



**World Health  
Organization**

Western Pacific  
Philippines

# Polio vaccination must intensify until the last child is reached and fully protected

## January campaign rounds aim to vaccinate all children under-5 in Mindanao and in NCR

30 January 2020 | News release

Since the re-emergence of polio in the Philippines was announced by the Department of Health (DOH) in September 2019, the synchronized polio vaccination campaigns rolled out from November to December of 2019 in targeted regions, have reached a total of 1,404,517 (exceeding target) children below 5 years old in the National Capital Region (NCR) and 2,937,327 (95%) children in Mindanao.

The call to vaccinate further intensifies with four new confirmed cases recorded in January, bringing up the total cases to 16 across the country. All new cases are children below 5-years of age. They are from Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat in Mindanao as well as the first recorded case in NCR, in Quezon City.

“Enhanced surveillance has enabled us to identify new cases; we must not leave any unvaccinated child behind. We would like to congratulate the Department of Health, local government leaders and the health workers in Mindanao, including BARMM and NCR on their efforts for reaching 95% or more of the targeted children during the previous rounds. We must continue this momentum and continue to work together to stop polio transmission in the Philippines,” said WHO Representative in the Philippines Dr Rabindra Abeyasinghe. “Let’s not be complacent – we know that polio is a serious

disease, but we also know that it can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine.”

“Despite the promising coverage, the circulating poliovirus still pose tremendous risk to children, until one child remains infected and not fully vaccinated. This is evidenced by the recent increase in confirmed cases,” said UNICEF Philippines Representative Oyun Dendevnorov. “UNICEF is working in collaboration with DOH, WHO and other partners, to boost up vaccination coverage. We must continue to strive together to reach all target population in the upcoming rounds of immunization. Polio has no cure; complete vaccination offers the only chance to protect our children and to eliminate polio from the Philippines once again.”

UNICEF and WHO have been supporting DOH and the Ministry of Health of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in its Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio vaccination campaigns and monitoring of the polio outbreak. Both organizations are long-standing partners of the Philippine Government in working towards routine immunization for all children in the country.

Parents and guardians are urged to have all children under five years vaccinated in the ongoing rounds of Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio from 20 January to 2 February in all regions of Mindanao, and 27 January to 7 February in NCR.

The transmission of polio, spread through faecal-oral route, can only be stopped if the immunisation coverage reaches over 95% of the targeted children. The risk cannot be mitigated as long as some children are not vaccinated regularly and especially during an outbreak.