

Polio eradication initiative receives \$40.4m from Rotary

The global effort to end polio is receiving an additional \$40.4m boost from Rotary to support immunisation activities and surveillance spearheaded by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.



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Polio is on track to become the second human disease ever to be eliminated from the world (smallpox is the first). To date, Rotary has helped 194 countries stop the transmission of polio through the mass immunisation of children. Rotary's new funding commitment targets countries where children remain at risk of contracting this incurable, but vaccine-preventable, disease.

"We are in the final push to end polio, but as long as the disease exists anywhere in the world, all children are at risk," said Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee chair, Michael McGovern. "With just two endemic countries remaining - Pakistan and Afghanistan - we must continue to raise awareness and funds needed to end this paralysing disease. Our grants show Rotary's commitment to staying the course until we wipe out polio forever."

Contribution to Africa

Following Nigeria's polio-free milestone, and no cases of wild polio in all of Africa in more than a year, Rotary is contributing \$26.8m to African countries to ensure the disease never returns to the continent: Burkina Faso (\$1.6m), Cameroon (\$2.7m), Chad (\$2.6m), Democratic Republic of Congo (\$499,579), Equatorial Guinea (\$685,000), Kenya (\$750,102), Madagascar (\$562,820), Mali (\$1.5m), Niger (\$3m), Nigeria (\$6.9m), Somalia (\$4.9m) and South Sudan (\$1.5m).

Rotary has earmarked \$6.7m to polio-endemic Pakistan, \$400,000 to Iraq and \$5.3m to India. The remaining \$990,542 will support immunisation activities and surveillance.

Rotary provides grant funding to polio eradication initiative partners UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, which work with the governments and Rotary members in polio-affected and high-risk countries to plan and carry out immunisation activities.

To date, Rotary has contributed more than \$1.5bn to fight polio. Through 2018, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match two-to-one every dollar Rotary commits to polio eradication (up to \$35m a year). Currently, there have been only 51 cases of polio reported in the world in 2015, down from about 350,000 a year when the initiative launched in 1988.

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