

Biological E reduces price of pentavalent vaccine for GAVI

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A supply agreement with Hyderabad based Biological E has made the five-in-one shot available to GAVI for just \$1.19 per dose, compared to the 2012 weighted average price of \$2.17. This new, more cost-effective price provides the opportunity for the GAVI Alliance to pay up to US\$ 150 million less over the next four years compared with using lowest cost alternative suppliers.

The contributions of vaccine companies from the developing world, especially India to allowing greater access to life saving vaccines have been acknowledged by stalwarts. "More affordable vaccines help us save and protect more children," said Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Today's announcement is a testimony to the vision of Biological E's Dr. Vijay K. Datla, who was committed to manufacturing vaccines at prices that make them one of the most cost-effective investments we can make in global health."

Mahima Datla, Managing Director of Biological E also added, "This partnership demonstrates the growing role of developing world manufacturers in the sustainable supply of effective, affordable vaccines. We are proud that our work to provide affordable prices for a variety of countries means life-saving vaccines can reach the most underprivileged children in the world."

UNICEF, an Alliance partner, managed the tender process for GAVI, which saw agreements made with Biological E, Crucell, GlaxoSmithKline, Serum Institute of India and new pentavalent supplier, LG Life Sciences of the Republic of Korea.

The GAVI Alliance was created in 2000 to accelerate the introduction of new vaccines so that all children, no matter where they live, have the same access to this life-saving technology. National governments, donors and vaccine suppliers must all play their part to ensure infants in the poorest countries are protected. The partnership aggregates donor funding, pools demand from countries, and works with suppliers to deliver lower and more accessible pricing. This reduces risk to supplies, enabling all partners to benefit and, most importantly, ensuring that the world can urgently reach all children with the vaccines

they need.

Pentavalent vaccines combine the antigens for five infectious diseases in a single shot, namely diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib). Pentavalent is already GAVI's most widely used vaccine and by 2020 GAVI support for this vaccine will have helped to avert more than seven million deaths.

"This is great news for children in the world's poorest countries and it shows that our innovative public-private partnership model is working well" said Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of the GAVI Alliance." A decade ago we had just one European supplier and a price of US\$ 3.56. Today we have five suppliers, including two in India, and a price that is down to its lowest level yet. This marks the realisation of a vision that GAVI started a decade ago to create a healthy, competitive and sustainable global market for pentavalent vaccine. "

Demand for pentavalent vaccine has been strong, with 70 of the 73 GAVI-eligible countries having already introduced it, and the three remaining countries - Somalia, Indonesia, and South Sudan - approved to do so.

This new agreement is another example of how the GAVI Alliance model is delivering on the promises GAVI made at the London pledging conference in June 2011, when donors committed an additional US\$ 4.3 billion towards GAVI's 2011-2015 programmes. In October, partners and donors will meet in Stockholm to review GAVI's progress.