

## ***PolioPlus Infrastructure Supports Efforts to Minimize COVID-19 Outbreaks***

Story by Ed Kolybaba on Nov 19, 2020



The PolioPlus program infrastructure is supporting efforts to prevent COVID-19 in parts of the world. Building on decades of experience stopping polio outbreaks, Rotary and its partners are taking a critical role in protecting communities from this unprecedented pandemic.



For example, in Afghanistan, over 3,750 community volunteers who typically support polio surveillance in Afghanistan are now promoting handwashing and positive hygiene practices in communities to reduce transmission and exposure to COVID-19. In Pakistan, polio staffs are aiding efforts to strengthen surveillance and raise awareness about COVID-19 across the country. The team has trained hundreds of surveillance officers while also supporting the development of a new data system that is fully integrated with the system used for polio. Various tools such as face masks and personal protection kits, a workforce and extensive surveillance networks are being used to support preparedness and response activities in many countries, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Polio volunteers and staff are involved in tracing contacts and testing for COVID-19, combatting misinformation, sensitizing health professionals on the disease, repairing ventilators, assisting in the set up and monitoring of quarantine sites, coordinating activities and providing transportation for various COVID activities.

These are only two of many endeavours being made by staff and volunteers associated with polio eradication and that truly represent the 'Plus' in PolioPlus.