

## National Interruption of Rabies Vaccine Supply

As of September 4, 2008, Novartis Vaccines is no longer shipping supplies of RabAvert®. Novartis will be re-directing customers back to their state public health authorities to obtain a passcode to process their order through Sanofi. Novartis will retain doses for emergency consideration on a case by case basis in case of adverse events to alternative vaccination.

As of August 29, 2008, Sanofi Pasteur in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has resumed shipping IMOVAX® Rabies rabies vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis only.

**How to Obtain IMOVAX Rabies Vaccine:** You must first contact the State Public Health Veterinarian so that a risk-assessment can be conducted for the suspected exposure. If the State Public Health Veterinarian determines that rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is indicated he will provide you with a passcode to place on the Sanofi Pasteur Rabies Post-Exposure Form. The form must be filled out in its entirety, including the required physician's signature and passcode.

Contact Sanofi Pasteur at 1-800-VACCINE to obtain the required form.

### Why is there an interruption in supply?

Starting in June 2007, Sanofi Pasteur began renovating its IMOVAX Rabies vaccine production facility in France to maintain compliance with the most current requirements from FDA and the French regulatory body. Prior to these renovations, Sanofi Pasteur established an inventory based on historical levels of sales and projected market demand. The facility is scheduled to be approved and operational by mid-to-late 2009. Until the facility is operational, Sanofi Pasteur has a finite amount of IMOVAX Rabies vaccine.

After the renovations began, Novartis, the other supplier of rabies vaccine for the United States, was unable to meet projected rabies vaccine supplies. Since early 2008, Novartis has been supplying its rabies vaccine, RabAvert, for post-exposure use only. Consequently, Sanofi Pasteur has been supplying nearly all of the market for rabies vaccine. The increase in demand for IMOVAX is outpacing the company's historical levels of supply.

### How does this affect current rabies vaccination recommendations?

Persons at increased risk for rabies exposure should take appropriate precautions to avoid rabies exposure. Vaccine is available for PEP, and providers should consult with the Vermont Department of Health to ensure appropriate use of PEP.

Additional information about rabies and its prevention is available from the Vermont Department of Health at 802-863-7240, 800-640-4374 or <http://healthvermont.gov>.

The *Infectious Disease Bulletin* can be viewed at:

<http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/IDB/index.aspx>

For questions & comments, please contact Patsy Kelso at (802)863-7240.

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