

# 20th Century Milestones in Public Health



1945

## Planning for WHO

Diplomats convene in San Francisco, California recognizing the need for global collaboration to control the spread of dangerous disease. They lay the ground work for the creation of the World Health Organization (WHO).



1946

## WHO Constitution Approved

The WHO Constitution is drafted and approved at the International Health Conference in New York City. WHO officially comes into existence, with a mandate to improve global health



1947

## 1st Global Disease Tracking Service

WHO establishes the world's first-ever global disease-tracking service, transmitting information via telex. This marks a crucial step in monitoring and responding to health threats



1948

## World Health Day & Mass Campaigns

WHO's Constitution comes into force, and this date is now celebrated annually as World Health Day. WHO focuses on mass campaigns against diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, yaws, syphilis, smallpox, and leprosy



1950

## Antibiotic Discovery Accelerates

The era of antibiotic discovery takes off, following the initial use of penicillin in 1941. WHO begins advising countries on antibiotic production, access, and responsible use



1952

## Inactivated Polio Vaccine

Dr. Jonas Salk develops the inactivated poliovirus vaccine, paving the way for global campaigns that have nearly eradicated polio. This achievement exemplifies the power of vaccination efforts



1961

## Smallpox Eradication Campaign

WHO launches a global campaign to eradicate smallpox. Through vaccination and surveillance, smallpox is declared eradicated in 1980, marking a historic achievement



1988

## Global Polio Eradication Initiative

WHO launches the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, aiming to eliminate polio globally. Tremendous progress has been made, although challenges persist



1974

## Primary Health Care & Alma-Ata Declaration

The Alma-Ata Declaration emphasizes primary health care as the key to achieving health for all. It underscores the importance of community involvement and prevention



1969

## Measles Vaccination Strategy

WHO recommends a two-dose measles vaccination strategy, leading to significant reductions in measles-related deaths worldwide

## Before the 20th Century

Public health gradually evolved from primitive preventive measures to more organized efforts. During the Middle Ages, the Black Death prompted some early quarantine measures. The Renaissance period saw an understanding of anatomy and disease transmission. In the 19th century, the field of public health truly emerged with the advent of germ theory and the recognition of the importance of sanitation, vaccination, and public health infrastructure, laying the groundwork for more systematic approaches