

## Poliomyelitis (Paralytic)

*Poliomyelitis is a Class A Disease. Recognized and suspected cases must be reported to the Office of Public Health within twenty-four hours.*

In the early 1900's, poliomyelitis became epidemic in the United States. In 1952, over 20,000 cases were reported. Following the introduction of effective vaccines, the reported incidence of poliomyelitis declined drastically in the U.S. to less than one hundred cases in 1965 and less than ten cases in 1973.

With the introduction and widespread use of oral poliovirus vaccine, which contains live-attenuated poliovirus strains, vaccine associated paralytic poliomyelitis (VAPP) was first recognized. By 1973, more cases of VAPP were reported than paralytic disease caused by wild poliovirus. The last cases of indigenously transmitted wild poliovirus were reported in 1979. Since then, apart from six cases of imported poliomyelitis, all reported cases of paralytic poliomyelitis have been vaccine associated. VAPP is a very rare disease with an average of eight reported cases annually. In order to eliminate VAPP from the United States, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended in 2000 that only inactivated poliovirus vaccine be used in the United States. The last case of VAPP acquired in the United States occurred in 1999.

In 1998, the World Health Assembly, (composed of the ministers of health of all Member States of the World Health Organization), voted to launch a global goal to eradicate polio. As a result of the 'Global Polio Eradication Initiative' - the largest public health effort to date - at the end of 2006, indigenous polio had been eliminated from all but four countries in the world (Nigeria, India, Afghanistan and Pakistan). (Figure 1)

Figure 1. World-wide distribution of poliomyelitis, 1988 and 2007.



