Rabies Vaccine Supply Update – February 3, 2009

Guidelines for Ordering Rabies Vaccine

There are only 2 companies in the United States that supply human rabies vaccines:
- Novartis who produces RabAvert
- Sanofi Pasteur who produces Imovax

There are only 2 companies in the United States that supply rabies immunoglobulin (RIG):
- Talecris Biotherapeutics who produces Hyperrab
- Sanofi Pasteur who produces Imogam

Currently there is not a shortage of RIG and product is available from both suppliers. RIG can be ordered through either supplier listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyperrab</th>
<th>Imogam Rabies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talecris Biotherapeutics Inc</td>
<td>Sanofi Pasteur, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 110526</td>
<td>Box 187 Discovery Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4101 Research Commons</td>
<td>Swiftwater, PA 18370-0187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 T. W. Alexander Dr</td>
<td>(800) 822-2463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Triangle Park, NC 27709</td>
<td>(570) 839-7187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(800) 243-4153</td>
<td>fax: (570) 839-0955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.talecrisbiouusa.com">www.talecrisbiouusa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.sanofipasteur.us">www.sanofipasteur.us</a></td>
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Currently there is a shortage of vaccine; however, vaccine is now available from both suppliers.

Post Exposure Treatment
- **Sanofi-Pasteur**: Sanofi-Pasteur requires that health care providers confer with state public health officials to obtain a confirmation code (that changes often) before processing vaccine orders. Please contact NC VPH at 919-733-3410 during business hours or 919-733-3419 after hours to obtain the confirmation code required by Sanofi-Pasteur to order rabies vaccine.

- **Novartis**: Effective 10/09/08 RabAvert is again available for rabies post exposure treatment. No password is required to place orders for vaccine. Contact Novartis at 800-244-7668 or your local Novartis wholesale distributor to order vaccine.

Pre Exposure Vaccination:
- **Sanofi-Pasteur**: Pre exposure vaccine is not available from Sanofi Pasteur.

- **Novartis**: Novartis is supplying pre exposure vaccine for high risk workers (laboratorians, animal control, veterinarians and technicians, wildlife care workers), but vaccine is not available for foreign travelers. Vaccine orders should be placed directly with your Novartis wholesale distributor, there is no password required.

NCDHHS, Veterinary Public Health is available 24/7 for consultation. During business hours please call 919-733-3410 or after hours call 919-733-3419.
In Search of … Free Rabies Vaccine & RIG for the Indigent

A Brief Overview of Patient Assistance Programs (PAP) that distribute Rabies products.

Because of the prevailing economic conditions in the United States, more & more people in North Carolina will become unemployed or no longer have adequate health insurance. There is an increased likelihood that patients seeking medical attention will not be able to afford any required or recommended services & products. Since animals that are considered a higher risk for transmitting rabies do not pay attention to recessions and/or any human’s personal economic misfortunes, the volume of patients presenting to a health care facility due to a bite or some type of exposure to such animals will remain relatively unchanged. For those patients who are assessed as exposed to rabies and rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is recommended, there will undoubtedly be a greater need for some sort of outside assistance among those patients; however a large percentage of these patients will also not be eligible for state or federal medical assistance. Although there are numerous pharmaceutical companies & non-profit organizations that handle & distribute free products to people who otherwise cannot afford medications, many of the patient assistance programs (PAPs) may not be well known, nor does every PAP actually handle rabies-related products. As of late 2008, listed below are PAPs that have been identified to distribute rabies products or can direct patients and/or health providers can obtain rabies products.

It is very important to realize that the eligibility requirements for assistance among PAPs are not uniform; some PAPs may have criteria that are more restrictive than others, an example is the level of income that is relative to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines can vary from 100% to 200%. For example, the NC Dept of Public Health’s FPL is 100% whereas most non-profit organizations & manufacturers are usually 200%

In the U.S. there are two brands of rabies vaccine, and two brands of rabies immune globulin (RIG). One brand of RIG, HyperRab immune globulin (Talecris Biopharmaceuticals), is not known to be available in any PAPs screened. However the NC DPH free rabies vaccine program does have this particular biological product available for distribution for any NC resident that the eligibility requirements.

Disclaimer: the NC Veterinary Public Health does not have a recommendation regarding the PAPs listed. The assessments of each listed PAP are by members of the NC Veterinary Public Health Program (VPH) who evaluated these sites, but is neither policy nor opinion of the State of North Carolina.

A. Manufacturers’ Individual PAPs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand (Biological Product)</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Imovax® (vaccine)</td>
<td>Sanofi Pasteur Inc.</td>
<td>866-801-5655</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sanofipasteur.us">www.sanofipasteur.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imogam® Rabies-HT (RIG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.vaccineshoppe.com">www.vaccineshoppe.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RabAvert® (vaccine)</td>
<td>Novartis Vaccines</td>
<td>800-589-0837</td>
<td><a href="http://www.novartis-vaccines.com">www.novartis-vaccines.com</a></td>
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B. NeedyMeds.org (www.needymeds.org) email: info@needymeds.com

This is a 501(c) organization that works much like an entry point for any person who is looking for help in obtaining medications. It is indexed by drug (both brand & generic, the list of medications is extensive), diseases & conditions, gov’t PAPs, & even for children. It offers assistance in filing the necessary paperwork including the applications relevant to the patients’ needs. Each medication has its own page with the name of the PAP, contact information, eligibility requirements and the procedure to apply for that particular medication. Application forms can be downloaded through links on the same page. This is probably the most comprehensive umbrella site readily available.

C. RxAssist ([www.rxassist.org](http://www.rxassist.org)) email: info@rxassist.org

This program functions more as a database for manufacturer-run PAPs than as an assistance program itself. It is based at the Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, operated by Volunteers in Health Care & sponsored by AstraZeneca (the products available however are not limited to only the sponsor’s brand). RxAssist does not handle distribution but can direct patients & health providers to numerous manufacturer PAP sites. It also can direct to other service programs such as manufacturer drug discount cards. The FAQs are comprehensive (including topics like Medicare Part D & generic drug programs) and also has a listserv for news impacting access to medications. Registration is required however this is free.

D. PatientAssistance.com, Inc. ([www.patientassistance.com](http://www.patientassistance.com))

This 501(c) organization is strongly patient-oriented & emphasizes on how to apply at a PAP site, however it is not the easiest site to navigate because the database is searchable on the ‘Programs’ page only, and lacks cross-linking of medications & brands; an example is the rabies products (brand or generic names) are not listed in the ‘Drugs’ tab but can be found via a search at ‘Programs.’ Each individual product has its contact & eligibility information on that particular product’s page. The one good feature is that the PAPs found here are indexed by the brand names available, and it is very extensive for other medications.

E. RxHope ([www.rxhope.com](http://www.rxhope.com))

This site is probably one of the better known non-profit PAPs, however the experience in obtaining products has been rated as slow. When accessed in November 2008, the contact information for sanofi-pasteur products is out of date. The database is searchable.

F. Free Medicine Program ([www.freemedicineprogram.org](http://www.freemedicineprogram.org))

This program (FMP) offers comprehensive list of medications, however unlike most others this website is populated with numerous advertisements, some from PAPs and some manufacturers, but many appear to be a ‘buyer beware’ type. Registration (user name & password) is required to be able to access & search this site for product availability. There are some caveats about this organization: information about the program itself is lacking, the person has to work through FMP & they will act as the advocate for that person, and this requires an application process & a $5 processing fee to join. Rabies products can be found; ImoGam is misspelled. The letter designation is appropriate.


The State of North Carolina has on hand a small stockpile of vaccine & RIG for NC residents who are eligible. The program itself is maintained by the NC State Laboratory for Public Health (SLPH), however all requests must be cleared by VPH for rabies products to be released. The criteria for eligibility are 1. the patient is a NC resident, 2. The products are recommended by a licensed physician in NC, and 3. all patients are within 100% of the FPL that fiscal year, has no insurance that will pay for PEP and is not eligible for state assistance (Medicaid); the affidavit must be notarized. The local health departments are the points of contact, and products can only be sent during the work week. An affidavit must be filled out and sent back to the SLPH, not to VPH. Only product is provided; there is no reimbursement for all other health provider services. A copy of the affidavit can be found in the “North Carolina Manual for Rabies Prevention and Animal Bite Management” which is available & downloadable on the VPH website on the [Rabies resources for the medical professional](http://www.rabies.ncdhhs.gov) page.