MNT is caused by bacterial spores found in soil all over the world. Tetanus can enter the bodies of women and infants through exposed umbilical cords if the woman gives birth in an unhygienic environment and is not properly immunized. The fatality rate for infected newborns can be as high as 100 percent.

MNT can be eliminated by immunizing women of reproductive age who in turn pass their immunity on to their newborns. Routine tetanus immunizations, training of birth attendants and education on the importance of clean birthing practices sustains the elimination of the disease.

Now that Kiwanis clubs and individuals, as well as partner organizations like UNICEF National Committees, have pledged or donated US$110 million, it is vital that Kiwanis fulfills all of the individual, club and district pledges to fund this important work. More than US$80 million has been collected in cash.

As of August 2018, MNT has been eliminated in 45 of the original 59 countries determined to be at-risk in 2000. MNT remains a threat in 14 countries.