World Immunization Week and LCIF Share the Life-Saving Value of Vaccines

Lions Clubs International Foundation continues to help those in need by taking part in World Immunization Week. Through this event, Lions and their partners are encouraging families to vaccinate their children and raising awareness of the life-saving value of vaccines.

Lions around the world advocate for routine immunization in their communities while assisting the Measles Initiative, a group of organizations dedicated to the elimination of measles. World Immunization Week, beginning on April 21, is an opportunity for Lions to continue advocating for routine immunizations alongside the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Foundation and other Lions partners.

In Haiti, Lions are conducting a nationwide measles vaccination campaign to launch World Immunization Week activities in their country. LCIF is supporting this effort with US$166,000 for measles vaccines.

“Haiti remains at risk for cases imported from other parts of the world because of low vaccine coverage rates here for both polio and measles/rubella among infants,” said Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary.

World Immunization Week and Lions will help Haiti’s government reach a goal of vaccinating 90 percent of the youth population. Haiti is just one of the countries that Lions are supporting by advocating for routine immunization - Lions and LCIF are committed to raising US$10 million for measles vaccinations worldwide.

Lions are also campaigning for measles vaccinations in over 20 countries where measles is a priority, as well as fundraising and providing education in over 200 countries. In countries like Nigeria, for instance, Lions are sharing information about measles through public outreach, education and government advocacy.

Measles is the leading cause of death among young children even though there is a safe and cost-effective vaccine available. Nearly 450 children still die every day from measles. Even if a child does not die from contracting measles, they could suffer from serious complications including blindness, pneumonia or encephalitis.

Routine immunization is one of the most successful and cost effective public health initiatives today. Vaccinations prevent between 2 and 3 million deaths every year from many diseases, including measles, mumps, polio, tetanus and yellow fever.
An estimated 1.7 million children died from vaccine-preventable disease in 2008 before reaching their fifth birthday, according to WHO. Lions around the world have dedicated their time and funds to helping the UN Foundation, WHO and partners at the Measles Initiative to vaccinate children, work with governments and educate the public about the deadly measles disease.

Find out how to celebrate the World Immunization Week with your local Lions by contacting the Lions Clubs International Foundation at lcifdevelopment@lionsclubs.org.

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About Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)

Lions Clubs International Foundation is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International. Established in 1968, LCIF is committed to providing humanitarian services to those in need, including providing disaster relief, saving sight, supporting youth, vaccinating against measles and combating disability. LCIF was ranked by a Financial Times study as the #1 non-governmental organization with which to partner. Learn more at lcif.org.

About the Measles Initiative

Launched in 2001, the Measles Initiative—led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the World Health Organization—provides technical and financial support to governments and communities for mass vaccination campaigns and disease surveillance around the world. The Initiative has supported the vaccination of more than 700 million children helping to reduce measles deaths by 78 percent globally (compared to 2000). To learn more, visit measlesinitiative.org.