

# *National Polio Vaccination Campaign to Begin Later This Month*

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Havana, February 9 (RHC)-- The 56th National Polio Vaccination Campaign will begin later this month nationwide.

During this year's campaign, whose first stage will take place from February 20th through the 26th, with a 2nd phase also from April 17th through the 23rd, over 471 thousand children will receive doses of the oral vaccine.

Dr. Francisco Durán García, National Director for Epidemiology with the Ministry of Public Health, said the campaign will be carried out in neighborhood polyclinics.

He further said that among the group scheduled to be vaccinated are 363,778 children under three years of age who will be administered doses during both phases of the campaign, while a total of 108,110 nine-year-old children will get a single booster dose during the second phase in April.

Since the first national polio vaccination campaign was launched back in 1962 up until the 55th such initiative last year, approximately 83.8 million doses of polio vaccine have been administered, providing

for all Cubans under 69 years of age to be protected against the disease.

Cuba became the first country in all of Latin America to be declared polio free, maintaining a vaccination rate of 99.5% among all population groups.

Cuba's vaccination campaigns have provided for the elimination of 14 infectious diseases, while nine others no longer represent health problems on the island. Added to this is the fact that five diseases show really low incidence rates, while 29 others are under control.

The country's mortality rate from infectious diseases is less than 1%.

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