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**2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2023**

**For Immediate Release**

**TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **GHANA DECLARES END OF LASSA FEVER OUTBREAK, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.**

#### **Background to Lassa Fever Outbreak Declaration**

Ghana declared an outbreak of Lassa Fever following the confirmation of two cases in the Greater Accra Region on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. Subsequently, 25 additional cases were recorded between the 24<sup>th</sup> of February and the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2023, making a total of 27 confirmed cases including one death.

#### **Initial and last cases of Lassa fever**

The first case was a female trader resident in Accra who was referred to Korle Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH) with difficulty in breathing and general rashes. She also passed bloody stools on admission and died within 5 hours. The second case was a female healthcare worker who was a contact of the first case. She was managed and discharged at the Ghana Infectious Disease Centre (GIDC).

The last confirmed case was also managed at the GIDC and discharged on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2023.

#### **Measures Undertaken to Contain the Outbreak**

Following the declaration of the outbreak, the National Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) was activated to coordinate the response activities and to provide direction. The Greater Accra Regional and District Public Health Emergency Management Committees (PHEMCs) were also activated to coordinate the response at the regional and district level.

We initiated several measures to contain the outbreak including the following:

1. Self-quarantine: of all identified contacts including healthcare workers and subsequent testing of all close contacts: 237 contacts including health workers, close family members, relatives, and friends were identified and followed up for the maximum incubation period of 21 days.
2. Case management: the Ghana Infectious Disease Centre managed all of the confirmed cases on admission.
3. Risk communication: materials on Lassa Fever were developed and disseminated to the affected districts and other places.
4. Environmental Assessment: an initial environmental assessment was undertaken. This will be followed by a more detailed investigation in some selected areas in the Greater Accra Region to help identify high-risk areas.
5. Surveillance: active surveillance was carried out in the affected districts resulting in the identification of 30 suspected cases of Acute Haemorrhagic Fevers reported between February and March. Two of these tested positive for Lassa Fever.

### **Declaring End of Outbreak**

The maximum follow-up period of 42 days has elapsed since the last confirmed case of Lassa Fever was discharged on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023, indicating the end of the Lassa Fever outbreak. Subsequently, the Ghana Health Service declares the end of the Lassa Fever Outbreak in line with the WHO-recommended mandatory 42 days post-Lassa Fever surveillance countdown period from when the last case was discharged.

### **General Advice to the Public**

1. The Ghana Health Service entreats the public to reduce the risk of disease spread from wildlife to humans by avoiding contact with wildlife, especially rats.
2. The public is entreated to
  - a. store leftover foods appropriately, in order to prevent rats from coming into contact with them
  - b. improve cleanliness in homes and especially, our kitchens.
  - c. avoid direct or close contact with persons who are suspected of having Lassa Fever or any other infectious disease.
  - d. undertake regular hand washing after visiting patients in health facilities, before eating, and after using the toilet, to avoid infections.

### **Specific Advice to Healthcare Workers**

We urge all health workers to apply strictly, the universal infection prevention and control measures at all times, including wearing gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment when taking care of patients.

### **Working with Partners to prevent and/or limit future occurrences.**

The Ghana Health Service will work with Local Government authorities and the Wildlife Division to depopulate rats in our marketplaces in order to avoid any re-occurrence of Lassa Fever outbreaks.

### **Acknowledgement**

The Ghana Health Service acknowledges the contribution of the different Development Partners including the media for their support during the outbreak. We want to use this opportunity to also thank all community members for their cooperation. We are as well, grateful to the Ministry of Health for the oversight role it played during the outbreak response.

### **Assurance**

Lastly, we wish to reassure the public that the Government of Ghana and Development Partners through the Ministry of Health (MoH), are supporting the Ghana Health Service and other MoH agencies in building a resilient health system to withstand all future outbreaks. We, however, appeal to the public to report to the nearest health facility on time for proper medical attention, whenever they feel unwell.

**SIGNED**

**DR. PATRICK KUMA-ABOAGYE**  
**DIRECTOR GENERAL**

**END**