IN 2011, PFIZER COMMITTED TO support infant immunization for the prevention of pneumococcal disease, a bacterial infection that can cause mild ear infections to fatal pneumonia, meningitis, and sepsis. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 1.6 million people — including more than 800,000 children under 5 years old—die every year from pneumococcal infections. Nearly all these deaths occur in the world’s poorest countries where it kills or disables 40 to 70 percent of infected children.

Pfizer committed to act as a major supplier to Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, supplying Prevenar 13 at a deeply discounted price. The company has supplied over 700 million doses of Prevenar 13 globally of which approximately 100 million doses have been distributed to Gavi-eligible countries.

Additionally, Pfizer has invested in the development of a multi-dose preservative formulation for Prevenar 13. Once approved, this will greatly reduce cold chain storage and UNICEF shipping costs. Additionally, it is anticipated to gain approval of the WHO Open Container Policy.

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PARTNERSHIPS

Gavi and UNICEF both play a critical role in increasing immunization access in poor countries through the AMC for PD. UNICEF issues calls for offers two times each year based on a 15-year demand forecast that is updated bi-annually by Gavi. UNICEF then assesses all offers received and enters into supply agreements with those manufacturers whose products have met the minimum specifications of the target product profile developed by the WHO.

Countries apply to Gavi for AMC funding according to Gavi procedures. On the recommendation of an Independent Review Committee, the Gavi Board approves the budget for vaccine introduction and annually reviews country progress. Countries contribute to the cost of vaccines based on Gavi’s co-financing policy.

This innovative public-private partnership model brings together donors, manufacturers, procurement and financial institutions. Pfizer offers Prevenar 13 at a price that is 90 percent lower than that in some industrialized nations and thus enables poorer countries to access vaccines at a discounted price while allowing for higher revenues to be generated from within industrialized countries.

LESSONS LEARNED

To achieve greater success in delivery and uptake of vaccines, countries need to be well equipped with supporting infrastructure to be able to manage large volumes and cold chain distribution of vaccines. Some of the key challenges include:

• Weak distribution and logistics management at provincial and district levels in some countries

• Transport of vaccines to remote areas, particularly in what is known as the “last mile” or the final delivery of a vaccine to a child who needs to be immunized

• Ensuring proper mechanisms are in place and supported to drive compliance of vaccination series for all infants. This requires support for ongoing education of mothers and sending vaccination reminders to parents

• Proper record keeping, including the use of simple computers and template spreadsheets, to avoid risk of damage or loss of data through use of manual log books and reports

NEXT STEPS

Pfizer is committed to Gavi AMC until 2025 and will continue to partner with the Alliance to deliver on its commitment, including affording the price of $3.30 to the Gavi countries even after they graduate from Gavi support based on Gavi’s graduating policy.