

POLIO UPDATE – District 1220 June 2015

There is much good news this month regarding our fight to eradicate Polio. We are not only so close to completing our mission, but so very close to doing so. It is going to take some more time and most likely some very hard work to accomplish worldwide eradication but we will do it.

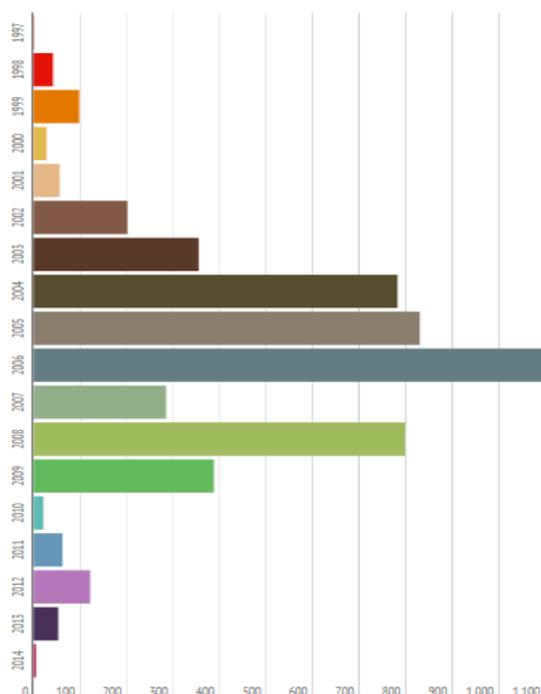
Good News –

Nigeria has gone all of 2015 without any cases of Polio. However, it cannot be declared Polio-free until 2018. Nigeria's last case of wild Polio was reported on 24th July 2014. This means Nigeria will be declared Polio-free in 2018 if no more cases of Polio are reported.

This would also be great news for the continent of Africa as well which has not had anyone contracting Polio since January 24th 2015. We may see Africa declared Polio-free by 2019. That would be fantastic to welcome in 2020 with Africa Polio-free!

The graph below shows two things: how bad things can get in one country alone with Polio and how good things can get with a concentrated eradication effort.

POLIO IN NIGERIA



World Health Organisation Criteria on Being Declared Polio Free

So, how does a country or continent get certified Polio-free? There are many theories about how and when an area is certified Polio-free. Below are the World Health Organisation's criteria for such a certification and I hope this clears up any misconceptions.

- 1) **STEP ONE - measured from the date that paralysis commences in the last case of "wild polio"**. (Wild polio refers to a form of the virus that was common in pre-vaccination times and caused a large burden of disease. It has been virtually eliminated except in the countries where polio is still endemic.) **If a year passes without any new cases diagnosed, the WHO removes a country from its list of polio-endemic countries.**
- 2) **STEP TWO - To be certified polio-free, WHO rules require that a country and its regional neighbours prove that they have stopped the transmission of the polio virus for at least three consecutive years.** Detailed laboratory testing data must be submitted to support this.

NOTE: Being removed from the list of Polio-Endemic Countries DOES NOT mean that country has achieved Polio-Free status.

More Good News –

Here is an article worth all our attention in the fight against Polio. Not only have we worked hard to eradicate Polio but spin-off technology has come about to help fight all deadly viruses worldwide. Go to the following link and you will find a new vaccine delivery method that will revolutionise vaccine distribution in the future.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/10/health/polio-vaccine-anniversary/index.html>

Even More Good News –

Amanda Watkins asked me to pass on to you the latest information on this campaign. I am pleased to report the great success yesterday by Judith Diment, Anna Rieder and all those working in Strasbourg over the last few days collecting more than 80 further MEP signatures. Here is yesterday's report we were all hoping for.

We are extremely pleased to let you know that more than 377 MEPs (the required threshold) have signed our Written Declaration on continued European Union support for polio eradication!

This is a major achievement after 3 months campaigning by everyone involved ... encouraging MEPs to support polio eradication as an EU policy and funding priority. Formal adoption and announcement may take place tomorrow still or else on Thursday.

A very big thank you and congratulations to you all for now. For the twitter-savvy amongst us, it may be good to already start creating some buzz online while we will also develop some thoughts how to communicate this success for the GPEI.

Please see a suggested tweet: Let's make polio history! @Europarl_EN just adopted declaration on EU support & funding for polio eradication. @WHO @Rotary @UNICEF

Thank you for taking the time to read through this District update. We hope you have found it informative. If you would like a speaker on the subject of Polio Plus please feel free to contact me. I will be glad to come and speak to your club about Polio Plus.

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