



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 11, 2011, 12:01 am EST

CONTACT:
Mala Persaud
+1 202-841-9336
Mala.Persaud@gmmb.com

STUDIES SHOW GREAT STRIDES IN VACCINATION BUT MORE PROGRESS NEEDED IN SCALING UP PROTECTION, TREATMENT INTERVENTIONS

New approach to treatment shows promise; integrated approach is urged to combat world's leading child killer on third annual World Pneumonia Day, November 12, 2011

(BALTIMORE, MARYLAND) – New reports issued this week by partners in the [Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia](#) show that community treatment programs, improved cookstoves and new vaccines are cost-effective and can contribute significantly to a reduction in pneumonia deaths. Even so, some of these interventions fall far short of recommended target levels set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

The [Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia](#) (GAPP), issued by the WHO and UNICEF in 2009, noted that child pneumonia deaths could be reduced by two-thirds if existing interventions to protect against, prevent and treat pneumonia could be scaled up to reach 90 percent of the world's children.

In a [paper](#) published November 9 in the journal *International Health*, the authors estimate that two pneumococcal vaccines being introduced in the world's poorest countries with support from the [GAVI Alliance](#) could save the lives of 3 to 4 million children over the next 10 years, and indicate that the vaccines are a highly cost-effective investment for developing countries. With GAVI's support, 15 of the world's poorest countries have introduced the newest-generation vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease. Nearly 60 countries are expected to introduce this vaccine by 2015.

The [International Vaccine Access Center](#) (IVAC) at the Johns Hopkins University, U.S.A., has released a [report](#) showing that progress in rolling out interventions to control pneumonia has been uneven. The greatest recent progress is in access to vaccines, though there is a lingering lack of access to medical care and antibiotics in the countries where children are most vulnerable to pneumonia.

"We're knocking it out of the park with our efforts to expand vaccine access in the countries with the most pneumonia deaths, but we need to up our game to protect against and treat this disease," said Orin Levine, executive director of IVAC and member of the Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia. "The challenge ahead for all of us is to follow the game plan outlined in the GAPP to expand these life-saving interventions to the people that need them most."

[Save the Children](#) will publish a new study in the November 11, 2011 edition of the medical journal [The Lancet](#) that could lead the way to changing pneumonia treatment guidelines based on the remarkable success that "Lady Health Workers" in Pakistan have achieved. Currently, millions of families have difficulty accessing quality care at a health facility.

“We can dramatically reduce the number of children dying needlessly from pneumonia. To achieve this, every family must have access to a frontline health worker with the knowledge to help prevent pneumonia and the skills to diagnose and treat cases that do occur,” said Mary Beth Powers of Save the Children. “A person with an eighth-grade education can be trained to provide this kind of health information and more countries are adopting policies that allow for community-based treatment to save costs and lives.”

Pneumonia claimed the lives of more than 1.5 million children in 2008 – more than any other cause of death, with over 98 percent of those deaths occurring in developing countries. A comprehensive approach to pneumonia control, including breastfeeding infants for the first six months of life, limiting exposure to indoor cookstove smoke, promoting regular handwashing, immunizing children against pneumonia’s leading causes and ensuring access to health care and antibiotic treatment for pneumonia cases that do occur, is vital to limiting this deadly illness.

“Each day nearly 3 billion people rely on solid fuels for cooking, that when burned, fill their households with dense, toxic smoke, dramatically increasing their risks for pneumonia,” said Radha Muthiah, Executive Director of the [Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves](#), a public-private initiative led by the United Nations Foundation. “In fact, more than half of all childhood pneumonia deaths are cookstoves-related. Reducing household air pollution is essential to protecting children from this devastating illness.”

To date, 15 of the world’s poorest countries have introduced the newest-generation vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease – the leading cause of pneumonia – into their national immunization programs. On [World Pneumonia Day](#), November 12, Malawi will become the 16th GAVI country to take this step. By 2015, nearly 60 developing countries are expected to introduce the vaccine with support from the GAVI Alliance.

Global health leaders, medical professionals, activists and community leaders are joining forces to shine the spotlight on World Pneumonia Day, with events planned in at least 20 countries, including Argentina, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ghana, Haiti, India, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Switzerland, the United States and Zambia.

In addition, the Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia is utilizing social media like never before to raise awareness, educate audiences and spur action. The Coalition is inviting advocates to follow World Pneumonia Day on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and to share the World Pneumonia Day [infographic](#) and [video](#) throughout their social networks. In the United States, people can use the [“Take Action”](#) button on the World Pneumonia Day Facebook page to send a message directly to Congress urging leaders to protect funding for the global fight against pneumonia as they work toward negotiating the 2012 budget. Learn more about World Pneumonia Day at www.worldpneumoniaday.org.

The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia

The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia was established in April 2009 to raise awareness about the toll of pneumonia, the world’s leading killer of children, and to advocate for global action to protect against, effectively treat and help prevent this deadly disease. The Coalition is a global network of more than 125 NGOs, community-based organizations, academic institutions, government agencies and foundations who together provide leadership for World Pneumonia Day, marked each year on November 12 to encourage efforts to combat the disease among donors, policy makers, healthcare professionals and the general public.

#