

GHANA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH TECHNICAL OFFICERS

In case of the reply, the number and the date of this letter should be quoted.

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16th March, 2020

An Amalgam of Field Technicians, Health Records Assistants, and Technical officers
(Nutrition, Disease Control, Community Health, and Health Information)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PRESS RELEASE ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

The global spread of COVID-19 is really an issue of great concern. As at 15th March 2020, The Ghana Health Services Reports 156,399 cases have been confirmed with 5833 deaths in more than 146 countries worldwide. On the African continent, at least 10 countries including Ghana have recorded at least a confirmed case.

The detection and confirmation of six cases in-country have raised more attention than ever on the pandemic. The question we need to pose to ourselves is whether this marks the start of an epidemic wave in Ghana and to what extent is Ghana ready to respond effectively to halt the spread, the illness and possible deaths from this disease.

The Government of Ghana together with Partners have so far demonstrated tremendous commitment in the response against COVID-19 and should be commended. Over the past few weeks, series of activities including; development and update of preparedness plans, risk assessment, trainings, social mobilization and community engagement, procurement of essential medicines/supplies and logistics are ongoing. However, a lot remains to be done and this requires more efforts from all Partners and especially everyone living in Ghana.

As a strong workforce at the forefront in Public Health and more especially with surveillance as a key strategy to contain this pandemic, the Ghana Association of Public Health Officers (GAPHTO) wants to assure the government, the MoH, GHS and the good people of Ghana that, we remain steadfast to the fight against this disease as we have always demonstrated in Disease Control and Prevention in this country.

GAPHTO is an amalgam of health professionals trained in Public Health who work at all levels (health facility, sub-districts, districts, regions and national) of the health structure within the Government, Private, CHAG, NGOs, etc. When it comes to Disease Control and Public Health Surveillance, we are at the frontline and our members remain paramount and have track records of supporting all forms of outbreak response (detection, investigation and contact tracing).

GAPHTO members wish to assure their employers and the general public that we remain committed to the national response efforts. Similarly, we call on Government to honour its obligations by providing the needed support on the following;

- Increase the presence of health staff at the community level (including those who are awaiting recruitment).
- Capacity building of Public Health workers at all levels
- Adequate PPEs to District and Sub District Health Directorates
- Insurance from the government to protect health workers at the fore front.

To all members of GAPHTO, we urge you to remain very professional and do what you are trained to do best. Remember, your health and safety first as per the guidelines for all health workers and to protect the public as well. Do no harm to the public nor yourselves.

As we continue to contribute our quota to the entire country's response during this moment, the leadership wish to highlight the following to the public;

1. All Ghanaians should not panic but seek information on mode of prevention from the nearest health facility. Let us all comply with directives that have been issued including the ban on public gathering as directed by the President of the Republic of Ghana and other health directives that will be issued with time.
2. If you feel unwell (fever, runny nose, cough, sore throat, headache), do visit the nearest health facility for appropriate care.
3. Frequently wash your hands with soap under running water or where possible use hand sanitizers.
4. Teach, encourage and practice best cough/sneezing etiquettes like covering of mouth with handkerchief or tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, coughing into sleeves at elbows, distancing yourself from colleagues, etc.
5. Avoid handshakes and direct physical contact in general but more especially during mass gatherings and occasions like funerals, weddings, church services, parties, etc.
6. A great enemy is the wide spread of false rumours (pseudo-science) causing unnecessary fear and panic, let us ALL say NO to the spread of such messages especially via social media.
7. We thus encourage the public to seek the right information from the right source to avoid the rumours.
8. To remain healthy, we encourage you to drink plenty of fluids, manage stress, exercise, get rest and sleep.


GAPHTO leadership will continue to collaborate with the government and all relevant stakeholders and continue to monitor the situation and update members and the public accordingly.

GAPHTO: Public Health, Our Concern

Thank you.



MAVIS FUSEINI
NATIONAL PRESIDENT



OSWALD DACHAGA
GENERAL SECRETARY

NB:

For further media interviews on this release, please call 0245847236, 0243587084, 0242209796