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Momentum Builds for First-Ever World Pneumonia Day

Activities Now Planned on Six Continents to Fight Biggest Killer of Children

Baltimore, MD (October 1, 2009) – Only a few months after the idea was hatched to set aside a day to address the world’s biggest killer of children, health advocates from more than a dozen developing countries are planning rallies, conferences, races, radio campaigns, and other activities to commemorate the first-ever World Pneumonia Day on 2 November, 2009.

In the past two weeks, more than 40 organizations from countries including Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, China, the DRC, India, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, the Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, and Uganda have joined the Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia. This week, the Coalition was also joined by ONE, a global advocacy campaign committed to the fight against global poverty and disease that was cofounded by Bono and other campaigners and is supported by more than 2 million members across the world.

“Pneumonia is entirely preventable and treatable, yet this disease still kills more than 2 million children each year, more than any other disease in the developing world,” said ONE President and CEO David Lane. “We have seen that when the world takes aim at preventable diseases and partners with poor countries in smart ways, we get results and save lives. It’s time for the world to target pneumonia in a concerted way and stop these needless deaths. ONE is proud to join World Pneumonia Day to help spread this important message.”

Pneumonia kills more than 2 million children under 5 each year—more than measles, malaria, and AIDS combined. World Pneumonia Day is intended to focus global attention on this under-noticed killer and spur policymakers to prevent and treat pneumonia.

“Pneumonia is the single biggest killer of children in the developing world, so it is vitally important that developing countries take the lead in organizing World Pneumonia Day,” said Dr. Orin Levine, a pneumonia expert and associate professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. “For us to succeed in making pneumonia a global priority, World Pneumonia Day must be a genuinely global effort.”

In Kenya, World Pneumonia Day will be marked by the Run for Child Survival, a 10km run and 3km walk led by a team of top Kenyan athletes promoting pneumonia awareness. On the other side of the continent, in Nigeria, advocates are planning a “voice of a child” essay contest to hear the perspective of schoolchildren on pneumonia. In Bangladesh, members

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of the worldwide Pneumococcal Awareness Council of Experts (PACE) will lead a rally, media outreach campaign, and a symposium.

“Pneumonia has long been one of the greatest threats to child survival, and the biggest obstacle to achieving Millennium Development Goal 4, to reduce the under 5 mortality rate by two thirds by 2015,” said Dr. Samir Saha, Head of the Department of Microbiology at the Bangladesh Institute of Child Health.

Many other countries are planning summits and conferences to bring medical leaders together and advance pneumonia prevention and treatment. The Uganda Paediatrics Association will host a full-day meeting bringing together keynote speakers advocating for pneumonia prevention, and the Ugandan government will also announce a new pneumonia treatment policy. In Jordan, researchers plan to host a medical conference focused on lower respiratory tract infections.

“The greatest tragedy of pneumonia is that most of these child deaths can be prevented through vaccines, early diagnosis and proper treatment with antibiotics that cost less than a dollar,” said Charles McCormack, president and CEO of Save the Children. “It’s encouraging to see so many communities, from Connecticut to Kampala, coming together on World Pneumonia Day to help save millions of children from this global killer.”

Some countries have already begun to take increased action against pneumonia ahead of World Pneumonia Day. Rwanda and the Gambia were the first two countries to launch national pneumococcal immunization programs over the past several months. On 12 August, India announced that it would bring a new 5-in-1 vaccine into its routine immunization program that includes protection against Hib disease, a leading cause of child pneumonia, as well as crippling meningitis.

“The demand by low-income countries for life-saving vaccines has never been higher,” said Dr Julian Lob-Levyt, CEO of the GAVI Alliance, a global health partnership that plans to introduce vaccines against pneumonia in 42 countries by 2015. “It is our responsibility to answer their call. Children in poor countries have the same right to good health as children in rich countries.”

The Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia is advocating for the United Nations to recognize 2 November as World Pneumonia Day, an effort that is supported by many national ministers of health. The organizers have also set up a website to educate people about pneumonia – www.WorldPneumoniaDay.org – and are using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Change.org to focus attention on pneumonia.

To join the Global Coalition to Fight Pneumonia, contact Nicole King at +1 202 297 2386 or nking@eurekastrategies.com.

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About the Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia: The Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia is diverse coalition of international health nonprofit organizations, academic institutions and foundations united in their fight to against the number one killer of children. Coalition Members Include:

- American India Foundation
- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
- Antibiotic Consensus Society of Uganda (ACSU)
- Arab Pediatric Infectious Disease Society
- Asian Alliance for Pneumococcal disease prevention (ASAP)
- Best Shot Foundation
- Boston University School of Public Health, Center for Global Health and Development
- California Immunization Coalition (CIC)
- Center for Vaccine Development (CVD-Mali)
- Centre National d'Appui à la lutte contre la Maladie (CNAM)
- Chinese Society of Pediatric Pulmonology
- Croatian Centre for Global Health
- The Earth Institute, Columbia University
- Every Child By Two
- Episcopal Relief and Development
- Destinee Charity Foundation, Cameroon
- GAVI Alliance
- GiveVaccines.org
- Global Action for Children
- Global Science Academy, India
- Hedge Funds Vs Malaria & Pneumonia
- Immunization Action Coalition
- Indian Academy of Pediatrics, West Bengal Branch
- International Pediatric Association
- International Rescue Committee
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
- International Society for Tropical Pediatrics-Philippines
- The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
- John Snow Inc.
- Jordan University Medical School, Division of Pediatric Infectious Disease
- Kageno
- The MacDella Cooper Foundation
- Measles Initiative
- Medical Teams International
- Monitoring and Accelerated Child Survival Initiative (MACS Initiative)
- Millennium Villages
- Ministry of Health - ARI Programme, Malawi
- Ministry of Health, Mali
- National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- NYU School of Medicine, Department of Medical Parasitology, Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases Initiative
- One
- Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases (PKIDs)
- The Paediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN)
- Paediatrics Association of DRC
- Paediatric Infectious Diseases Society, Nigeria
- Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of the Philippines
- Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of Thailand
- Pediatric Association of Tanzania
- PGIMER School of Public Health, Chandigarh
- Philippines Foundation for Vaccination (PFV)
- Pneumonia Advocacy and Working Group of Uganda
- Project HOPE
- The Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University
- Sabin Vaccine Institute
- Save the Children
- Southern African Society of Paediatric Infectious Diseases (SASPID)
- The Task Force for Global Health
- Uganda Paediatrics Association (UPA)
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Melbourne, Centre for International Child Health
- US Coalition for Child Survival
- US Fund for UNICEF
- The Vaccines for Africa Initiative (VACFA)
- Voices for Vaccines
- Women's Refugee Commission
- World Vision
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