

Global Immunization and Gavi

Global immunization efforts have **saved at least 154 million lives** over the past 50 years, including 101 million infants.

Vaccines are one of the most effective public health tools ever created. They prevent illness, disability, and death from diseases. Today, vaccination saves millions of lives annually. Yet millions of children around the world still miss out on routine vaccines. Not because the science or technology doesn't exist, but because access is unequal.

Global immunization is about making sure everyone, everywhere can access lifesaving vaccines. This is one of the smartest investments countries can make in healthier populations, stronger economies, and a safer world.

What are Global Immunization Programs?

Vaccines protect people—especially children—from infectious diseases like measles, polio, tetanus, pneumonia, and rotavirus (which causes deadly diarrhea). Most vaccines are given early in childhood, when the immune system is still developing and the risk of severe illness is the highest.

Successful immunization programs depend on more than vaccines alone. They require:

- Trained health workers to deliver vaccines safely
- Reliable supply chains and cold storage (so vaccines stay effective)
- Strong health systems that can reach every community
- Trust and engagement with families and caregivers

When these pieces are in place, vaccines work remarkably well.

How Big Is the Challenge?

Infectious diseases are among the leading killers of children. But globally, about 1 in 5 children lack access to lifesaving vaccines. This leaves them at risk of death, disability, and illness from preventable diseases. In 2024, over 14.3 million children under the age of 1 were “zero-dose”—meaning they didn't receive any basic vaccines.

Disease	Approximate Number of Child Deaths Annually ¹
Pneumonia	700,000
Diarrhea	480,000
Malaria	475,000
Tuberculosis	250,000

¹ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) [Childhood Diseases Program Overview](#)

The Role of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

The biggest single driver of global immunization progress is Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a public-private partnership that helps lower-income countries afford vaccines and strengthen their immunization programs. Since its creation Gavi has helped immunize more than [1.2 billion](#) children and prevent more than 20 million future deaths.

Gavi works by pooling donor resources, negotiating lower vaccine prices, and supporting country-led immunization plans. This approach has made vaccines far more affordable and predictable for countries with limited resources.

Spotlight on Pneumonia: Through innovative financing and pooled purchasing, Gavi helped reduce the price of pneumonia vaccines by more than [40 percent](#) over the past decade. Lower prices mean more children can be reached, and countries can stretch limited budgets further.

Gavi has a strong track record of success. Now, they have [a plan](#) to help countries vaccinate 500 million more children and save 8-9 million more lives over the next 5 years. Sustained partnership and investment will be key to achieving this.

Immunization as a U.S. Global Health Priority

There is a clear moral case to support global immunization. No child should die from a disease we know how to prevent, simply because of where they were born.

For decades, The U.S. has been a leading supporter of global immunization and a key donor to Gavi. Through this partnership, countries have been able to introduce new vaccines, reach underserved communities, and recover from disruptions like pandemics and conflict. Many of these lifesaving vaccines came from scientific breakthroughs led by the U.S. government and U.S. companies. These investments have saved lives and strengthened health systems. But progress requires sustained support.

For twenty years, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to fund Gavi and its remarkable impact. Even when the Trump Administration has defied Congress' directive to keep funding this lifesaving work, members of Congress aren't giving up. They're pushing to make sure the U.S. comes back to the table, doing its part alongside dozens of other countries.

What Can Congress Do?

As a global partner, the U.S. Congress can play a critical role through funding Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – and making sure the Administration actually delivers those funds – so countries can plan, purchase vaccines, and reach the most vulnerable children.