



# National Public Health Institute Of Liberia

Preventing and Controlling Public Health Threats

## Press Release

### **National Public Health Institute of Liberia Observes First Anniversary; Significant Achievements Underscored**

**Monrovia, January 26, 2018:** The National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) has observed its First Anniversary underscoring significant achievements in the last 12 months since its enactment into Law by a 2017 Act. It was passed into law by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Legislature in Dec 2016; signed by Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and printed into handbill January 26, 2017.

According to a NPHIL release, the last 12 months have been characterized by unprecedented achievements notably the construction of new headquarters, Regional Laboratories, speedy testing of 11 infectious diseases, the establishment and effective functioning of reference laboratory, and training of 250 field epidemiologists in 73 districts across Liberia's 15 counties.

NPHIL also noted its ability to have responded effectively and efficiently to 50 clusters of outbreaks that led to averting thousands of deaths – owing to diseases including measles, Lassa fever, Ebola, meningitis, etc.; Increased and mobilized domestic and external financing to support the work of the institute in the next 2 to 3 years; succeeded in establishing sustainable partnership with international organizations like the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), United States Department of Defense (USDOD), US Agency for international Development (USAID), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), National Institute of Health (NIH), International Association of Public Health Institute (IANPHI), African CDC, Nigeria CDC and the West African Health Organization (WAHO). The NPHIL is also collaborating with the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET) - in the area of training field Epidemiology at basics, intermediate and subsequently advanced levels.

The release further revealed that NPHIL has also effectively embarked on water quality and food testing initiatives aimed at reducing food and water borne diseases. Also, there is an ongoing construction of the national water quality testing laboratory, as well as, upgrading of human capacity in environmental and occupational health to improve environmental and occupational hazard detection and reduction.

Speaking to the press on the occasion of the first anniversary, the Award-Winning Global Public Health Expert and Director General of the NPHIL, Hon. Tolbert G. Nyenswah, said the arduous task of preventing, detecting and rapidly responding to Public Health threats of both local and international concerns will continue to be the hallmark of National Public Health Institute of Liberia, which aims at improving the healthcare delivery system of Liberia.

It can be recalled, NPHIL was created as a result of the unprecedented Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa that claimed the lives of more than 11,000 people and infected more than 28,000. The Ebola epidemic highlighted the need for the establishment of a public health institute in Liberia and in December 2016 the Bill to launch NPHIL passed through the Liberian legislature marking a critical milestone in its post-Ebola journey.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, NPHIL's mission is to prevent and control public health threats by promoting healthy outcomes while serving as a source of knowledge and expertise. As the center of excellence for better health outcomes for Liberians through a strong health system, this Institute aims to strengthen existing infection prevention and control efforts, laboratories, surveillance, infectious disease control, public health capacity building, response to outbreaks, and monitor diseases with epidemic potential.

The goals of NPHIL seeks to contribute to the development and sustainability of the public health workforce; Develop, enhance, and expand the surveillance and response platform; Develop and strengthen the laboratory system and public health diagnostics; Develop, enhance, and expand process and structures to protect environmental and occupation health; Expand, conduct, and coordinate public health and medical research to inform Liberian public health policies; Ensure sustainable financing and operations of the NPHIL.