

# CDC - Increasing Capacity for Ebola Response in Unaffected Countries

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The West Africa Ebola outbreak is one of the most challenging global public health emergencies in recent times. The outbreak highlights the importance of strong, sustained national public health capacity to detect and confirm disease threats, address outbreaks, and prevent their spread.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has prioritized 15 countries for technical assistance for Ebola preparedness including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, and Togo. Coordinated efforts are underway to quickly identify and address their needs. A major contributor to these preparedness efforts is an ongoing partnership between the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist low-resource countries in developing National Public Health Institutes (NPHIs).

IANPHI is an association of the world's 100+ NPHIs, including CDC. NPHIs use scientific evidence to inform policy and resource allocation and are accountable to national governments and the public. Their key functions – disease surveillance and detection, outbreak investigation and control, analysis/policy development, research, training, and laboratory science—are particularly critical in quickly identifying and controlling infectious disease threats in low-resource nations. Through this partnership, and a Congressionally-funded cooperative agreement, IANPHI and CDC have leveraged and mobilized new resources and activities in response to the current outbreak.

By augmenting their existing NPHI development activities in more than 10 countries, IANPHI and CDC are supporting the efforts of WHO to assess the needs of unaffected countries and help to develop and strengthen their disease surveillance and control capacities. As part of this, IANPHI and CDC, along with other international partners, provided the WHO with assistance in preparing a *Checklist for Ebola Preparedness in Unaffected Countries*. Using this checklist, WHO is conducting Ebola preparedness support team visits to 15 WHO-prioritized countries with partners such as CDC. In late October,

WHO, with IANPHI and CDC, conducted the first visit to Mali. Mali was on the list of unaffected countries at the time, but has since been re-categorized due to the multiple outbreaks on-going there. CDC experts provided in-depth technical assistance in contact tracing, epidemiologic surveillance, and laboratory science. CDC experts have also been providing support to several other unaffected countries on incident management systems and emergency operations centers.

CDC's Ebola Response, through the Unaffected Countries Team of CDC's Emergency Operations Center, has also deployed epidemiologists to work on Ebola preparedness activities with Ministries of Health in 11 of the prioritized 15 unaffected countries.

Furthermore, CDC's Unaffected Countries Team has a liaison officer assigned to WHO-AFRO in Brazzaville helping facilitate CDC's contributions toward the WHO coordinated effort on Ebola preparedness in unaffected countries.

IANPHI has used its network of 100+ NPHIs to disseminate the latest information and updates about Ebola, and to link members for technical assistance, training, and other necessary assistance. It has created an online resource site, which provides national public health institutes with up-to-date Ebola resources from CDC and other organizations in Spanish, French, English and Portuguese. IANPHI funded Ebola education

and prevention training in Cameroon, and is assisting other NPHI directors to identify and support their urgent needs including Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo.

The IANPHI network of NPHIs has used existing strong regional networks to collaborate in responding to public health challenges. Through support from Oswaldo Cruz Foundation also known as Fiocruz in Brazil, the Network of National Public Health Institutes of the Union of South American Nations (RINS-UNASUR) and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (RINS-CPLP) will offer regional RINS-UNASUR and CPLP Ebola trainings. The workshops will be held in Brazil in late November and in Cape Verde in December.

As CDC continues to expand its portfolio of partner countries by working with IANPHI and the CDC Unaffected Countries Team, there will continue to be assessment and consideration of capacity building in the areas of surveillance, detection and response, emergency management and operations, and long term control and prevention of Ebola.

For further information, contact: **Shelly Bratton** at [bwp8@cdc.gov](mailto:bwp8@cdc.gov).



*Team from Nigeria (from left to right, Dr Peter Adewuyi, Dr Patrick Nguku, Dr Akin Oyemakinde and Dr Ndadilnasiya Endie Waziri) attended the preparedness workshop in Ghana to share lessons learned from their country's successful Ebola response.*



*Dignitaries open the Preparedness workshop in Accra Ghana, October 7, 2014.*