

## Indonesian government initiates 2023 National Rotavirus Immunization Program



Indonesian Deputy Minister of Health Dante Saksono Harbuwono administering the Rotavirus vaccine to an infant during the inauguration event of the Rotavirus national immunization program in Pangkep District, South Sulawesi Province, on Tuesday (August 15, 2023). (ANTARA/Nur Suhra Wardyah).

The Indonesian government has commenced the implementation of the 2023 National Rotavirus (RV) Immunization Program that aims to protect infants from severe diarrhea, Deputy Minister of Health Dante Saksono Harbuwono stated.

The deputy minister made the statement while attending the launch event of the RV immunization program in Pangkep District, South Sulawesi Province, on Tuesday (August 15, 2023).

According to data provided by the Health Ministry, one out of eight children in Indonesia suffers from diarrhea, the second-deadliest disease affecting Indonesian children after pneumonia.

To protect children from diarrhea, the government had implemented a similar program in 2022 by gradually providing RV vaccines to 196,876 toddlers in 21 districts and cities in 18 provinces.

Harbuwono noted that in 2023, the government aims to expand the coverage of the immunization program.

"This program is expected to help our children, including those living in islands, get RV immunization," he remarked.

### Three doses of vaccines to infants aged at least two months

Harbuwono elaborated that the program will provide three doses of vaccines to infants aged at least two months, at an injection interval of every four weeks. Hence, the final dose will be given when the babies enter the age of six months and 29 days.

Furthermore, he affirmed that the government required support from all parties, including private actors, to promote implementation of the RV immunization.

"We should exert maximum efforts to inform parents that immunization can prevent diarrhea and invite them to get complete immunization for their babies, encouraging other families to follow in their steps," he pointed out.

During the inauguration event, the deputy minister participated in giving the vaccine, which is administered as oral drops, to several babies, including the third child of Muhammad Yusran Lalogau, the head of Pangkep District.

Meanwhile, Nurlita Wulan Purnama, head of the Pangkep Family Welfare Empowerment Mobilization Team, emphasized the importance of getting children vaccinated for the sake of their health.

"This (immunization) serves as an effort of the government to protect our children from diarrhea,"

she remarked. – **ANTARA news agency, Makassar, August 15, 2023**