

Biological E cuts vaccine cost by 30% for GAVI

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Bangalore: The GAVI Alliance signed a supply agreement with Biological E, India, according to which it will receive the latter's five-in-one vaccine for just \$1.19 per dose, as compared to the 2012 weighted average price of \$2.17. This new, more cost-effective price provides the opportunity for GAVI to pay up to \$ 150 million less over the next four years when compared with using lowest cost alternative suppliers.

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.

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. 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.

Dr Seth Berkley, CEO, GAVI Alliance, said that, "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. A decade ago we had just one European supplier and a price of \$ 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. "

Dr Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and chairman, Microsoft, US, said that, "More affordable vaccines help us save and protect more children. 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."

Ms Mahima Datla, MD, Biological E, India, said that, "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."