



BARRICK (NIUGINI) LIMITED
(Manager of the Porgera Joint Venture)
PO Box 484
Mount Hagen 281, WHP
Papua New Guinea

Tel: (657) 547 8200 (Porgera)
(675) 547 8201
Fax: (675) 547 8132
Tel: (675) 545 1288 (Mt Hagen)
Fax: (675) 545 1514

PO Box 851
Port Moresby 121, NCD
Papua New Guinea

Tel: (675) 322 4800
Fax: (675) 322 4824
Telex: 23369

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PRESS RELEASE

PJV supports nationwide polio vaccine program

PORT MORESBY, 07 MARCH, 2019, 1300HRS: The Porgera-Paiela District Health Service, under the Enga Provincial Health Authority anticipates to achieve 100% target coverage in the fourth round of polio vaccine campaign being administered nationwide through the National Health Department and support agencies from 25 February – 8 March 2019.

This is being made possible with Porgera Joint Venture's (PJV) support of K161,000 toward helicopter hire to fly teams to nine remote locations in the Paiela Hewa Local Level Government commencing on the 5th of March.

These drop off sites will include Iffiki, Papaki, Pyaona, Allelem, Weonga, Takopa, Aspringa, Taronga and Kole.

PJV Manager Community Relations and Engagement (CRE) Manager Meck Minnala said the support was necessary to reach the remote locations and close in the gap on the nationwide coverage target.

"Without this support, there would still be a gap in the nationwide target of 100% coverage in polio vaccine and this poses a risk or weakness that can potentially undermine everything the health team is doing so PJV is happy to contribute toward closing that gap in polio vaccine coverage," Mr Minnala said.

Porgera District Health Manager Jerry Maku said in the last three rounds of polio vaccine, they managed to achieve 90% coverage and were the first district in Enga to successfully complete all three rounds of the nationwide vaccine program.

He said this was a great achievement for the district health team as the first case of polio for the country was initially registered at the Kia Kona in Paiam in June 2018 and the staff had to work hard to contain the disease from spreading to other communities in the valley.

In the first week of the round 4 program from 25 February to 1 March, the urban clinic vaccinated children from within Porgera district covering the villages of Maip, Palipaka, Yuyane, Panadaka, Keowinda, Apalaka, Alipis, Kumbipara, Anawe, Lukale, Suyan, Paiam Town, Yanjakale, Porgera Station, Mungulep, Kakadaka, Kairik, Tipinini, Kulapi, Yarik and Apalaka.

The vaccine is being administered to children 0-11 months and 1-15 years of age.

15 teams of two consisting of health officers and community health workers are involved in the delivery of the polio vaccine program in Porgera.

With the support of PJV, the urban clinic is aiming to have over 28,000 children receive polio vaccination in this 4th round.

“In the 4th round with PJV’s assistance, we hope to go above the set target. Health is everybody’s business and it is important for all stakeholders to participate in prevention efforts,” Mr Maku said.

The immunization campaign is organized by the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Authorities, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, Rotary International and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Porgera Gold Mine in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea, is operated by Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”)– through an equal partnership between Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin Mining Group Company Limited – which owns 95 percent participating interest in the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV). The remaining 5% in PJV is owned by Mineral Resource Enga (MRE) Limited – a consortium consisting of the Enga Provincial Government and the Porgera landowners.

The Porgera Mine employs over 3,300 Papua New Guineans, and over the life of the mine has produced more than 20 million ounces of gold and contributed approximately 10% of PNG’s total annual exports.



Community Health Worker Ben Lakai from the Porgera Urban Clinic administers the polio vaccine to an infant at Anawe.



The Porgera-Paiela District Health Service polio team with Mr. Maku (yellow cap) standing next to PJV Senior Manager Community and Social Responsibilities, Timothy Andambo (in hard hat).

PJV Media Contact Details:
Email: PJVMedia@porgerajv.com
Phone: (+675) 547 8200

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