

## RI President & TRF Chair on 'Our Involvement with COVID-19 vaccination'



Dear district governors,

In these difficult days, we are so heartened to receive such uplifting reports on the unrelenting efforts of our Rotary members who have responded in their communities against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, the single question we hear time and again as we traverse the virtual world is, “Are we getting involved with COVID vaccination?” Considering the success and expertise we have gained in our polio eradication effort, this question is both natural and timely.

The answer is yes. We will have an important role in the months ahead.

This does not mean we will deviate in any way from our avowed commitment to eradicating polio, which remains our highest priority and will continue to be our only corporate program. Polio vaccinations and surveillance activities must continue unabated, as must our effort to raise \$50 million per year for this effort.

But as we know, there is a pandemic sweeping the world. The Board of RI and the Trustees of our Foundation met in joint session and have agreed that we have a role to play.

We ask you, then, to encourage your clubs to:

- Utilize Rotary’s knowledge of vaccine safety and efficacy based on our polio eradication experience to conduct vaccination education and communication outreach in your communities. This will need to be tailored to local contexts to address unique cultural and regional needs. Your leadership will be critical in crafting the appropriate messages and strategies.
- Engage, where appropriate, with our current polio eradication partners WHO and UNICEF at the country level to offer Rotary’s support to COVID-19 response activities, including vaccination efforts.
- Partner at the local level with governments, corporations, and foundations to support Rotary activities at the country level.
- Through hundreds of global grants and projects, Rotary members have demonstrated what we can accomplish to raise awareness, deliver critical personal protection equipment, and provide support for

frontline health workers. As you learn of work being done in your area, please encourage clubs to add to the more than 3,000 projects already registered on Rotary Showcase (please log in to My Rotary first, and navigate to Rotary Showcase). We would like to know about them.

We have one final call to action: Help us combat the powerful, growing force of vaccine resistance and misinformation. Our advocacy in our communities will be critical — we need to spread the message about the power of vaccines to save lives.

Working together, we have done so much to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, to care for our communities, and to prepare Rotarians for the work ahead.

We do this for ourselves and for future generations. We do this as part of our obligation to support our world as it faces the most significant challenge of this generation.

Thank you.

Holger Knaack  
President, Rotary International

K.R. Ravindran  
Chair, The Rotary Foundation