Seqirus donates vaccines to Fiji to alleviate increase in influenza

Melbourne, Australia – CSL's subsidiary, Seqirus, today announced the donation of 20,000 doses of seasonal influenza vaccine to the people of Fiji in order to help alleviate a spike in cases of severe influenza.

The Fijian Ministry of Health recently reported a notable increase in hospitalisations due to seasonal influenza, as well as the number of pregnant women testing positive for influenza virus H1N1 and consequently suffering Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI). Through a request facilitated by the World Health Organisation's Emerging Diseases Surveillance and Response Unit in Fiji, CSL has been able to provide an immediate donation of influenza vaccine manufactured at its facility in Melbourne, Australia.

"We are pleased to be able to rapidly respond to the Fijian government's request for support. This is part of our longstanding promise to deliver important medicines and protect the health of people around the world," said Seqirus Head of Medical Affairs, Asia Pacific, Dr Jane Leong.

"Seasonal influenza can result in very serious complications for high risk populations such as pregnant women, children and the elderly. We know that influenza vaccination is one of the most important ways to prevent the burden of this disease each year and are happy to provide assistance where possible to countries such as Fiji where these vaccines are not readily available," she said.

The Permanent Secretary for Health & Medical Services Dr Meciusela Tuicakau said that the Fijian Health Ministry is grateful for this timely donation of influenza vaccines.

"The flu season in Fiji has commenced and we are particularly concerned with more vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with non-communicable or other chronic diseases. The complications of flu are high for this vulnerable group and the influenza vaccine will assist with reducing the risk of complications," Dr Tuicakau said.

About Seasonal Influenza
Influenza is a common, highly contagious infectious disease that can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications in hundreds of thousands of people worldwide each year. Because transmission to others may occur one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick, the disease can be easily transmitted to others. Influenza can lead to clinical symptoms varying from mild to moderate respiratory illness to severe complications, hospitalisation and in some cases death. Annual influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent flu. It is very important for people who are at-risk of complications from influenza, and for those in close contact with at-risk people.

www.seqirus.com

Media Contact:
Jemimah Pentland
Head of Communications, Asia Pacific
Ph: +61 3 9389 3473 | Mb: 0412 635 483
Jemimah.Pentland@csl.com.au