

Rotary adds \$35m to polio-fighting coffers

Following three new cases of polio in Nigeria in the last two months, [Rotary](#) has provided an additional \$35m in grants in support of the global effort to end the disease.

While significant strides have been made against the paralysing disease, with just 26 cases reported in 2016, polio remains a threat in hard-to-reach and underserved areas and conflict zones.



Source [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

Rapid response plans

The Nigerian cases are the first to be detected in the country since July 2014. So, funding for polio eradication is particularly vital as rapid response plans are now in action in Nigeria and surrounding countries to stop the outbreak quick and prevent its spread.

Rotary and its partners in the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) are acting to immunise children in Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin (Chad, northern Cameroon, southern Niger and the Central African Republic). Nearly a quarter of the money will support the emergency response campaigns in this at-risk region.

Immunisation campaigns

"This situation underscores the extreme importance of widespread immunisation campaigns and strong disease surveillance in all countries of the world until polio is fully eradicated," says Michael K McGovern, chair of Rotary's International PolioP committee. "This funding will help ensure that Rotary and our GPEI partners are doing all that we can to redouble our effort and protect the progress in polio-free parts of the world, as well as stop transmission in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and now Nigeria."

To protect all children from polio, experts say \$1.5bn is urgently needed. Without full funding and political commitment, the disease could return to previously polio-free countries, putting children everywhere at risk.

In addition to supporting the response in the Lake Chad Basin region, funding has been allocated to support polio eradication efforts in Afghanistan (\$5,55m), Pakistan (\$12,36m), India (\$875,000), Somalia (\$1,77m), South Sudan (\$2,04m), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (\$2m). A final grant in the amount of \$2,25m will support key World Health Organisation (WHO) staff.

Rotary launched its polio immunisation programme PolioPlus in 1985, and in 1988 became a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative with the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and was later joined by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Since the initiative launched, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99,9%, from about 350,000 cases a year to 26 confirmed to date in 2016.

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