

PRESS RELEASE ON THE BAYELSA STATE RESPONSE AND THE CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID -19 IN A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

May 20, 2020

Distinguished Gentlemen

Yesterday, a new case of COVID -19 in Bayelsa State was announced by the NCDC amongst 226 confirmed cases nationwide.

This new case is a middle -aged man. He is a healthcare professional employed by one of our foremost health institutions in the State. He shuttles almost on a weekly routine between Edo, Delta and Bayelsa. His family is settled in Edo State. He does not have a forwarding address in Bayelsa.

Last week he returned to Bayelsa from Delta and two days later he started feeling unwell with cough, fever and breathlessness. He reported to a private hospital in Yenagoa where he was admitted. The State COVID -19 team was alerted by the Hospital for a review and sample collection. The sample was thus collected and sent to the UPTH COVID -19 Molecular laboratory. The Result returned positive for COVID -19.

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He has since been evacuated to the NDUTH Isolation Centre while the Private Hospital has been shut down and decontamination procedures commenced.

All his contacts are being line listed and will be adequately followed up including necessary environmental decontamination. Samples will be collected from the high -risk contacts while risk communication and community engagement will continue unabated as usual.

Sixty (60) Contacts have so far been line -listed. The State COVID -19 Contact Tracing team has swung into full action and are meticulously ensuring all these persons are contacted and counselled on the necessary procedures for quarantine and sample collection.

The State Government Controlled Quarantine Facility is ready for use to accommodate contacts who would have challenges with self -quarantine.

The State Public Emergency Operations Centre (the technical arm of the state response) and the State COVID -19 Task Force are and will remain on REPONSE mode; doing their best to contain and mitigate the impact of this pandemic.

In addition to the NDUTH Isolation Centre, the Federal Medical Centre Yenagoa has a 22- bed ready to use Isolation/treatment Centre with adequately trained staff to manage active cases of COVID -19 in the State.

Let me seize this opportunity to thank the His Excellency, Senator Douye Diri, Governor of Bayelsa State, for his exemplary commitment to fighting the outbreak of this pandemic in the State.

There is need to re-emphasize that public vigilance is important while asking that patients should confide in their physicians the true case history of their ill health. We have also commenced active health facility case search for any case of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) in our hospitals in order to have a sentinel insight into the importation and possible community transmission of COVID -19.

Let me reiterate that we still believe in the opportunities and the gains of prevention and early detection while building our capacity to manage COVID-19 seamlessly.

To this end we join the rest of the global community to advise as follows:

1. Regular and thorough hand washing with soap and water; the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also recommended.
2. Social distancing is key. Maintain at least 2 meters (6 feet) distance between you and anyone. Avoid crowds and follow the stay-at-home advisory.
3. Endeavour to practice good respiratory hygiene: when sneezing or coughing, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve at the flexed elbow or with a tissue. Then dispose-off the used tissue safely, immediately.
4. Exposed persons should stay home if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty in breathing and notify relevant authorities immediately.

5. DO NOT SPREAD FAKE NEWS. Citizens are advised not to abuse social media and indulge in spreading misinformation that can cause panic and lead to a stampede

All health facilities should ensure strict and appropriate IPC at all triage points. The Bayelsa State Public Health Emergency Operations centre will continue to provide updates and guidance while implementing all necessary measures to ensure public health and safety. Therefore, no cause for alarm as the State Government is on top of the situation.

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