



NEWS RELEASE
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Celebrating World Pneumonia Day:

Let's answer the call and pledge for protection against Pneumococcal Disease

KUALA LUMPUR, 9th November 2011 – Some may have heard of Pneumococcal Disease: a complex group of illnesses caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.¹ This bacteria causes invasive infections which include bacteremia/sepsis (bacterial infections of the blood), meningitis (inflammation of the membrane surrounding the spinal cord or brain), pneumonia (lung inflammation) and otitis media (middle ear infection).² However, did you know that Pneumococcal Disease is the leading cause of childhood morbidity and mortality worldwide?³ According to the World Health Organisation, Pneumococcal Disease is responsible for up to 1 million deaths among children younger than five years around the world. Pneumonia kills more children than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.⁴

Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, together with the support of the Asian Strategic Alliance for Pneumococcal Disease Prevention (ASAP), Pitter Patter, parenting2u.com and SJ Echo, today launched a new website – www.abc4pneumococcal.com – which aims to build awareness on Pneumococcal Disease and emphasise the fact that the disease is preventable via vaccination. Held in conjunction with World Pneumonia Day observed globally on November 12, the launch of the website is a continuation of the *Aim for Broader Coverage (ABC), campaign* that was launched in June, calling on parents and other like-minded individuals to support the call to ensure that every child in Malaysia is protected against pneumococcal disease through vaccination.

The www.abc4pneumococcal.com website is a rich repository of information on everything related to the disease and how parents can protect their children against infection. Parents and like-minded individuals are encouraged to sign up

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Invasive pneumococcal disease in children 5 years after conjugate vaccine introduction-eight states, 1998-2005. *Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2008;57:144-148.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention of Pneumococcal disease: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR.* 1997;46(RR-8):1-24

³ All-Party Parliamentary Group. Improving global health by preventing pneumococcal disease. Report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pneumococcal Disease Prevention in the Developing World.

⁴ UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, 2006, Pneumonia, The Forgotten Killer of Children, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2006/9280640489_eng.pdf, last accessed 16 October 2011.

the online pledge to support a call for the vaccination to be included as part of the National Immunisation Programme in order to afford the protection for the children of Malaysia.

“More than half of pneumococcal disease occur in the Asia Pacific region contributing to 28% of global pneumococcal deaths.” said Dato’ Dr. Musa Mohd Nordin, founding member of Asian Strategic Alliance for Pneumococcal Disease Prevention (ASAP) and Consultant Paediatrician at Damansara Specialist Hospital. “It is important that we educate parents and the general public on protecting our children from Pneumococcal Disease. The consequences of this disease are dire but yet are completely avoidable. Effective prevention methods need to be available to all children of Malaysia.” In Asia alone, approximately one child under the age of five dies every two minutes from Pneumococcal Disease.⁵

According to the World Health Organization, Pneumococcal Disease is the number one vaccine-preventable cause of death in the world, and immunisation being arguably the most efficient and cost-effective way of reducing illness and death incidences.^{6 7}

“The first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine was introduced in 2000 protecting against seven most common serotypes of pneumococcus. Advancements in the area of pneumococcal research allows us to protect against the 13 most common strains of pneumococcal bacteria.” explains Angel Choi, Pfizer Country Manager for Malaysia and Brunei. “Pfizer has successfully partnered with more than 53 governments worldwide to establish effective pneumococcal disease prevention programmes which protect more than 22 million children worldwide. With more than a decade of experience and wealth of evidence of its positive impact, the inclusion of a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in National Immunisation Programmes have proven to be of significant benefit to children, parents and public health systems worldwide.” she added.

Speaking on the power of advocacy was Bruce Langoulant, the President and Asia Pacific Regional Leader for the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) and father of a Pneumococcal Disease survivor. “At six months of age my daughter Ashleigh contracted pneumococcal disease that led to meningitis and left her profoundly deaf, epileptic and with severe intellectual disabilities. I’m one of thousands of parents and families who have been affected by this devastating disease yet this disease is preventable. We should never undermine

⁵ O’Brien KL, et al. Burden of disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in children younger than 5 years: global estimates. *Lancet* 2009;374:893-902

⁶ Andre FE et al. Vaccination greatly reduces disease, disability, death and inequity worldwide. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2008; 86: 81 1- 160

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine Preventable deaths and the global immunization vision and strategy, 2006-2015. *MMWR* 2006; 55:511-5

the strength of our voice when advocating for a safe and healthy community. By signing this pledge, parents have the opportunity to lend their voice to this cause and be a mobilising force towards better healthcare for all children in Malaysia.”

Many other countries have started to recognise the importance of pneumococcal vaccination in promoting the well-being of children. More than 50 countries globally, have included pneumococcal vaccine into their respective National Immunisation Programmes.

About Pfizer Malaysia

Pfizer Malaysia is committed towards Working Together for a Healthier World™. We apply our global resources and strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value of medicines to improve the health and well-being of Malaysians at every stage of life. Our diversified health care portfolio includes human biologic, small molecule medicines and vaccines in Biopharmaceuticals, as well as a wide range of Nutritional products.

We also collaborate closely with public and private health care providers, and communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care in Malaysia. Pfizer Malaysia began operations in 1964, and every day, some 500 colleagues throughout the country work to advance wellness and make a difference for all who rely on us.

Wyeth is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Pfizer Inc. The merger of Wyeth Malaysia and Pfizer Malaysia entities may be pending in various jurisdictions and integration is subject to completion of various local legal and regulatory obligations.

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