



Expanded program on Immunization holds media Orientation for Polio Vaccination



EPI Manager, Mary Momolu speaking at the Orientation

About 2,305,451 children received polio vaccination, vitamin A and de-worming

MOH validates National Health Recovery Plan



Cross section of participants at the Validation exercise

Officials of the Ministry of Health and International partners congregated at the Paynesville Town Hall on Wednesday November 4th for the purpose of validating the country's Health recovery Plan, which was developed following the Ebola Epidemic that claimed the lives of dozens of health workers and the population as well.

The validation exercise was also meant to show areas of improvement and others that still need additional donor support for the

MOH Launches National Dead Body swabbing Mass awareness Campaign in 7 counties



Dead body Oral swabbing awareness campaign Banner

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has launched a Mass awareness campaign for Dead body oral swabbing in seven counties to contain any future outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in the country.

At an well attended launching program held at the Duport Road Health Center in Monrovia

medicine across the country in October, a Health Ministry official has disclosed. The exercise, which was carried out by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and partners, targeted children between the ages 0-59 months for the National Integrated Polio, De-worming and Vitamin A campaign.

Making the disclosure Tuesday at the Ministry of Information regular press briefing, the National EPI Manager at the Ministry of Health, Mary Momolu, explained that the MOH targeted about 945,463 children for polio vaccine, 525,756 for vitamin A and 834,232 children for de-worming medication. According to Madam Momolu, the vaccina-

achievement of the much talked about resilient Health System.

Speaking during the program, Liberia's Health Minister, Dr. Bernice T. Dahn, said the country's health sector was at a critical stage which required proper planning and implementation for prompt recovery. Dr. Dahn noted that it was against this backdrop that the Ministry of Health with support from its partners had designed a National Health recovery and investment plan following the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Minister Dahn revealed that the exercise was also designed to review the Ministry's work for the year, critically looking at its nine pillars in the investment plan which is a form of stocks taking and working out prospect.. She also noted that the Health Ministry was working on its recovery and investment plan for the next ten years in a bid to make the nation's health delivery service resilient and responsive to the need of the public.

Foreign and local partners of the ministry expressed delight over its achievements and promised their unabated support to helping the MOH realize its objectives.

Messages of goodwill and support also came

on Friday, January 8, 2016, Government officials, Health partners and key stakeholders were present to ensure a smooth start to a worthy endeavor.

The key objective of the launching program was to create massive awareness about the importance of dead body Oral swabbing in seven counties including Montserrado, Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Cape Mount and Basa Counties. An array of officials and staff from government and partners organizations from the health sector were in attendance to grace the occasion. The campaign was launched and Keynote address delivered by Hon. Peter S. Coleman, Senate standing committee on Health and former Minister of Health.

The Liberia Crusaders for Peace (LCP) with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified, recruited and trained 350 field communicators, mobilizers, moni-

tion teams faced lots of difficulties in the campaigns, noting that "the house-to-house strategy helped us with the coverage of 91.5% children."

She indicated that 14 of the counties covered summed up to 90 percent children, while in Montserrado County only 87 percent of children were covered. Meanwhile, Madam Momolu Thanked the media and others who helped the Health Ministry to disseminate information to the public on the vaccination process.

from the USAID, The World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (EU) with a firm declaration of support.

The validation exercise of the National Health Recovery Plan lasted for two days, with strong commitment from the Participants to help government rebuild a resilient health system. Since 2005, the Liberian Government through the Ministry of Health has been rebuilding the health sector ravaged as a result of the war years. The MOH convened that effort with a number of reform measures and the introduction of the Essential Health Packages.



tors and supervisors; pointing out that 50 were selected from each of the seven counties. The project which is in its initial phase, will entail communicators and mobilizers going from door to door in all communities and marking houses covered by the exercise to ensure that the message filters down to everyone as this is crucial to prevent the recurrence of the deadly Ebola disease. The project code named "Dead Body Swabbing Ebola Prevention Program" is aimed at creating massive awareness in seven of Liberia's 15 counties on the need to abstain from tampering with dead bodies until the County Health Team completes medical diagnosis and finally declares dead bodies free of the Ebola virus.

Swabbing is cheek or mouth swab that will be performed on dead bodies to detect the possible presence of Ebola virus and such swab analysis will help to assist families by providing them options to the burial of their deceased relatives.



Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year

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Cross section of participants at the World Prematurity Day program

About 22, 000 Children are Born Prematurely in Liberia

On November 17, 2015, Liberia joined over 200 countries globally to celebrate World Prematurity Day.

This year's event was commemorated by the MOH and partners to highlight the incidence of prematurity in Liberia. The day commenced with a parade leading to the Paynesville City Hall where the official indoor ceremony was held. As customary, the Ministry of Health with its partners brought together national and international NGOs, health workers, students and community residents to celebrate the occasion.

According to Madam Mandain P. Jallah, Child Health Coordinator of the Family Health Division of the Ministry of Health, about 22,000 babies were born in Liberia prematurely. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Obed Dolo; Medical Director at the C.B. Dunbar Hospital who called on parents to give their girls children more attention during pregnancy to help prevent prematurity in delivery. He noted that premature birth results from hard work, lack of medication, drug and substances used during pregnancy.

Representing the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Liberia, Dr. Francis Kateh, was Assistant Minister for Preventive Services at the Ministry of Health Dr. Sampson Azoiquoi who highlighted the importance of World Prematurity Day and acknowledged it as a global occasion which emphasizes the fate of premature babies mostly leading death. The health official expressed gratitude to the United Nations for highlighting the fate of premature newborns and called on experts to throw more light on some non medical conditions that are strong culprits in the development of complications that lead to premature births.

A situational analysis of prematurity in Liberia later presented by Mrs. Jallah revealed that globally, new born deaths constitute about 44% of under 5 mortality in the world. "We know that from our own DHS, the under 5 mortality is decreasing. But we also know that globally, the new born deaths is increasing which forms a significant component of that under 5 mortality" she added.

The statistics also identified the first cause of death in under 5 is from

preterm birth and it's complication which is 15.4% followed by pneumonia with 14.9% and inter-partum related deaths which accounts for 10.5% globally.

34% of under 5 mortality is from new born. 10.8% due to preterm complications and estimated 21, 700 babies born alive prematurely in Liberia.

Preterm babies' rate in Liberia account for 14% of all deliveries in Liberia. Liberia ranks 106, in global ranking of premature deaths, making Liberia one of the highest in the incidence of premature deaths. The first international awareness on premature births was created by Yutan Parent Organization in 2008. And this day was first celebrated globally in 2011 and in 2013 about 50 countries joined the celebration and in 2014, over 200 countries participating and more than 60 countries planned special events reaching 1.6 million people.

Why Dead body testing is important

*Dead Body testing is taking saliva/spit from the mouth of the dead body with cotton ball to check for Ebola.

*In the event of a death, do not touch the body. Call 4455 and tell your community leader.

*All Family members must allow health workers to collect saliva/spit from the mouth of the dead person

*Family will be provided documentation of the swab identification number and can call their county health Team to get their results.

*The Health workers will explain the testing process and answer questions the family may have.

*After talking with the family, the health workers will put on protective gear for the body testing

*Dead body testing is very important to help keep us from Ebola in Liberia.

*After the dead body testing and if the person was not sick with Ebola signs and symptoms, the family can bury their loved one how they normally do.

*If the person who died had Ebola signs and symptoms, safe burials will be required and provided by the County Health Team

MOH Graduate 30 in Disease Surveillance



Parial view of the Emergency Operations Center

The graduation of 30 Disease Surveillance Officers took place on Friday November 6, 2015 at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), an annex of the Ministry of Health in Congo Town, Monrovia. This ceremony is the first ever batch of disease surveillance officers to be trained and graduated by the by the Ministry of Health thru the EOC. 30 surveillance officers from the 15 counties

graduated from the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) - the first of its kind in the country. The training was conducted in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), Emory University (USA) and African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET). Liberia has meanwhile reactivated its Disease Outbreak Surveillance Program to intensify vigilance and rapid response to any emergency. The FETP basic training lasted for three months and focused on fundamental skills used in frontline surveillance and response for diseases. Delivering the keynote at the graduation program, Deputy Health Minister and Head of the Incident management System, Tolbert Nyenswah said the graduation of the officers was a significant step to the country’s effort in building a resilient Health system. He disclosed that the trainees were drawing from the fifteen political subdivisions of the country. Deputy Health Minister Tolbert Nyenswah

said disease outbreaks would not end without the presence of trained Ebola surveillance officers who were the frontline defense to identify early signals of any epidemic and marshal a rapid response Minister Nyenswah also revealed that the training of the 30 Disease Surveillance Officers is part of the nine pillars in the investment Plan as the officers are now equipped to do proper diagnoses and advice for effective response when there is an outbreak in the country. The IMS Boss also hailed the partnership the MOH has forged with the Emory University and the Center for Disease Control as a result of which Liberia now has Disease Surveillance Officers. Meanwhile, representatives of the Emory University and the Center for Disease Control expressed delight over the performance of the graduates and promised to continuously support Liberia’s effort to rebuild the Health care system.

PRESS STATEMENT BY Dr. Bernice Dahn, Minister of Health R.L.

We have come to inform you basically about progress made in our strategic plan developed to build a resilient health sector for all of us. Under this strategy, we intend to build a resilient health sector capable of managing shocks and responding effectively. We had done a full assessment of our health sector looking at all of the building blocks. As a result of the assessment, we developed an emergency hiring plan, targeting over 4000 existing health workers to be placed on GOL payroll in an effort to address the human resource gap in the sector. At current, we have placed over 700 hundred health workers on government payroll and submitted over 800 personnel action notices to CSA.

Although we have a challenge of i.9 million needed to get more health workers on GOL payroll, government is making frantic effort to make available what was approved in the FY 2015/16 as regards the health workers. Because we have captured our workforce as fit for purpose, productive and motivated, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Housing Authority and also disbursed 500,000 to the NHA to construct 100 housing units for health workers under a mortgage scheme arrangement. We have identified the land space and design complete. Our challenge now is the income for our health workers is too small and so we are recommending an extended mortgage financing period from 10 to 15 years. We are currently making effort to upgrade our regional hospitals, including JFK, Redemption and JJ Dossen. We want to solidify JFK as Liberia’s primary referral to comply with IPC standard and ensure quality service provision. Although there are requests for public private partnership for the management and operation of the JFK, let me state that the government has made no decisions to either accept or reject those requests.

In a bid to strengthen our preparedness and response mechanism, it will interest you to know that we recently held a graduation ceremony for 30 Disease Surveillance Officers who are now equip to do diagnoses of various diseases and recommend response. Modalities are being worked out to offer those disease officers advance training, while additional 20 are being enrolled in the program. As part of our strategic plan to also strengthen our supply chain and in line with our transparency and accountability process in leading the health sector, we have taken a series of new measures to improve the management and operation of National Drugs Services (NDS), an entity with statutory responsibility to procure and manage the country’s drugs

and medical supplies. An Interim Management Team has been setup to carry out a full assessment of situation at the NDS, after we have observed that situations at the entity have taken a nosedive, with report of chronic theft of health commodities. The IMT is doing a good job in putting systems into place to make the NDS assume its statutory role in the management of the country drugs and medical supplies system.

Already as you may be aware, we have suspended 12 staff of the NDS and they are currently undergoing investigation. Additional personal are facing police investigation for reports of chronic theft of drug commodities. As we speak, huge quantity of public sector drugs are being confiscated from private business people to the detriment of the agency and the people of Liberia. The MOH is working hard to build capacity and ensure commodities security through collaboration with stakeholders to carry out best practices in storage, distribution and information for health commodities at NDS.

In a bid to improve NDS performance, MOH is also strengthening its operation to ensure timely supplies and the availability of health commodities at counties and facilities level at all times. Also as part of the reformed measures, the MOH is strengthening the NDS health inventory management to ensure best practices in stocks storage and proper record keeping as it relates to expiration date of health commodities, the integrity of containers and the completeness and legibility of labels. As part of the assessment, the interim management team discovered a quantity of expired drugs worth US\$9.7 million dollars, which will be disposed off in a few weeks. The MOH believes the high level of demonstrable lack of managerial skills, account for the decline of the NDS and with the new measures announced the entity will shortly take a new shape of efficiency and productivity. We are soliciting the patience of the public as we go through the process of the investigation and the public will be informed accordingly after the completion of a thorough and painstaking investigation process at which time recommendations will be received from the IMT on the next course of actions. When the process of cleaning the NDS is complete, we intend to contract and agency to build then capacity of NDS for an estimated period of two years. After the contract period, NDS will then become an autonomous government agency.

AAP implements robust action Plan to meet MGD-5

As part of efforts to ensure the implementation of strategies to meet Millennium Development Goal-5(MDG-5), the government of Liberia through the Ministry of Health and partners developed an Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) for the Reduction of Maternal and Newborn Mortality in 2012, to guide the process. The Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) program is an effort by the international community and Liberia through the Ministry of Health with funding from USAID through the Fixed Amount Reimbursement Agreement (FARA) respectively. The AAP is also a strategy intended to focus global attention to the reduction of maternal mortality, whereby the Ministry of Health facilitates access to skilled birth attendants at health facilities, access to family planning services and management of obstetric emergency among its major strategies. In July of 2015, Africare-Liberia entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Health to implement AAP activities in Nimba and Bong Counties while the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is implementing the same in Lofa County through the FARA. The program is also being implemented by the county health teams in Margibi, Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties in partnership with health INGOs operating in these counties.

In keeping with this mandate, the MOH and partners have, over the last few months implemented a number of activities under the AAP for the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal morbidity and mortality which is a determined effort to meet MDG-5 which highlight the need for nations to strategically design programs activities to drastically reduce maternal an neonatal mortally By the year 2015. The activities covered the second quarter of the fifth year of implementation; 2015. A release from the Family Health Division of the Ministry of Health says activities under the program were implemented in six counties: Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Lofa, Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties. Specific program objectives for the quarter included:

- * Increased access to and utilization of family Planning services;
- * Expand and strengthen outreach and community base services to improve coverage of Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH); and
- * Increase coverage and access to quality comprehensive and basic emergency obstetric and neonatal care and essential MNH care.

During this period, several activities were implemented with specific deliverables achieved which included :

- * Reach every district (RED) and reach every pregnant woman (REP) monthly outreach visits
- * Development of quarterly mentoring schedule by AAP mentors; and

WAHO Conference on Communication ends in Burkina Faso

A two-day meeting held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso for Communication Directors across West Africa has ended, with a number of recommendations aimed at improving the communication strategy of the West African Health Organization. WAHO which organized the meeting, had been experiencing a low level of recognition and visibility in its member countries, despite the huge multifaceted interventions it has made in mostly area of health. The Communication Director of the Ministry of Health, Sorbor George attended the forum, which was characterized by the announcement of the 2016/2020 Strategic Plan of WAHO, presentations and group works. WAHO, a regional body set up by ECOWAS Leaders to handle health matters in member countries, was instrumental in sending doctors and medical supplies along with cash donations during the Ebola Crisis in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Participants at the close of the meeting, called for the setting up of a network of Communication Officers who will liaise with WAHO Liaison Officers to properly communicate activities and programs of that West African Body. They also recommended for a stronger partnership in their effort to syndicate WAHO publications to other news outlets in their respective countries thereby increasing the visibility of the institution

- * The establishment of a system for maternal and neonatal deaths review to ensure in- depth review of mortality to establish causes which are further disaggregated by districts for appropriate interventions.

Additionally, the program conducted monthly reproductive health technical working group meetings, and provided staff incentive for 24 hours a day (24/7) service. It also included Family health awareness at schools and at the same time, implementing quarterly district contraceptive events to improve family planning coverage. In Nimba County, family planning activities were held to improve the utilization of family planning commodities and services for 21 schools in all six health district with a total of 6,103 students; and in 19 communities with a total beneficiaries of 10,763, the activities also Provided motivation (finance) to health facility staff (midwives/MCH staff) for 24-hour service delivery at all 39 supported health facilities while one thousand eight hundred and four (1,804) Trained Traditional Midwives (TTMs) were mapped in 35 health facilities and or communities for orientation on reporting of maternal and neonatal deaths occurring in their assigned communities and home visit of postpartum mothers and referral of pregnant women. In Bong County, a total of 4,637 children under one year were immunized while 1,001 pregnant women received Tetanus Toxoid vaccination. From 29 health facilities, nine hundred and forty pregnant women benefited from intermittent preventive therapy (IPT) and 1,481 pregnant women benefited from antenatal care (ANC) resulting from 87 “Reaching Every District and Pregnant Woman” (RED/REP) sessions. In Grand Bassa County, The contraceptive day activities were carried out in the seven Health Districts with implementation in twenty one sites including both health facilities and catchment communities. The Day was well attended by students/adolescents, women, girls, men, and boys. The total beneficiaries were six thousand eight hundred seventy six (6,876) clients including both female and male clients. In Lofa County, Two district Reproductive health supervisor mentors along with two IRC & PMU mentors conducted mentoring in 25 AAP health facilities in Salayea, Voinjama and Zorzor Districts. Conducted monthly RHTC meetings to acknowledge achievements and constraints relating to pregnancies and childbirths at all levels (communities, PHCs and secondary facilities), that midwives and vaccinators carry-out RED-REP Outreach under the direct supervision of the District EPI Supervisors while IRC in collaboration with Lofa County Health Team carried out 24/7 incentives payment. In Montserrado County, the quarterly contraceptive day activities were implemented in eight health facilities of seven health districts. Data collected shows 5,142 beneficiaries’ access family planning service.

Solar Radios Distributed to Traditional Chiefs



Cross section of Chiefs at the training in Zwedru

In furtherance of the capacity building efforts by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Carter Center Liberia to train traditional leaders to take charge of their health especially in the face of Liberia’s recovery from the recent devastating outbreaks of 4 waves of the Ebola Virus Disease, 66 traditional leaders have been Trained in Ebola Virus Disease prevention in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County from December 13-19, 2015 and given solar Radios for monitoring health messages and announcements. Few months ago, a consignment of radios were donated to the National Health Promotion Division of the Ministry of Health as requested division to sustain access to approved health messages in the media to all parts of the country. Similar donation was made in August in Kakata, Margibi County at a training which brought together Women’s Groups from all over Margibi County for the same purpose.