

RE: Updates to Rabies Vaccine Supply

Effective immediately physicians and health care officials (including hospital pharmacies) ordering rabies PEP treatment will require consult with state public health officials for a password to order RabAvert. This measure is required to slow the usage rate of vaccine associated with inappropriate PEP. Health care providers are to contact the: Epidemiologist on Call at: 304-558-5358 or 1-800-423-1271- 24 hours a day, seven days a week to obtain both consultation on appropriateness of PEP and this password to order the vaccine.

Sanofi Pasteur's rabies vaccine IMOVAX is no longer available for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Increase in demand and production delays are responsible for the acute shortage. This is an update from an earlier health advisory of June 23 (WVBPH Health Update 17) when IMOVAX was the primary supplier of PEP.

Further information regarding the RabAvert product is found at:

<http://www.novartisvaccinesdirect.com>. Updates on rabies vaccine supply are available from CDC at: http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/news/2008-08-15_RabVaxupdate.html.

Limited supplies of IMOVAX are available for rare cases of severe allergic reactions to the Novartis RabAvert product. Requests for IMOVAX for these reactions to RabAvert should go to the epidemiologist on-call for the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program (IDEP: 800-423-1271). IDEP will work with CDC to obtain the vaccine. Requests for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP) continue to be coordinated through Dr. David J. Henzler.

Increases in the supply of IMOVAX are expected in late-September to early-October. Changes to the supply situation will be forwarded. Updates are available at the BPH web site at: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/a-z/a-z-rabies.org>.

Judicious use of post-exposure prophylaxis and general rabies awareness and prevention messages should be stressed:

- Avoid wildlife contacts.
- Assure vaccination of dogs, cats and ferrets and livestock (where appropriate).
- Capture and testing of wildlife or stray animals associated with human exposure will reduce unnecessary PEP.