

# PARTNERSHIP FOR INFLUENZA VACCINE INTRODUCTION (PIVI)

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## Background

In April 2012, Walgreens Co. donated 375,000 doses of inactivated trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine directly to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), in a unique public-private partnership, one of the first of its kind. WHO WPRO and CDC's Influenza Division collaborated with the Lao PDR Ministry of Health (MoH) to support operational costs and provide technical assistance. This pilot project, dubbed the "Lao PDR Influenza Vaccine Donation Project", successfully vaccinated populations at high risk for seasonal influenza (pregnant women, persons 50+ years of age, persons with chronic diseases) and health care workers for the first time in Lao PDR. This pilot program was recognized by CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden in September 2012 with the 2011 CDC Director's Award for Innovation; the program also received the CDC Excellence in International Partnering Award, and has been highlighted by WHO as a promising global vaccine strategy.

The pilot project expanded in 2013 to support influenza vaccination of pregnant women in Nicaragua while continuing collaboration with Lao PDR. Existing partners including Lao PDR MoH, WHO Country Office, Walgreens Co. and United Parcel Service (UPS) were joined by new program partners including Nicaragua Ministry of Health, the Pan-American Health Organization, bioCSL, Becton Dickinson and Company (BD), and U.S. Department of Defense. The Task Force for Global Health also joined the project in 2013. In the Fall of 2013, the Task Force for Global Health and CDC formally launched the Partnership for Influenza Vaccine Introduction (PIVI) with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## The Partnership for Influenza Vaccine Introduction

The Partnership's mission is to help low- and middle-income countries reduce morbidity and mortality from influenza and enhance their pandemic preparedness through introduction of vaccine and expansion of existing vaccination programs. The Partnership plays a pivotal role by supplying donated influenza vaccine and supplies to countries that lack those resources but which are otherwise ready to establish or expand their influenza vaccination programs. Country program evaluation and sustainability planning are identified as important program components.

On December 3–4, 2013, the Task Force for Global Health's Center for Vaccine Equity convened a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia to formally launch the Partnership by bringing together the founding partners, engaging new partners, and providing a forum for the 2014 participating countries to work with technical experts from CDC and other organizations to develop their program plans for the coming year. Partnership Co-chairs Dr. Alan R. Hinman, Director for Programs, Center for Vaccine Equity at the Task Force for Global Health and Dr. Joseph Bresee, Chief, Epidemiology and Prevention Branch, Influenza Division welcomed more than 60 participants from across the globe to the two-day meeting to develop future plans and direction for the PIVI program.

## Objectives of PIVI

- Reduce morbidity and mortality from seasonal influenza by protecting at-risk populations, particularly those prioritized by WHO/Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization, such as pregnant women.
- Evaluate the programmatic aspects of seasonal influenza vaccine implementation.
- Demonstrate that the introduction of seasonal influenza vaccine can be both feasible and accepted and can strengthen future public-private partnerships for the introduction of new vaccines into the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

## Principles

- Vaccine donation should not interfere with current influenza vaccine program growth and should serve as a catalyst for sustainable vaccine program.
- There must be demonstrated commitment from MoH's, and WHO Country offices.
- The country must have existing influenza surveillance systems in place and/or a National Influenza Center.
- Vaccine target groups should be based on local data and be informed by WHO SAGE recommendations.
- An evaluation plan must be developed to assess the vaccine program's introduction and impact.
- A sustainability plan should be developed by the country to develop a sustainable source of seasonal influenza vaccine among priority groups.
- The program should be coordinated with WHO's Global Action Plan for Influenza Vaccines and other partners.

## Partnership Deliverables

- Increases in vaccine coverage in vaccine target groups in partner countries.
- Successful integration of influenza vaccine in partner countries' current immunization programs.
- Reduction in influenza-associated health outcomes in immunized populations in partner countries.
- High acceptability of influenza vaccine among stakeholders in partner countries.
- Sustainability of respiratory disease surveillance, laboratory capacity and rapid response capabilities that have been developed in response to pandemic preparedness priorities.
- Data to support evidence-based decision making related to influenza vaccination of potential target populations .

## Future Plans

The program targets the most vulnerable populations as designated by WHO SAGE influenza vaccine recommendations, with an emphasis on maternal immunization. The program seeks to meet country partners' target requirements from Partnership-supply resources. PIVI plans to engage new country partners on an annual basis. PIVI's expansion will be governed by the level of vaccine and other donations and the successful transitioning of existing partner countries to sustainable programs. Enabling factors include collaboration with WHO Global Action Plan for Influenza Vaccines (GAP-II), incorporation into CDC

Influenza Division's International Strategic Plan as a key component, HHS/BARDA's flu vaccine development program, and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)'s future consideration of support for flu vaccine in GAVI-eligible countries. Constraints include vaccine supply limitations; regulatory time frames for approval of new vaccines; predictability of donations; timing of flu season in partner countries and selection of vaccines; provision of immunization supplies; and logistics and transport of vaccines and supplies.

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U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, administering Vitamin A tablets.



Nurse administering influenza vaccine.