

Polio eradication hinges on four countries

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Successfully global eradication of polio depends four countries' efforts to vaccinate children, the Swiss-based Advisory Committee on Polio Eradication said.

The committee said most countries that experienced recent polio outbreaks are again polio-free through targeted vaccine and faster tracking methods, the World Health Organization said in a news release. In the Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan, there is a persistent failure to vaccinate all children.

"Eradicating polio is no longer a technical issue alone. Success is now more a question of the political will to ensure effective administration at all levels so that all children get vaccine," said Stephen Cochi, ACPE chairman and senior adviser to the Director of the Global Immunization Division at the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The four countries should set realistic target dates for stopping polio transmission, WHO said, adding that improvements in vaccinating all children in these areas has been incremental.

ACPE estimated that it would take more than a year for Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan to end polio.

The global eradication initiative is spearheaded by WHO, national governments, Rotary International, the CDC and UNICEF.

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