

# Health Bulletin

## Putting An End To Polio

(NAPSA)—Here's good news about health: There has never been a more opportune time to finish off polio, with new cases at an all-time low and the wild poliovirus now confined to only a few pockets in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan—and you can be a part of the solution. In less than a generation, the number of reported cases has fallen by 99 percent, mostly due to mass immunization drives.



**A child receives the oral polio vaccine. Credit: Jean-Marc Giboux**

The problem, public health experts say, is a \$700 million funding gap that threatens to undermine all the progress achieved against the disease. If the eradication effort stalls now, polio could rebound quickly, potentially paralyzing 250,000 children a year. Unvaccinated children everywhere, including those in countries now polio free, would be at greatly increased risk.

In 1988, Rotary International joined with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a worldwide effort to eradicate this crippling childhood disease. To date, Rotary has contributed nearly \$1.2 billion to the effort.

A new, innovative, interactive online campaign gives everyone a chance to support the fight to end polio by joining Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Gates, Jackie Chan, Amanda Peet and other world figures and celebrities already participating in Rotary's "This Close" campaign (as in, "this close" to ending polio) to raise awareness and support for polio eradication.

You simply upload a photo of yourself to [www.endpolionow.org](http://www.endpolionow.org), to be edited into a constantly expanding promotional spot—the "World's Biggest Commercial." You'll get an e-mail with a direct link to your image.

You can also buy "End Polio Now," an album of songs performed by Rotary polio ambassadors from the music industry, including polio survivors Itzhak Perlman (classical violin), Donovan (folk rock) and Staff Benda Bilili (Congolese soukous).

The album is available via iTunes and [shop.rotary.org](http://shop.rotary.org).



**Editor's note:** Rotary is a global humanitarian organization with more than 1.2 million members in 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Rotary members are men and women who are business, professional and community leaders with a shared commitment to make the world a better place through humanitarian service.