

New Vaccine, a Game Changer in the Eradication of Polio

Story by Ed Kolybaba on Nov 19, 2020



According to Carolyn Ferguson, Senior Gift Officer with The Rotary Foundation, speaking to Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise, a new vaccine produced by Gavi may be the “game changer” in the quest to eradicate polio from the world.

The new live oral vaccine, driven by research with Gavi, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will ensure that the virus cannot revert back to paralysis addressing cases that have been vaccine derived.



Ever since 1988 when The Rotary Foundation partnered with other world organizations to eradicate polio, the number of polio cases has continued to decline throughout the world. Type 2 polio was eradicated in 2015 and Type 3 polio was eradicated in 2019, leaving only Type 1. In 1988, polio was prevalent in 125 countries. That number was reduced to three countries in 2018. At the present time, polio has been eradicated by 99.9 percent throughout the world, only leaving cases in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Polio, a highly infectious and sometimes deadly disease has plagued the world since ancient times. Progress against the disease has been made possible by the development and expanded use of effective vaccines, particularly the more easily administered and less expensive oral poliovirus vaccine, and mass immunization campaigns. The concerted efforts of Rotarians around the world through Rotary International, along with five other partners, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Health Organization, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United National Children’s Fund, and a recent partner, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, are instrumental in achieving the goal of 1988.