

## **Travellers beware: Ensure proper vaccination before travelling to densely populated countries to avoid deadly infectious diseases such as meningitis**

TORONTO, Sept. 10, 2012 /CNW Telbec/ - This October, thousands of Canadian Muslims will be embarking on one of the greatest religious observances in Islam, the Hajj and Umrah. Requiring months of mental, physical and spiritual preparation, pilgrims need to also remember the medical preparation required to start this journey.

The Hajj and Umrah is the Muslim ritual of pilgrimage to Mecca, a city located in Saudi Arabia. It is an annual religious ceremony that has been occurring for more than 14 centuries which takes place this year between October 24 and October 29. This Muslim ritual of pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, has been occurring for more than 14 centuries, and is an important part of the Muslim faith.

To ensure smooth entry into Saudi Arabia, Hajj pilgrims and Umrah visitors from all over the world are required to have a certificate proving that they were vaccinated against all four vaccine preventable strains of meningococcal meningitis not more than three years and not less than ten days before arriving in Saudi Arabia.

Meningitis is also common in densely populated areas, and vaccination is recommended for anyone travelling extensively or on long-term working assignments in the meningitis belt of Africa's northern Savannah and in other densely populated areas such as India and China.

"Meningitis can be transmitted by coughing, sneezing, sharing drinking glasses or eating utensils and can be deadly or lead to severe complications such as hearing loss, neurological damage, paralysis or limb loss," says Dr. Vivien Brown, Vice President, Medisys Health Group. "In large group settings like the Hajj or Umrah where over two million pilgrims can be present at a time, it is important to reduce the risks of infection by prevention, through vaccination."

Symptoms of bacterial meningitis can often be confused with a cold or common flu, yet it kills one in 10 of those infected, typically within the first 24 to 48 hours. The only way to prevent meningitis is through vaccination.

Following the Hajj in April 2000, an outbreak of meningitis occurred in Saudi Arabia infecting 225 people and taking the lives of 57. Since then, vaccination against meningococcal meningitis with a quadrivalent vaccine such as MENACTRA® to protect against serogroups A, C, Y and W135 has been mandatory for all pilgrims over the age of two making the journey to the Saudi Arabia.

"Even if you have been vaccinated against meningococcal disease strain C, you are still vulnerable to other strains that are prevalent both inside and outside of Canada. Conjugated quadrivalent vaccines such as MENACTRA® can still be used in people who have already been vaccinated against strain C," states Brown.

Sanofi Pasteur recognizes the specific needs of Canadian travelers and has developed a customized brochure for pilgrims travelling to the Hajj and Umrah. The new brochures have been distributed to travel agencies across Canada specializing in these pilgrimages. Travel agencies can contact Sanofi Pasteur Customer Service to obtain copies.

### **About MENACTRA® vaccine**

Sanofi Pasteur is a leading manufacturer of travel vaccines such as MENACTRA®. MENACTRA® vaccine is indicated for active immunization for the prevention of invasive meningococcal disease caused by N. meningitidis serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 in persons 2 to 55 years of age. MENACTRA® vaccine has over 6 years of real-world experience and over 40 million doses have been distributed worldwide.

To learn more about MENACTRA® vaccine, visit [www.menactra.ca](http://www.menactra.ca).

### **About Sanofi**

Sanofi, a global and diversified healthcare leader, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. Sanofi has core strengths in the field of healthcare with seven growth platforms: diabetes solutions, human vaccines, innovative drugs, consumer healthcare, emerging markets, animal health and the new Genzyme. Sanofi is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).

Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi, provides more than 1 billion doses of vaccine each year, making it possible to immunize more than 500 million people across the globe. A world leader in the vaccine industry, Sanofi Pasteur offers the broadest range of vaccines protecting against 20 infectious diseases. The company's heritage, to create vaccines that protect life, dates back more than a century. Sanofi Pasteur is the largest company entirely dedicated to vaccines. Every day, the company invests more than EUR 1 million in research and development. For more information, please visit: [www.sanofipasteur.com](http://www.sanofipasteur.com) or [www.sanofipasteur.us](http://www.sanofipasteur.us)

**Forward Looking Statements**

*This press release contains forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended. Forward-looking statements are statements that are not historical facts. These statements include projections and estimates and their underlying assumptions, statements regarding plans, objectives, intentions and expectations with respect to future financial results, events, operations, services, product development and potential, and statements regarding future performance. Forward-looking statements are generally identified by the words "expects", "anticipates", "believes", "intends", "estimates", "plans" and similar expressions. Although Sanofi's management believes that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are reasonable, investors are cautioned that forward-looking information and statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties, many of which are difficult to predict and generally beyond the control of Sanofi, that could cause actual results and developments to differ materially from those expressed in, or implied or projected by, the forward-looking information and statements. These risks and uncertainties include among other things, the uncertainties inherent in research and development, future clinical data and analysis, including post marketing, decisions by regulatory authorities, such as the FDA or the EMA, regarding whether and when to approve any drug, device or biological application that may be filed for any such product candidates as well as their decisions regarding labelling and other matters that could affect the availability or commercial potential of such product candidates, the absence of guarantee that the product candidates if approved will be commercially successful, the future approval and commercial success of therapeutic alternatives, the Group's ability to benefit from external growth opportunities, trends in exchange rates and prevailing interest rates, the impact of cost containment policies and subsequent changes thereto, the average number of shares outstanding as well as those discussed or identified in the public filings with the SEC and the AMF made by Sanofi, including those listed under "Risk Factors" and "Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements" in Sanofi's annual report on Form 20-F for the year ended December 31, 2011. Other than as required by applicable law, Sanofi does not undertake any obligation to update or revise any forward-looking information or statements.*

SOURCE: SANOFI PASTEUR

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