalism or a political hit job against a presidential candidate.

To answer that question, PolitiFact—the website that ranks the accuracy of political claims—in partnership with Africa Check dived into the weeds. The result?

“We rate this statement false.”

Here’s the backstory.

It is true that Clinton Health Access Initiative works with Indian generic drugmaker Ranbaxy and various governments and nonprofits to supply low-cost medications to nearly 11 million people living with HIV.

And it is true that Ranbaxy has been investigated by the FDA for delivering drugs that weren’t as strong as the company claimed or had a shorter shelf life—but none of those drugs were HIV medications. Eventually, PolitiFact reports, the company admitted it falsified reports and as a result paid a fine, but again, that didn’t involve HIV meds.

The Clinton Foundation took additional steps to ensure that sub-Saharan governments and other buyers confirmed the quality of meds.

Here’s PolitiFact’s final ruling:

> The Daily Caller said that the Clinton Foundation and the Clinton Health Access Initiative distributed “watered-down HIV/AIDS drugs to patients in sub-Saharan Africa.”
>
> At the most literal level, the statement is a misreading of a report from a conservative Republican who said the foundation “likely facilitated” the distribution of watered-down

HIV/AIDS drugs.

Neither version of the claim—centering around the drugmaker Ranbaxy—is proven. In fact, a host of regulatory agencies have found the drugs in question to be safe.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said there was no evidence the drugs themselves were substandard. The World Health Organization, South Africa's Medicines Control Council and the British Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency tested the Ranbaxy drugs and found them to be safe. Such testing dates back to at least 2005.

We rate this statement False.

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