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Subject: New Price Commitment: HPV Vaccine to GAVI for US\$5 per Dose  
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## **Cervical Cancer Action News Brief | June 2011** *News and views of interest to our community*

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### **New Price Commitment: HPV Vaccine to GAVI for US\$5 per Dose**

The GAVI Alliance recently announced a number of vaccine price reductions, including a commitment from Merck & Co., Inc. to provide HPV vaccine at US\$5 per dose to the GAVI Alliance so that GAVI can offer it at a subsidized price to the world's poorest countries. Once GAVI subsidizes the vaccine, it is likely--based on recent experience in Africa, Asia and Latin America--that many low-resource countries will add HPV vaccine to their national programs.

The text below comes from a CCA press release:

The announcement today is a major step forward, helping erode the price barrier that has delayed access to this life-saving vaccine in the countries where cervical cancer deaths are highest. A similar price commitment is now needed from GlaxoSmithKline plc, the producer of the other HPV vaccine.

Because infection with HPV is responsible for nearly all cases of cervical cancer, widespread HPV vaccination of girls will help to prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths among women in developing countries in the decades ahead. Of the 275,000 worldwide deaths due to cervical cancer each year, more than 85 percent occur in developing countries, where women often lack access to cancer screening and treatment.

Since 2006, HPV vaccines have become available through public sector, government programs in thirty-three countries. The first countries to introduce the vaccine were wealthy, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In these countries, strong early screening and treatment programs had already achieved low-levels of disease, but HPV vaccine was still considered a cost-effective public health investment. Several middle-income countries--namely Mexico, Panama and Malaysia--and one low-income country, Bhutan, also have set up national programs. But most girls in low-income countries, especially those from poorer families, have no access to the vaccine.

"Ongoing HPV vaccine pilot programs in twenty developing countries--including Vietnam, Uganda and Peru--are showing that HPV vaccine is valued by communities and providers and can be safely and affordably delivered, even in the lowest-income settings." says Scott Wittet, Co-Chair of Cervical Cancer Action and Advocacy and Communication Lead for Cervical Cancer Prevention Programs at PATH. "But we have to reach more families to save more lives. Now that GAVI will be able to buy HPV vaccine at a price that is both cost-effective and comparable to other new vaccines, the onus is on all of us to immunize the girls who need it most."

Merck has offered the US\$5 per dose price to the GAVI Alliance, which supports the co-financing and purchase of new and underused vaccines for the world's 72 poorest countries. This price represents a 67 percent price reduction in the recent lowest-public price, previously offered to the Pan American Health Organization's Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement, an important vaccine purchasing mechanism for Latin American countries.

Countries requesting GAVI-supported vaccine would be responsible only for a co-pay of about US\$0.20 to 0.40 per dose. GAVI's support would put HPV vaccines within reach of the world's poorest nations.

"In recent years, vaccine companies have committed to providing HPV vaccine to low-income countries at 'no-profit' and 'radically tiered prices' but this is the first time that a dollar figure has been quoted. HPV vaccine now sits well within price points for bulk purchase by the GAVI Alliance." says Alessandra Durstine, Co-Chair of Cervical Cancer Action and Vice President of Regional Strategies at the American Cancer Society.

Leaders in developing countries have been calling for access to HPV vaccine. Since 2007, Cervical Cancer Action has received over 390 letters from Presidents, First Ladies, Ministers of Health, Ministers of Women's Affairs, Parliamentarians, physicians, and grassroots leaders calling for international support for cervical cancer prevention. Cervical cancer has also been a rallying point for improving women's health, especially in Africa. A new Forum of African First Ladies Against Cervical and Breast Cancer have become active at the United Nations and on the global stage.

"Today's announcement dispels the misconception that HPV vaccination of girls, and cervical cancer screening and treatment of adult women, may not be possible within current global financial constraints," says Wittet. "The barriers are coming down rapidly, we know how to reduce deaths due to cervical cancer and we have the tools for the job. Many countries are ready to move on this and we are ready to help."

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### Cervical Cancer Action Governing Council



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