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UK recommends Novartis Bexsero[®] vaccine for inclusion in National Immunisation Programme to help protect against devastating meningitis B

- *Following further review of evidence, JCVI recommends routine vaccination of infants against meningitis B, the leading cause of meningitis in Europe^{1,2}*
- *UK will introduce a nationwide vaccination campaign with Bexsero as soon as possible; once implemented, parents will have free access through the NHS*
- *Novartis is committed to working with UK public health officials to ensure implementation of this recommendation as early as summer 2014*

Basel, 21 March, 2014 – Novartis announced today that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) in the UK has recommended the inclusion of Bexsero[®] (Meningococcal Group B Vaccine [rDNA, component, adsorbed]) in the National Immunisation Programme¹. According to the recommendation, Bexsero should be routinely used in infants from two months of age to help protect against meningococcal serogroup B (meningitis B)¹. The implementation will be carried out by the Department of Health through the National Health Service (NHS), following the public procurement process.

“Today’s decision by the UK authorities brings tremendous relief to many parents and families who have lost loved ones to meningitis,” said Andrin Oswald, Division Head, Novartis Vaccines. “At Novartis, it took us over 20 years of hard work to get to this point. Protecting infants who are the most vulnerable will be a great achievement. It is also a strong motivator for us to continue our efforts to protect all children and adolescents against this devastating disease, in the UK and elsewhere in the world.”

Meningitis B is a rare but aggressive and often deadly disease³; it is the leading cause of meningococcal disease and septicemia in Europe². Meningitis B can kill or cause serious life-long disabilities within 24 hours of onset, leaving little time for intervention³. Like infants, adolescents are also at an increased risk for contracting meningitis and have a high fatality rate from the disease^{4,5}. Approximately 3,200 people in the UK are affected by bacterial meningitis and septicemia each year, with meningitis B responsible for more than half of those cases⁶. Vaccination is therefore the best defense against this aggressive disease.

“I applaud the JCVI for taking the right decision to make this life-saving vaccine available to babies and am delighted that the UK is once again leading the way in meningococcal disease prevention. However I would urge that toddlers and adolescents should also be offered protection,” said Dr Nelly Ninis, Consultant Pediatrician, London. “No child should suffer the devastation of a preventable disease, especially one that can be fatal within hours, and leave many of its survivors maimed and impacted for life.”

Bexsero is the only licensed broad coverage vaccine approved in Europe, Canada and Australia for all vulnerable age groups from two months to help protect against meningitis

B^{7,8,9}. It was also approved for use in the US under a treatment Investigational New Drug (IND) designation as part of vaccination programs at Princeton University and the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB)^{10,11}. The recent outbreaks of meningitis B in the US demonstrate the dynamic and unpredictable nature of this disease and the need for broad coverage protection through vaccination¹². Novartis continues to work with health authorities around the world where meningitis B remains an unmet public health need to support broad and timely access to the vaccine.

Disclaimer

The foregoing release contains forward-looking statements that can be identified by words such as “recommends,” “will,” “as soon as possible,” “committed,” “to ensure,” “recommendation,” “recommended,” “should,” “to continue,” “can,” “would,” “continues,” “remains,” or similar terms, or by express or implied discussions regarding potential additional marketing or reimbursement approvals for Bexsero, or regarding potential future revenues from Bexsero. You should not place undue reliance on these statements. Such forward-looking statements are based on the current beliefs and expectations of management regarding future events, and are subject to significant known and unknown risks and uncertainties. Should one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements. There can be no guarantee that Bexsero will be submitted or approved for sale or reimbursement in any additional markets, or at any particular time. Nor can there be any guarantee that Bexsero will be commercially successful in the future. In particular, management’s expectations regarding Bexsero could be affected by, among other things, unexpected regulatory actions or delays or government regulation generally; the uncertainties inherent in research and development, including unexpected clinical trial results and additional analysis of existing clinical data; global trends toward health care cost containment, including ongoing pricing pressures; the company’s ability to obtain or maintain proprietary intellectual property protection; general economic and industry conditions; unexpected manufacturing issues, and other risks and factors referred to in Novartis AG’s current Form 20-F on file with the US Securities and Exchange Commission. Novartis is providing the information in this press release as of this date and does not undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statements contained in this press release as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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Novartis Media Relations

Central media line : +41 61 324 2200

Eric Althoff

Novartis Global Media Relations
 +41 61 324 7999 (direct)
 +41 79 593 4202 (mobile)
 eric.althoff@novartis.com

Liz Power

Novartis Vaccines
 +1 212 830-2466 (direct)
 +1 617 583 3015 (mobile)
 elizabeth.power@novartis.com

e-mail: media.relations@novartis.com

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For questions about the site or required registration, please contact:

journalisthelp@thenewsmarket.com.

Novartis Investor Relations

Central phone: +41 61 324 7944

Samir Shah +41 61 324 7944

Pierre-Michel Bringer +41 61 324 1065

Thomas Hungerbuehler +41 61 324 8425

Isabella Zinck +41 61 324 7188

North America:

Stephen Rubino +1 862 778 8301

Jill Pozarek +1 212 830 2445

Susan Donofrio +1 862 778 9257

e-mail: investor.relations@novartis.com

e-mail: investor.relations@novartis.com