



APHPN NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter of the Association of Public Health Physicians
of Nigeria

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From the President

PROFESSOR ALPHONSUS ISARA



On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the National Executive Council, I bring you warm greetings and felicitations. I am particularly delighted that members of our Association were at the forefront of the COVID-19 response in their respective states. We are encouraged to continue to take the leadership role in epidemic responses in Nigeria. All hands must be on deck to deal with the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the new Omicron variant.

You will agree with me that the COVID-19 pandemic will not be the last in human history. Therefore, it is important for us to build and support a very resilient health system in Nigeria to enable us to consolidate the gains of the COVID-19 response. One of the ways we can achieve this is to strengthen the Nigerian health system so that we are able to respond better to the health needs of the Nigerian population. Thus, the 38th APHPN Annual Scientific Conference tagged Ilorin 2022, with the theme "The Imperatives for Strengthening the Nigerian Health System" is very apt and timely. It is hoped that the conference will come up with actionable strategies that will usher in a better health system in Nigeria.

The Local Organizing Committee and the National Executive Council are working tirelessly through advocacy and mobilization of all stakeholders to ensure a very successful conference. Several APHPN partners are committed to participating actively in the conference. I encourage APHPN members to register en masse and participate fully in the conference. I wish you all a prosperous New Year.

Update from the Secretariat

DR ALPHONSUS AIGBIREMOLEN

The national secretariat of APHPN has continued to actively discharge its functions in promoting the ideals of APHPN and supporting state branches in their activities. Highlights of activities carried out within the fourth quarter of 2021 were:

The President, Prof. Alphonsus Isara led a team of APHPN members to participate in the funeral ceremonies of Late Justice Samuel Oseji, husband of Dr. Mininim Oseji at Asaba, Delta State on the 11th of November 2021.

The President, Prof. Alphonsus Isara, the National Treasurer, Dr Adesuwa Aigbokhaode, and members of the Delta State branch of APHPN paid a courtesy visit to the Permanent Secretary of Delta State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr Jude Winful-Orieke. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss the necessity and mutual benefits of continued collaboration between the Agency and APHPN.

The Health Care in Danger Working Group (HCiD WG), a collaborative network between APHPN and ICRC, was inaugurated in November 2021. Prof. G. K. Osagbemi leads the Group with members spread across Nigeria. The HCiD project is envisioned to promote the mainstreaming of violence and healthcare into the undergraduate and postgraduate medical curriculum in Nigeria.

The APHPN President visited the ICRC Office in Abuja on the 17th of November 2021. He had an interactive session with the ICRC Head of HCiD Initiative Geneva, Maciej Polkowski, the Head of Prevention, ICRC Abuja Delegation, Leonard Blazeby and the HCiD Advisor for the ICRC, Dr. Ryan Enaworu.

In November 2021, the President participated in the APHPN Lagos State Biennial Scientific Conference. The President gave a goodwill message during the conference which was themed "PANDEMICS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: BEYOND COVID-19"

In furtherance of the vision to strengthen state branches of APHPN, the President, Prof. Alphonsus Isara paid a working visit to members of APHPN Delta State Branch and APHPN Kaduna State Branch on the 11th of November 2021 and 7th of December 2021, respectively.



From Left to Right: Dr. Kene Terfa, Dr. Sabastine Esomonu, Dr. Matthew Ashikeni, Prof. Mustapha Jamda (APHPN VP I), Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa (DG, NCDC), Prof. Alphonsus Isara (APHPN President), Dr. Dan Gadzama (Chairman FCT APHPN), Dr. John Oladejo

The APHPN President, Prof. Alphonsus Isara, in the company of the First Vice President, Prof. Mustapha Jamda, and members of the FCT branch of APHPN, paid a courtesy visit to the newly appointed Director-General of NCDC, Dr Ifededayo Adetifa on the 9th of December 2021. The visit was to congratulate the DG on his well-deserved appointment, reinstate the commitment of APHPN members towards building and supporting a resilient health system in Nigeria and seek the DG's support for APHPN activities including the APHPN Annual Scientific Conference scheduled to hold at Ilorin in 2022. The team was well received by the DG who also committed to supporting the forthcoming Conference.

The APHPN Liaison Office located within the premises of the FCT Primary Health Care Board which has been at abeyance for many years has been reactivated with the appointment of an administrative officer. The staff, who shall be resuming officially on the 4th of January, 2022 will help in managing the Liaison Office as a critical communication point for APHPN activities in Nigeria.

APHPN condoled with the family of our Board of Trustees member, Dr Clara Ejembi on the loss of her son, Adah Ibrahim Ejembi. APHPN was represented at the funeral in Kaduna by Dr Kene Tarfa.

Primary Health Care in Nigeria: progress and challenges towards the achievement of Universal Health Coverage

TANIMOLA MAKUNJUOLA AKANDE

Primary health care (PHC), as conceptualized by the Alma Ata declaration of 1978 is a grass-roots approach towards universal and equitable health care for all. It is the “first level of contact with the National Health System”; bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of the continuing health care process. Primary Health Care is indeed the “first point of access to health care by individuals, families, and communities”. It is thus described as the bedrock of Universal Health Coverage. It was adopted as the cornerstone for the actualization of the health for all strategy and an improved health system in Nigeria in 1988. But prior to the 1978 Alma-Ata declaration and the launching of the National Health Policy, Nigeria had implemented the Basic Health Services Scheme (1975-1980). This strategy, which was also grass-roots oriented, failed to engender community participation and ownership of health programmes. Beyond the Alma-Ata mandate of PHC, it has been transformed and strengthened since its adoption in Nigeria. There were landmark achievements in immunization coverage and uptake of exclusive breastfeeding across the country in the late 80s.

The initial efforts towards the improvement of Primary health care delivery in Nigeria included the strengthening of community participation through the Bamako initiative programme and the establishment of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency in 1987 and 1992 respectively. Achievement of Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria is primarily tied to the progress made in its implementation of PHC.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is defined as the ability of all people who need health services to receive them without incurring financial hardship, thereby achieving equity and access. It can only be achieved with the existence of a well-functioning health system and timely access to services.

Within the context of the National Health System of Nigeria, the National Health Policy identifies PHC as the cornerstone in the achievement of UHC. Over the years, some of the initiatives which have been deployed by the Federal Government of Nigeria, towards the attainment of the UHC through PHC include the “Revitalization of PHC initiative; Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS). Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) Week, Strengthening of NHMIS, Quarterly PHC Reviews and the introduction of PHC Under One Roof (PHCUOR).

“Primary Health Care is indeed the “First point of access to health care by individuals, families, and communities”. It is thus described as the bedrock of Universal Health Coverage.”

Tanimola Akande



Tanimola Makunjuola Akande

Professor of Public Health & Consultant
Community Physician,
Dept. of Epidemiology & Community Health,
College of Health Sciences,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria.

The 56th National Council on Health (NCH) in 2011 adopted Primary Health Care Under One Roof (PHCUOR) as a national policy to improve the implementation of PHC. In addition, the 58th NCH in 2013 adopted the PHCUOR implementation guidelines as a tool towards the realization of effective national implementation of the strategy. The concept of PHCUOR combines the Principle of “Three Ones”: One Plan; One Management and One Monitoring and Evaluation System.

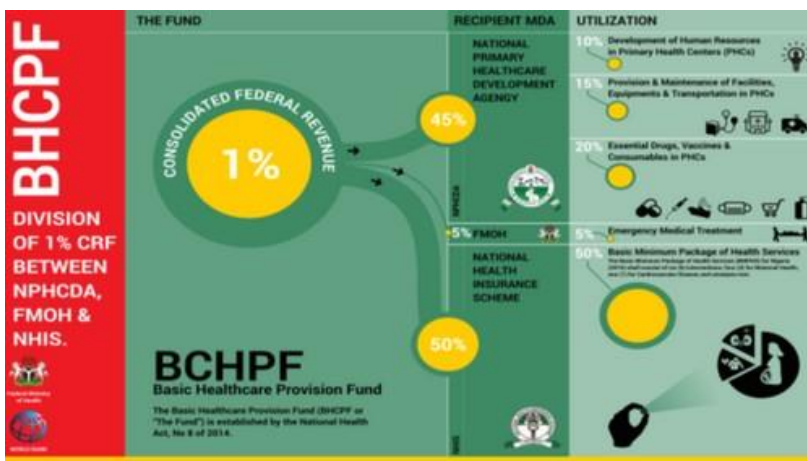


Figure 1: Distribution of the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund in Nigeria

Furthermore, the National Health Act (NHA) of 2014 outlines the major steps towards the achievement of UHC using PHC. It clearly defines the various modalities of funding the health care system. It stipulates fund disbursement through three payment gateways from the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF). The BHCPF is derived from one per cent (1%) of the Consolidated Federal Revenue. Forty-five per cent of the fund is to be remitted to the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA); five per cent is remitted to the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) for emergency medical treatment. In addition, 50% of the fund is allocated to the National Health Insurance Scheme; which is used for the Basic Minimum Package of Health Services (BMPHS). It is envisaged that the BMPHS can be expanded as Government revenues grow. It is indeed meant to be implemented in phases to the population.

Challenges:

Some of the major challenges with the implementation of PHC across Nigeria include: (i) poor Infrastructure – about 30,000 public primary health facilities have been reported to be dilapidated; (ii) Fragmentation in governance and coordination. Human resources for primary health care in various states are still under the Local Government Service Commission, contrary to the guidelines of PHCUOR; (iii) Poor funding – evidenced in programmes/interventions being largely donor dependent; (iv) Shortage of Human Resource for Health; (v) lack/non-functional equipment; (vi) Poor demand for services largely driven by a loss of confidence in the system. Only 38% of pregnant women have been reported by a recent survey to have delivered under the supervision of skilled birth attendants; while 58% of pregnant women were reported to have received ANC in their last pregnancy; (vii) PHC caters for only about 20% of the entire population (in contrast to the expected care for about 80% of the population, thus significant burden transferred to secondary and tertiary level of care; (viii) Poor and unreliable data; (ix) Poor Community engagement and demand for PHC services.

Measures that should be put in place by government to address these challenges include:

- i) Re-positioning of PHC through the new Health Reform Committee;
- (ii) Improve funding of health care, Health Tax Fund can be considered as additional measure to increase public funding for PHC;
- (iii) Reliance on out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) must decline with aggressive measures towards high level of financial protection through health insurance (insurance coverage towards UHC target of 90%);
- (iv) Fast track progress towards achieving UHC by upgrading PHC infrastructure;
- (v) Provision of adequate health workforce with incentives for those in rural locations;
- (vi) Lessons learnt from performance-based incentives need to be escalated and enshrined at all levels;
- (vii) Improve on quality of data leveraging on technology (ICT) to strengthen data management;
- (viii) All components of PHC to be emphasized as against the current focus on few of the components.

Conclusion:

PHC is a major backbone to achieving UHC in Nigeria. Several initiatives have been put in place to strengthen PHC in Nigeria but Nigeria is still a long way from achieving UHC. A lot is still required to strengthen PHC, if UHC is to be achieved. The new Health Sector Reform committee is another opportunity to put in policies, initiatives that will strengthen PHC and also putting in place effective and efficient implementation of programmes based on lessons learnt.



News in Brief

BY OMOсивIE MADUKA & TERKAA BITTO

APHPN President Visits Kaduna

The National President, APHPN, visited Kaduna State on Monday 6th of December 2021. During this visit, he interacted with the EXCO and members of the Kaduna State Branch of APHPN who expressed their excitement and pledged their support to the EXCO of APHPN. Also present during the visit was a member of APHPN Board of Trustees Dr. Clara Ejembi.



APHPN President Visits ICRC Office in Abuja

The National President, Association of Public Health Physicians of Nigeria (APHPN), paid a courtesy visit to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Abuja, on Wednesday 17th of November 2021. The aim of the visit was to strengthen the collaboration between APHPN and ICRC especially in the area of prevention of violence against health care.



APHPN Rivers Holds Its Annual General Meeting, Honours Members

APHPN Rivers State Branch held its Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference on Tuesday, 21st December 2021. The theme was: Navigating the new normal in the light of COVID-19; subtheme 1: Hybrid/Virtual events: The ICT of the New Normal by Dr Omosivie Maduka. And Subtheme 2: Retooling Occupational Health Practice in the Light of COVID-19 pandemic by Dr Nsikak-Abasi Ntia. Several members were presented with awards of recognition for contribution to the association.



APHPN Anambra Elects New Executives

APHPN Anambra State held her AGSM/Election on Wednesday 15th December 2021.

The new Executive Committee included: Chairman; Dr Ahoma Mbanuzuru, Vice Chairman; Dr Irene Okeke, Secretary; Dr Uzoma Okereke, Asst. Secretary; Dr Emeka Okoh, Treasurer; Dr Chinenye Atuegbu, Fin. Secretary; Dr Collins Alutu, PRO; Dr Martin Okolie, Auditor; Dr Sampson Ita, Ex-officio I; Dr Chijioke Ezenyeaku and Ex-officio II; Dr Chidiebere Aniagboso.



APHPN Benue Commemorates World AIDS Day

Activities to mark the World AIDS Day 2021 themed "End inequalities, End AIDS, end Pandemic", included: a rally around Makurdi metropolis to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care; Health education and promotion in English and all the major local dialects on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care; free HIV Testing Services at an outreach to high-level market and garage Makurdi with nineteen volunteers participating in the outreach.



Dr. Durowade wins Health Research Grant

APHPN congratulates Dr. Kabir Adekunle Durowade, a Consultant Public Health Physician with the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido-Ekiti, who has been awarded the 2021 Health Reward Grant by The March 8th Initiative. The initiative was established to commemorate the birthday of the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osibajo, and reward Nigerians who are making the country proud in their endeavors. Dr. Durowade is among the 34 Nigerians/Health workers awarded the Health Reward Grant out of 1,520 nominations.

Appointments and Promotions

OMOSIVIE MADUKA



APHPN congratulates Prof Akin Osibogun on his assumption of office as the President of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria.



APHPN congratulates Prof Zubairu Iliyasu on his appointment as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman Governing Council, Kano University of Science and Technology Wudil.



APHPN congratulates Dr Yetunde Kuyinu on her elevation to the rank of Professor of Public Health, in the Department of Community Medicine, Lagos State University



APHPN congratulates Dr Audu Onyemocho on his elevation to the rank of Professor of Community Health in the Federal University of Health Sciences Otukpo (FUHSO), Benue state.



APHPN congratulates Dr Daprim Ogaji on his elevation to the rank of Professor of Health Systems and Community Medicine in the University of Port Harcourt.



APHPN congratulates Dr Vincent Adam who was recently promoted to the rank of Professor in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Benin.



APHPN congratulates Dr Stephena Ighedosa who was recently promoted to the rank of Professor in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Benin.



APHPN congratulates Dr Ani Etokidem who was recently promoted to the rank of Professor in the Department of Community Medicine, University of Calabar.



APHPN congratulates Dr Segun Afolabi of the Department of Community Medicine, Obafemi Awolowo University on his elevation to the rank of Professor.



APHPN congratulates Dr Elizabeth Nwonwu who was recently promoted to the rank of Professor in the Department of Community Medicine, Ebonyi State University.



APHPN congratulates Dr Abubakar Joshua Difa of the Department of Community Medicine, Gombe State University on his elevation to the rank of Associate Professor (Reader).

Faculty Day Lecture Highlights



Prof Obehi Okojie calls for health system strengthening and epidemic preparedness in Nigeria

The 2021 Faculty Day Lecture of the Faculty of Public Health & Community Medicine of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria was held on the 9th of August, 2021. The Faculty Day lecture titled "Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on Communities and the Mitigation Efforts" was delivered by the distinguished and erudite scholar, Professor Obehi Okojie.

She highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an enormous impact on communities with a global surge in demand for health and social services; with some positive impact such as the boom in research output and global collaboration while bringing to the fore the very important role of public health and community medicine specialty.

Prof Obehi Okojie, in her conclusion stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the humongous deficiencies in the Nigerian health system including the social and welfare support for various communities. She calls attention to the need to sustain mitigation efforts that have been instituted and prepare for future pandemics as connected cycles while learning from the past ones.

Meet the APHPN Administrative Staff: Miss Pamela Chimuanya Obidike



Miss Obidike holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State and is currently a Masters student in Clinical Psychology. She has been tasked with providing secretariat support both at the Liaison office and for APHPN Committees among other duties. She resumed at the APHPN Liaison Office located at the FCT Primary Health Care Board, Abuja on Tuesday 4th January, 2022.

Obituary



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Global Public Health Dates of Significance:

January to March 2022

CULLED FROM THE PAN AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Jan 27 2022

World Leprosy Day



Feb 04 2022

World Cancer Day



Feb 15 2022

International Childhood Cancer Day



Mar 03 2022

World birth defects day



Mar 08 2022

International women's day



Mar 11 2022 - Mar 17 2022

Salt awareness week



Mar 14 2022

World kidney day



Mar 22 2022

World water day



Mar 24 2022

World tuberculosis day

This article can be assessed at <https://www.paho.org/journal/en/international-health-days?page=1>
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