

Drug makers up commitment to vaccines for poor states - Tehran Times

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Pfizer (PFE: 21.03, -0.11, -0.52%) and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK: 44.89, -0.30, -0.66%) are increasing sales of their discounted pneumonia vaccines to developing countries by more than 50% as part of a broader effort to protect children from what is the leading cause of preventable death among them.

Global pharmaceutical giant Pfizer says it is committed to supplying another 180 million doses of vaccine Prevenar 13 through 2023, building on its earlier commitment announced in March 2010 to supply up to 300 million doses. GlaxoSmithKline is providing a similar number of its Synflorix at a deeply discounted price. The vaccines are under a so-called Advance Market Commitment (AMC) for pneumococcal vaccines, which is a type of public-private health funding that ensures an affordable and stable supply of the vaccines at steeply discounted prices, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, which was set up in 2000 to speed the introduction of vaccines into the world's poorest countries.

The GAVI Alliance negotiated a low price in exchange for high volumes, getting the shots at \$7 a dose for the first 20% and \$3.50 for the remainder of orders. "Public-private partnership programs like the AMC are vital to accelerating the availability of affordable vaccines, faster than ever before, to those children who are most vulnerable," Pfizer president of vaccines, Mark Swindell, said in a statement.

Some 7 million infants and children could die by 2030 from diseases that could have been prevented if poor countries can't get access to crucial vaccines, according to watch groups. The deeply discounted vaccines were introduced into the children immunization program of Nicaragua last December, just a year after they were launched in the U.S. and Europe. That is of historic precedent given the average lag time is 10 to 15 years.

"One year later, Prevenar 13 is now available in 14 of 16 countries which have launched pneumococcal immunization programs under the AMC," Swindell said, including Cameroon, Congo, Guyana, Honduras, Mali, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Yemen. Supply agreements for the vaccines have been financed by the GAVI Alliance, five donor countries, including Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Russian Federation and Norway, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

(Source: Fox Business)