



UNIVERSITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA

26th March 2020

UPDATE: STATEMENT ON THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

In December 2019, the world was struck with an outbreak of a novel corona viral infection (COVID-19), which has since become a pandemic. The University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), having closely monitored the activities of various stakeholders regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana do hereby propose the following for consideration by the appropriate authorities and the Government in particular.

1. While applauding the Government's efforts at keeping the people up to speed with information on the state of affairs, we believe a lot more needs to be done. We advocate for a more robust public education exercise aimed at encouraging the populace to adhere religiously to the directives and protocols regarding handwashing, social distancing and staying indoors unless absolutely necessary. In this regard, the National Commission for Civic Education and the Information Services Department should be engaged to intensify education particularly on the realities and myths of COVID-19 to avert fear and panic.
2. While a lockdown, aimed at containment and/or restriction of the disease to affected communities is desirable, Ghana's socioeconomic circumstances make it impractical. We should not lose sight of the fact that countries, states and cities presently on lockdown and have been successful in pursuing it have robust social support systems in place. What will benefit our situation is to encourage our district and metropolitan authorities to religiously enforce the "stay at home" policy. However, where a lockdown becomes the last resort for us, we would advocate for efforts to support the poor and other disadvantaged groups who may not have the means to store food and other essentials for the period of the lockdown.
3. A patent supply chain management system that will ensure a steady supply of Personal Protective Equipment needs to be put in place immediately. This must not benefit only the public health facilities, but also the private facilities as well.
4. Government should expedite action on the proposed establishment of more testing centers to support the services of KCCR and Noguchi. We recommend the immediate resourcing of the Navrongo and Kintampo Health Research centers.
5. A robust team of psychologists and psychiatrist should be made available in all health facilities to manage the post-traumatic stress associated with the disease. Particularly, these specialists should be part of drafting the public service announcements to allay the fears of the population.

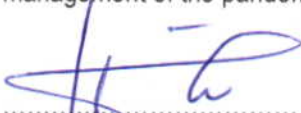
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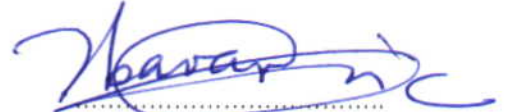
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6. Rather than calling in retired health personnel to support, UTAG believes employing our young and vibrant unemployed health professionals by the Government will be a better option. The present option will needlessly endanger our retired health professional who belong to groups most at risk of COVID-19.
7. Preparing the uncompleted affordable houses in the various regions for case management of isolated patients must also be considered where more spaces are needed as wards to avoid possible nosocomial infection of OPD patients (infections at the Health Care institutions) due to COVID-19 infection.

UTAG will like to take this opportunity to pledge that it will continue to place at the disposal of the Nation of its experts not only to help with education but also with the technical aspects of the management of the pandemic.



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