
POSITION STATEMENT ON COVID-19

POSITION STATEMENT TO ALL DISTRICT GOVERNORS AND CLUB PRESIDENTS,
From: Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation

We see the decision to vaccinate as a civic and humanitarian imperative. Rotary is not a political or religious organization, it is a service organization and this is the lens through which we are advising you of our position.

- 1) Global vaccination is the path to ending the pandemic and the emergence of new variants. Rotary endorses and strongly encourages vaccination for all individuals including our members who are currently able to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In areas where COVID-19 is surging, communities are facing extreme challenges, health systems are overwhelmed, and contentious rhetoric is dividing us. It is critical that the virus be contained so that the world may begin to heal. To that end, the purpose of this statement is to reinforce Rotary's position.
- 2) Misinformation has become an "infodemic" that hinders the fight against COVID-19. In line with our Four-Way Test, Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation are committed to providing our members with science-based information.
- 3) Rotary staff at One Rotary Center were required to be vaccinated by 10 October 2021, as a criterion for employment after that date. RI's employee vaccination rate stands at over 99 percent.
- 4) Globally, Rotary is actively engaged in assuring equity in vaccine access to all people. Our efforts have included advocacy with the G-20, and a proof-of-concept program with GAVI/COVAX to leverage our frontline experience with polio eradication to facilitate vaccine delivery in several low- and middle-income countries where Rotarians are active. While we know many clubs are already deeply involved in COVID-19 prevention, we are working on additional strategies to multiply our collective efforts. GAVI/COVAX is a partnership including WHO and UNICEF focused on global access and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.
- 5) Those children for whom vaccines are not currently available are at significant risk. Until vaccines are available for all children, the vaccination of adults is the best way to protect children who cannot be vaccinated. Pediatric admissions for COVID-19 are rising precipitously in areas of low vaccination.
- 6) Rotary salutes health care workers everywhere as they continue to provide lifesaving services. Local recognition of these heroes by each of our clubs can help to encourage them to continue their important work. Rotary abhors any harassment and attacks on healthcare workers.
- 7) Rotary and Rotaract clubs are encouraged to
 - a. set good examples by being exemplary role models;
 - b. redouble their efforts to support COVID-19 treatment, prevention, and vaccination efforts.
- 8) Vaccines have proven to be one of the greatest advances of modern medicine. The World Health Organization estimates that vaccines save between 2 to 3 million children's lives each year, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative estimates the polio vaccine has saved more than 19 million children from paralysis. Vaccines are safe, effective, and are responsible for eliminating or controlling many other vaccine-preventable diseases such as smallpox, measles, rubella, and Ebola. And now, there is the opportunity to end the COVID-19 pandemic through vaccines.
- 9) The eradication of polio remains a goal of the highest order for Rotary. We can apply the lessons we have learned in fighting polio to the efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.