Cooper Marolf - Switzerland

Hi, my name is Cooper Marolf, My country of study is Switzerland. Switzerland began vaccinating against polio in 1957 with the injected Salk vaccine, added an oral vaccine from 1961 to 2000, and has used only the injected vaccine since 2001. The last case caused here was in 1982, and the country has been considered polio-free since the early 1990s. On June 21, 2002, the World Health Organization certified the European Region, including Switzerland, as polio-free.

Today, polio is eliminated in Switzerland, but because it has not been eradicated worldwide, the virus could still be imported. The Swiss Federal Office of Public Health rates that risk as very low, but not zero.

Switzerland's challenge is not geography but uptake. Vaccination is recommended, not mandatory, and run by the cantons, so coverage varies by region. Central Switzerland has the lowest child coverage, with Lucerne at 89% in 2024, below the 95% needed to stop spread.

To stay protected, the Federal Office of Public Health maintains a national vaccination plan and published a 2024 action plan for responding to a polio case. Globally, the World Health Organization and Gavi are both headquartered in Geneva, and they work with partners like UNICEF and Rotary International, whose PolioPlus program has contributed over 2.9 billion dollars.

Looking forward, Switzerland's priority is getting every canton to 95% coverage. My takeaway is that polio anywhere is a risk everywhere, so eradication is of vital importance.