

Global Health Events

May 2009 – October 2009

May 2009

11th President Obama announces his fully FY2010 budget which includes \$8.6 billion for global health. This is the part of the Obama Administration's Global Health Initiative that will provide \$63 billion in global health spending over six years (FY2009-2014). Global health advocates criticized the FY2010 budget numbers for not providing enough to reach the goals of PEPFAR and other global health commitments.

26th The 62nd World Health Assembly closed on Friday with the adoption of global health resolutions focused upon primary health care, control of drug-resistant TB, and H1N1 preparedness.

29th CDC scientists in collaboration with the WHO and Egyptian authorities developed a H5N1 virus sample critical for the production of a H5N1 vaccine. In parallel, the WHO called for countries to continue sharing H5N1 viral samples with the organization to be included in the WHO H5N1 vaccine development and selection process.

Three H1N1 virus samples were released by the WHO to vaccine manufacturers for use in development of an H1N1 vaccine. WHO Assistant Director-General Keiji Fukuda stated that manufacturers should be able to produce an H1N1 vaccine by early July, while CDC's Interim Deputy Director for Science and Public Health Program Anne Schuchat stated that an H1N1 vaccine may be available by October.

June 2009

3rd With the continued spread of H1N1 (swine flu) across multiple countries, the WHO indicated that it is seriously considering elevating the pandemic alert status to phase 6 "pandemic". As of Wednesday, the WHO reported 19,273 cases of H1N1 with 117 deaths. This epidemic has brought attention to the pandemic alert system and how to reconcile highly transmissible yet low severity viruses.

12th The WHO elevated the pandemic alert level for H1N1 (swine flu) influenza from phase 5 to phase 6, and declared a global flu pandemic, due to sustained transmission in multiple continents. As of June 11, the WHO reported 28,774 confirmed cases with 144 deaths in 74 countries. Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General,

indicated that a vaccine would likely not be available before Fall 2009, and initially in small quantities.

A \$2.8 billion Advanced-Market Commitment (AMC) for pneumococcal vaccine was launched by GAVI, the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, five national governments, and the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation to accelerate access in developing countries. An AMC guarantees a market for vaccine manufacturers to develop new vaccines targeting diseases affecting developing countries.

- 16th Six major health agencies from Australia, Canada, China, the UK, and the United States launched the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) to respond to the growing prevalence of chronic diseases in developing countries.
- 20th *The Lancet* published an assessment of the interactions of global health initiatives (GHI) and country health systems conducted by a WHO work group. This is one of the first comprehensive reports to examine GHIs and their interactions, positive and negative, by conducting a meta-analysis of existing research and 15 new studies.

July 2009

- 6th The Global Fund reported that it requires \$170 million to cover programs it committed to supporting and between \$2.5 to \$3 billion to finance programs planned for 2010.
- 8th WHO Assistant Director-General Keiji Fukuda stated that the WHO shortly would recommend that countries halt testing all suspected cases of H1N1. Countries with previously confirmed H1N1 cases should diagnose the virus based on symptoms to free up laboratories to focus on unusual or severe cases, illness clusters, or cases with odd symptoms.
- 15th GSK announced plans to invest \$97 million over the next ten years to strengthen pharmaceutical R&D and access to drugs in Africa. The company also issued a free voluntary licensing agreement for one of its ARVs, Abacavir, for a South African generic drug manufacturer.
- 17th The WHO announced that it would no longer track H1N1 cases and related-deaths.
- 28th A three-day meeting held in Rwanda brought together U.S. government, WHO, and African health officials to launch a program to strengthen the quality and standards of medical labs across Africa. Based upon collaboration between the WHO and U.S.

government, a five-point scale will be introduced to rate African public health labs.

August 2009

6th A Los Alamos National Laboratory project aims to create an automated network to monitor animal health to predict disease outbreaks. The research team has developed a \$1.75 million genome-sequencing machine exponentially faster to monitor animal diseases.

10th A *Health Affairs* article from its developing country health care delivery issue details the African health professional crisis and recommends an immediate increase of 800,000 additional health professionals in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The article states Africa has only 30% of the physicians it requires.

11th UNAIDS released a report on HIV/AIDS risk for women in the Asia-Pacific region. It stated that approximately 50 million women remain at risk for contracting HIV due to at-risk behavior conducted by their spouses and boyfriends. Over 90% of the 1.7 million Asian females living with HIV contracted the virus while in long-term, monogamous relationships.

South African Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi convened a meeting of African health ministers to discuss preparedness and prevention efforts of H1N1.

19th AFP reports that the WHO stated that developed countries have ordered in excess of one billion doses of H1N1 vaccine. A WHO spokesperson explained that in the initial period there would be a limited supply of vaccine, which will require governments to prioritize populations to vaccinate.

20th A WHO report confirms that since the emergence of H1N1 in April 2009, there are now 1,799 deaths due to the virus. There are now over 170 countries that have confirmed H1N1 cases.

24th A *Washington Post* article examines the ongoing spread of drug-resistant TB in Russia. Preliminary surveys conducted in Russia reveal a small increase in incidence; the rate of infection increased from 83.2 cases per 100,000 to 85.2 per 100,000 in one-year. Blame has been placed on the Russian government's inability to order supplies of key medicines in 2008.

September 2009

9th At a Southeast Asian health ministers meeting, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan stated that the H1N1 pandemic will "test the

world on the issue of fairness” and “reveal in a measurable and tragic way the consequences of decades of failure to invest adequately in basic health systems and infrastructure.”

- 17th Merck and Wellcome Trust established a non-profit research center with approximately \$150 million in India to assist in vaccine development including neglected diseases and increase focus on vaccine access in developing countries.
- 28th Nine developed countries recently committed to donate H1N1 vaccine supplies to developing countries, as WHO reported H1N1-related deaths increased to over 3,900 people worldwide.
- 30th UNAIDS report on ART access highlighted the significant scale-up of ART programs. More than four million people living with HIV/AIDS in low- and middle-income countries have begun ART by the end of 2008.

October 2009

- 26th President Obama declares the H1N1 outbreak a national emergency. This enables the government to waive or modify certain federal requirements to speed up treatment.
- 29th U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebellius stated that the U.S. government would delay donating H1N1 vaccine stock until at-risk Americans receive the vaccine. The Secretary indicated that as more vaccine became available, the U.S. government would evaluate when it is appropriate to commence donations.
- 30th A report from the Global Health Initiative, a coalition of global health advocates, recommends that the United States double its commitment to global health from approximately eight billion dollars to sixteen billion dollars by 2011. The six-year total investment would reach 95 billion dollars or 32 billion dollars more than President Obama’s global health initiative.

Sources: World Organization, Reuters, AFP, Bloomberg, *Health Affairs*, *The Lancet*, *Wall Street Journal*, GAVI, Kaiser Family Foundation, *New York Times*, UNAIDS, Global Health Initiative Health, AP, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Washington Post*, *Nature News*