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US Approves First Vaccine for Hepatitis A

by **Gina Pugliese, RN, MS**
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The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave SmithKline Beecham PLC approval to distribute Havrix, the first vaccine licensed for preventing hepatitis A. The US was the 41st country to license Havrix. An FDA spokesperson

said the agency wanted to be sure that the vaccine caused no significant adverse effects in recipients. An estimated 1.3 million people in Europe and Asia have received Havrix since 1991.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that hepatitis A cases are under-

reported considerably. About 23,000 cases are officially reported each year, but CDC estimates that the virus infects 150,000 Americans each year.

FROM: Altman L. U.S. approves first vaccine for hepatitis A. *New York Times* February 23, 1995.