



ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Marie-Pierre Préziosi to be new director of Meningitis Vaccine Project

Seattle/Ferney-Voltaire/Geneva, 1 March 2012—PATH and the World Health Organization (WHO) today announced the appointment of Dr. Marie-Pierre Préziosi as the new Director of the PATH/WHO Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP), effective today. A member of the MVP team since 2003, Dr. Préziosi most recently served as the Director of Clinical Development for MVP, as part of her role as Medical Officer at WHO.



“We are very pleased that Marie-Pierre has been chosen to lead the MVP. Her wealth of experience, technical know-how, and dedication will be an asset as she takes on this important role,” said Dr. Jean-Marie Okwo-Bele, Director of WHO’s Immunization, Vaccines, and Biologicals department. “We are excited to work with Marie-Pierre to strengthen our partnership and continue rolling out MenAfriVac in all 25 countries in Africa’s meningitis belt.”

Dr. Préziosi (center) and Dr. Diallo (WHO Country Representative) encourage with a smile a little Malian girl who is being vaccinated with MenAfriVac™ in September 2010, during the first vaccine introduction phase in the country.

Dr. Préziosi will take over from Dr. F. Marc LaForce who announced last December that he was retiring after more than ten years with MVP. Under LaForce’s directorship, MVP successfully developed MenAfriVac™—a group A meningococcal meningitis conjugate vaccine specifically designed to eliminate the devastating meningitis epidemics that have been plaguing sub-Saharan Africa for more than a century. Around 55 million people aged 1 to 29 years have been vaccinated with MenAfriVac™ since the vaccine was introduced on the continent in December 2010.

“Given the extraordinary success of the MVP, we wanted to ensure the smoothest possible transition to the next phase of the project, which will be the rollout of MenAfriVac™ in additional meningitis belt countries and obtaining marketing authorization for use of the vaccine in infants,” said Jacqueline Sherris, PhD, Vice President for Global Programs at PATH. “We have no doubt that this can be accomplished under Dr. Préziosi’s leadership.”

“I am delighted that Marie-Pierre Preziosi has accepted the challenge of serving as MVP Director,” said Dr. Marc LaForce. “Along with staff from Serum Institute of India, Marie-Pierre has led a hugely successful clinical development team at MVP that has led to the WHO prequalification of MenAfriVac. Her experience, industry, analytic skills, and leadership qualities bode well for the continued success of the project.”

In her early years with MVP, Dr. Préziosi contributed documentation on epidemic meningitis and related vaccine use for informing development of a new meningococcal A conjugate vaccine and introduction strategies. As MenAfriVac™ moved to the clinical phase, she was appointed to lead MVP clinical research activities. In this role, she has led the strategy and implementation of MVP’s clinical development work, has helped foster the ongoing strong relationships between the two MVP partner organizations (WHO and PATH), and has contributed technical guidance to meningococcal vaccine introduction activities and research to define evidence-based policy for optimal vaccine use.

“I am honored and privileged to serve as MVP’s new director,” said Dr. Préziosi. “I welcome the opportunity to continue to work with all the committed partners who have accompanied the project for more than a decade and to lead a public health project for which I have a profound passion. I am confident that we have the quality team that is needed to ensure MVP’s continued momentum and success in the years to come.”

Prior to joining MVP, Dr. Préziosi was a visiting assistant professor at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, where she conducted research on the effects of pertussis vaccination. As an epidemiologist at the Institute for Scientific and Technical Research (ORSTOM), she spent several years in Senegal conducting pertussis vaccine trials. Her interest in vaccines started with clinical studies of a Hib conjugate vaccine at Pasteur Mérieux. Marie-Pierre Préziosi earned her medical degree from Claude Bernard University in Lyon and her PhD in epidemiology from Victor Segalen University in Bordeaux (France). She trained in tropical medicine at the Prince Léopold Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp (Belgium) and in field epidemiology at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta (USA).

About the Meningitis Vaccine Project

The Meningitis Vaccine Project is a partnership between the World Health Organization and PATH. It was established in 2001 through a US\$70 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. MVP’s mission is to eliminate epidemic meningitis as a public health problem in sub-Saharan Africa through the development, testing, introduction, and widespread use of conjugate meningococcal vaccines.