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Gavi to boost access to life-saving human rabies vaccines in over 50 countries

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Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in collaboration with partners, has announced support for human rabies vaccines for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) as part of routine immunisation.

Eligible countries are receiving guidance on how to access these vaccines under Gavi's cofinancing policy. The first round of applications will be accepted by mid- July 2024. Ninety-five percent of human rabies deaths occur in Africa and Asia, most often in marginalised communities that lack access to care.

This development complements ongoing global efforts of the Zero by 30 campaign, led by United Against Rabies Forum including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly (OIE), with the goal of eliminating all dog-mediated human rabies deaths by 2030.

In more than 150 countries where dog rabies remains a serious public health problem, stocks of human rabies vaccines in public health systems are often extremely limited, especially in marginalised communities. Where human rabies vaccine is available through private facilities, the cost of PEP can impose a catastrophic financial burden on families and communities.

"Gavi's aim with this programme is to contribute to the global rabies control effort and save lives by ensuring that human rabies vaccines are available to those that need them the most, including the vulnerable and marginalised communities that too often get left behind," said Aurélia Nguyen, the Chief Programme Officer at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Funding applications will be accepted by Gavi in 2024 by 15 July and by 23 September 2024, with subsequent funding windows open three times every year.