



# Liberia Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak Situation



Situation Report: No. 159

Date of onset of outbreak: 16 March 2020

Reporting date: 21 August 2020

Data Source: County Incident Management & National Reference Laboratory

## I. Highlights

**CUMULATIVE CONFIRMED CASES: 1,286 DEATHS: 12 in TU**

- **One new confirmed case** was reported in the last 24 hours from 295 samples evaluated by National Reference Laboratory of Liberia (NRL) with 0.3% positivity rate;
- One of the 15 counties reported new confirmed case on 21 August 2020;
  - Since March 16 – August 21, 2020, a total of 9,499 suspected cases including 182 deaths have been reported across 15 counties;
  - Of these, one thousand two hundred eighty-six (1,286 have been confirmed including 208 (16.2%) health workers;
  - 98.7% of confirmed cases are locally transmitted and 1.3% remains imported;
- Cumulatively 15,414 samples have been tested at the national reference laboratory;
- No new death was reported in the last 24 hours from the treatment unit;
- The cumulative total of twelve (12) deaths (CFR-1.4%) in confirmed cases including five health workers have been reported in the treatment units across the country;
- No new admission reported from the treatment centers in the last 24 hours, cumulating a total of 868 admissions recorded of which 39 case patients remain in treatment units as at 21 August 2020;
- Compulsory use of mask in public places including voluntary testing are being enforced across the country
- Two regional laboratories have been established to facilitate improve samples turn time from reception of samples to testing and release of results

### SITUATION UPDATE (last 24 hours)

#### SAMPLES TESTED

15,414 (295 new)

#### CONFIRMED CASES

1,286 (1 new)

#### AFFECTED COUNTIES

15 (0 new)

#### ADMITTED CASES

868 (0 new)

#### RECOVERED CASES

816 (1 new)

#### CONFIRMED DEATHS

12 (0 new) - 1.4% CFR

Note: Cumulative community deaths are 27 and their death audits is ongoing

#### CASES BY GENDER

Male: 844 (65.6%); Female: 442 (34.4%)

#### MOST AFFECTED AGE GROUPS

35-54 (39.2%)

#### CONTACTS LISTED

8,199 (20 new)

457 (5.6%) have tested positive; 7,107 (86.7%) have completed 14 days follow up; 3 lost to follow up; while 462 (5.6%) remains under active follow-up with 98.2% seen the last 24 hours

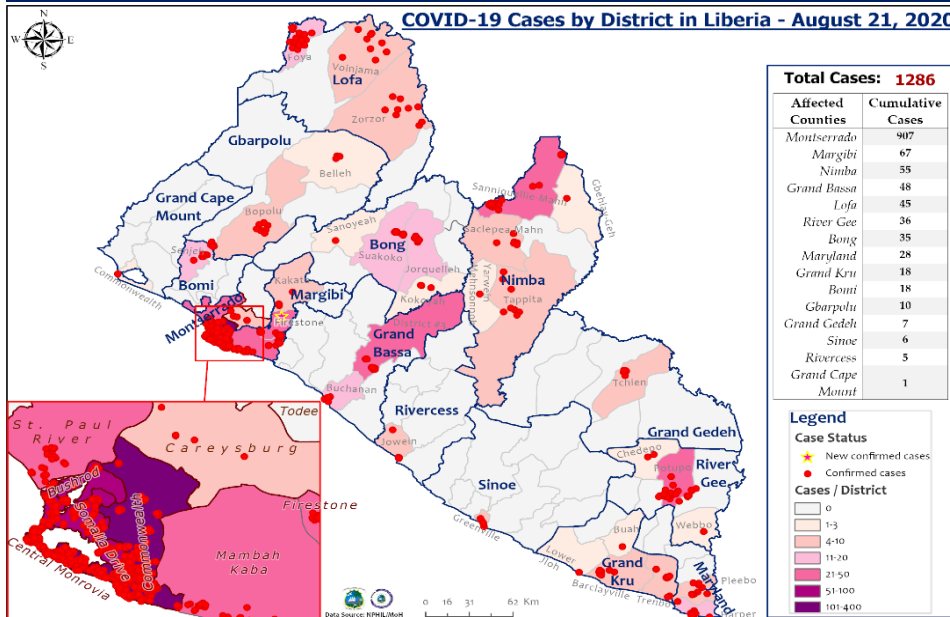
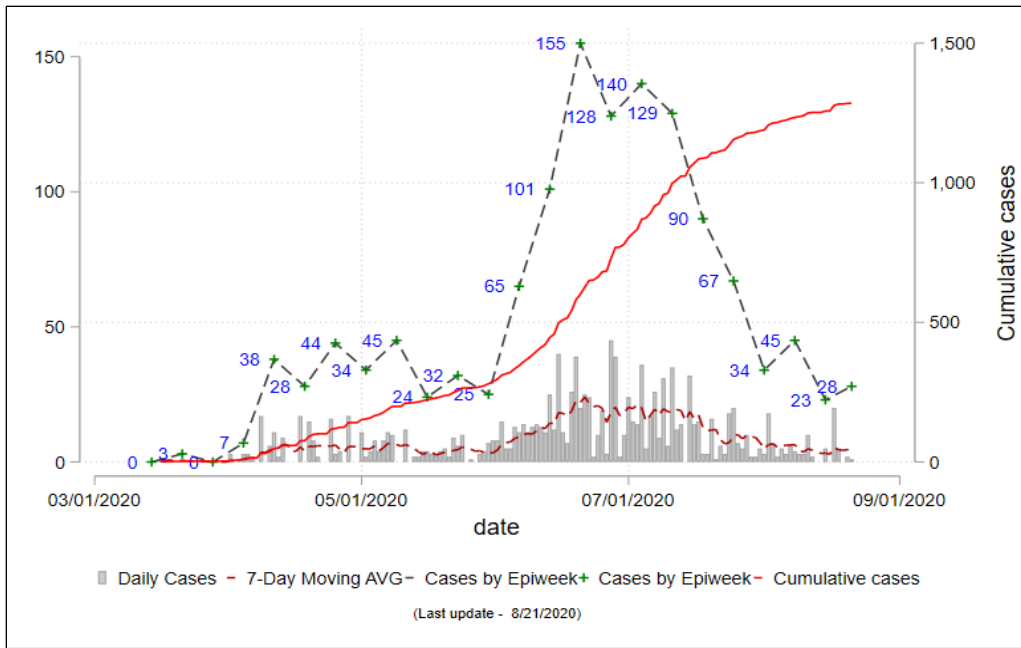


Table 1: Distribution of COVID-19 Response Status by County, Liberia. 16 March – 21 August 2020

County	Laboratory Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Cases on Contact List	Cumulative Confirmed cases
Bomi	0	0	18
Bong	0	0	35
Gbarpolu	0	0	10
Grand Cape Mount	0	0	2
Grand Bassa	0	0	48
Grand Gedeh	0	0	7
Grand Kru	0	0	18
Lofa	0	0	45
Margibi	1	0	67
Maryland	0	0	28
Montserrado	0	0	907
Nimba	0	0	54
Rivercess	0	0	5
River Gee	0	0	36
Siinoe	0	0	6
NATIONAL	1	0	1,286

Figure 1: Geographical Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by County, Liberia, 16 March – 21 August 2020



**Note:** There was a 48.9% reduction observed during the week starting from Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020 as compared to previous week with 45 confirmed cases.

This increase could be due to enhance surveillance conducted in high risk communities. The previous trend has ranged from 155 to 128; 140 to 129, 129 to 90 and 90 to 67; 67 to 34 cases, 34 to 45 and 45 to 23 cases this gone week.

A total of 28 confirmed cases have been reported on day six since the week starting 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Data is calculated based on WHO-CDC's epi-week which starts on

Figure 2: Epi-curve for COVID 19 Cases in Liberia, 14 March – 21 August 2020

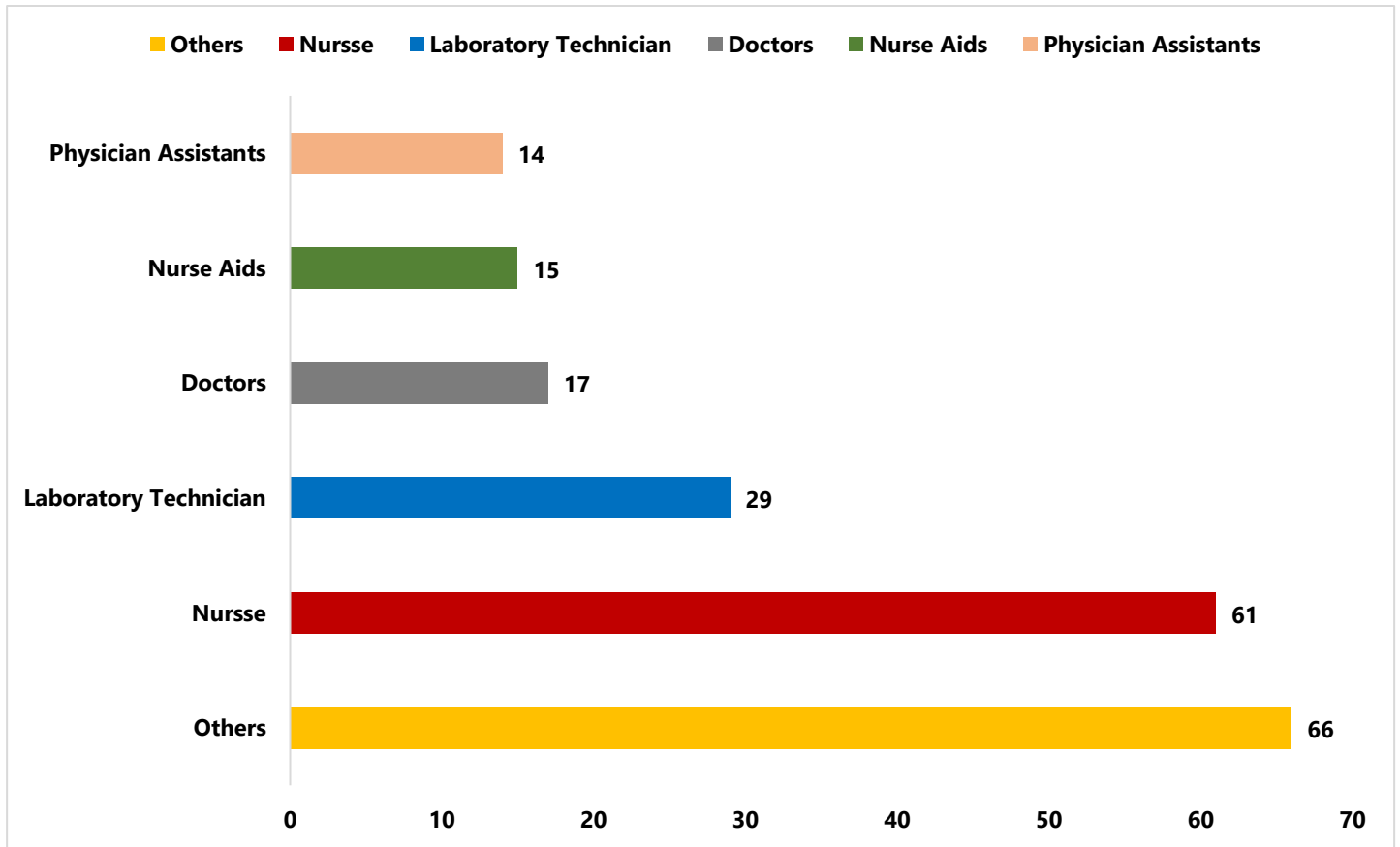
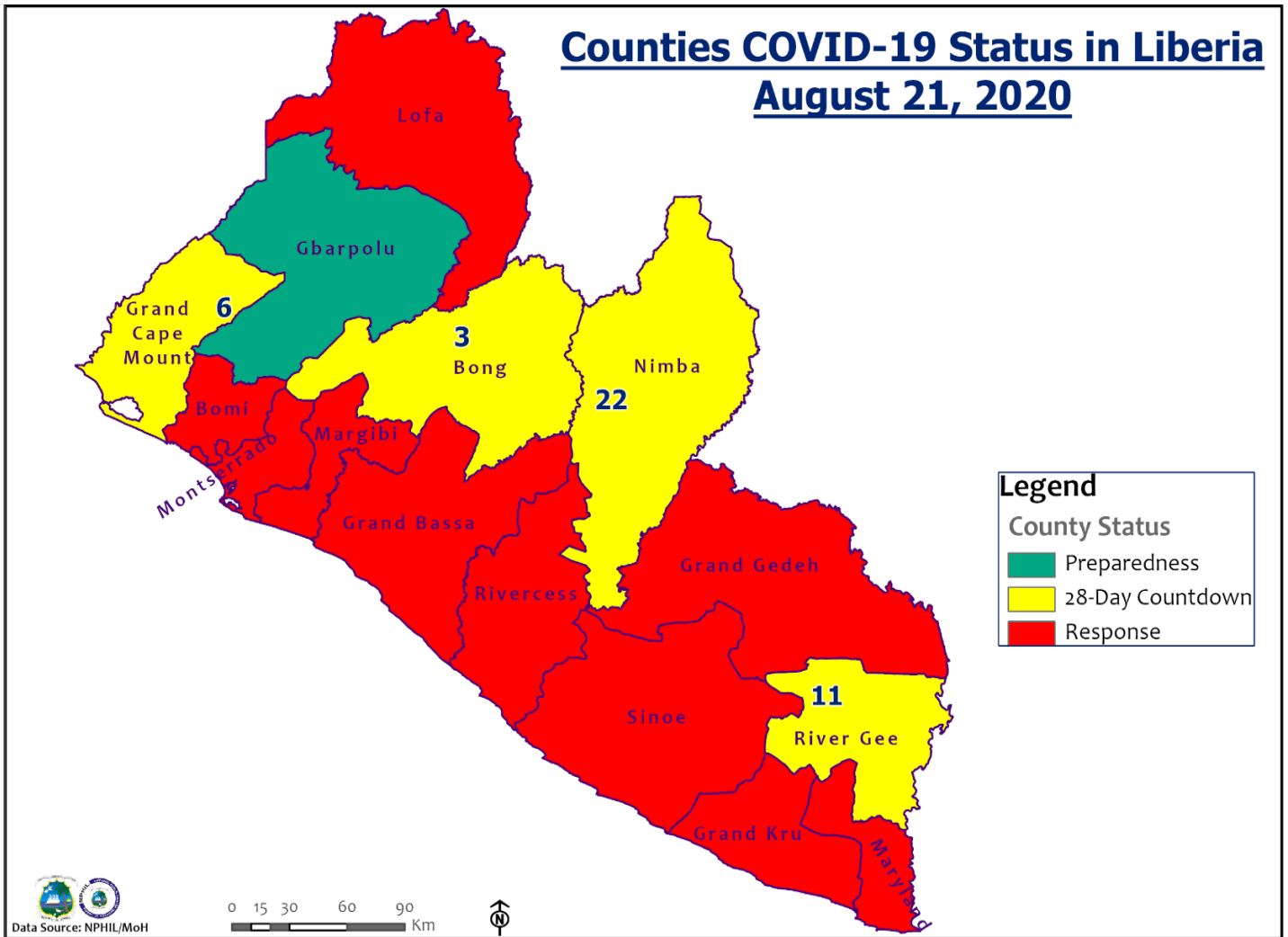


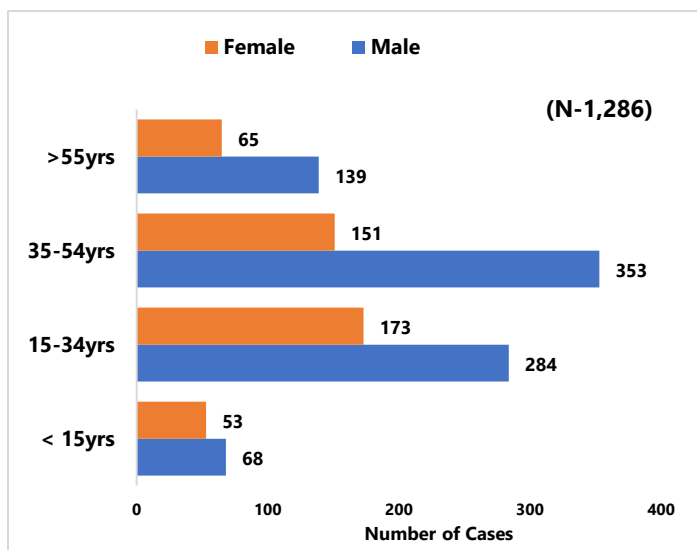
Figure 3: Cadre of Healthcare Workers mostly infected with COVID-19, Liberia, 16 March – 21 August 2020

## Counties COVID-19 Status in Liberia August 21, 2020

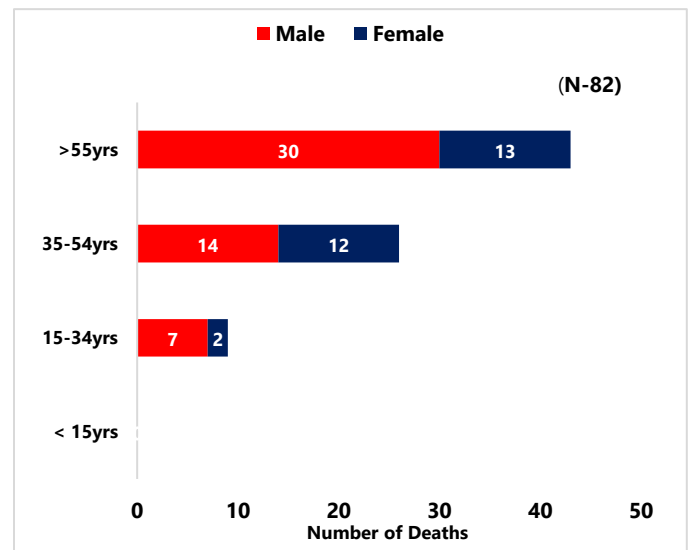


**Figure 4: Geographical Distribution of COVID-19 Response Status by County, Liberia, 16 March – 21 August 2020**

**Note:** All the 15 counties of Liberia have reported at least one confirmed case of COVID-19. On 12 July 2020, Rivercess county confirmed its first case since March 2020. Five counties are undergoing the 28 days count down with 3 days remaining for Bong county and 6 days remaining for Grand Cape Mount county, 11 days remaining for River Gee county, 22 days remaining for Nimba county and 24 days remaining for Margibi county to exist the epidemic phase as of 21 August 2020. A total of nine counties remain in epidemic phase while Gbarpolu county has moved to preparedness phase.



**Figure 5: Distribution of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by Age and Sex, Liberia, March 16- August 21, 2020**



**Figure 6: Distribution of Confirmed COVID-19 Deaths by Age and Sex, Liberia, March 16- August 21, 2020**

	Pre LKD	1 <sup>st</sup> LKD	2 <sup>nd</sup> LKD	3 <sup>rd</sup> LKD	4 <sup>th</sup> LKD	5 <sup>th</sup> LKD	6 <sup>th</sup> LKD
Date	3/16 - 4/10	4/11 - 4/24	4/25 - 5/08	5/9 - 5/22	5/23 - 6/06	06/06 – 06/21	06/21-07/ 22
Confirmed Cases	37	80	82	50	85	292	511

61% Reduction after 2 Lockdown Period but rebound significantly with 243% upward trend as compared to 4th LKD

The 6<sup>th</sup> LKD period is lifted with 511 confirmed cases recorded as compared to 292 during the 5<sup>th</sup> LKD; the 42% increase was due to measures put in place during the LKDs to do compulsory testing

The number of confirmed cases continue to drop since the lifting of Lockdown on 22 July 2020

Figure 7: Significant impacts observed during the lockdown periods in Liberia, 16 March – 22 July 2020

Table 2: Number of Contacts line listed and monitored, Liberia, 16 March – 21 August 2020

County	New Contacts Line listed	Cumulative Contacts	No. of Health Care Workers as Contacts	Cumulative no. of Health Care Workers as contacts	Contacts became a case	Cumulative contacts that became a case	Contacts Completed 14 Days	Cumulative Contacts Completing 14 Days	Contacts Under Follow-up	Contacts lost to Follow-up
Montserrado	0	4,402	0	452	0	159	0	3995	296	3
Margibi	0	471	0	110	0	24	0	447	0	0
Grand Bassa	0	263	0	65	0	9	48	312	143	0
Maryland	0	268	0	23	0	5	0	128	5	0
Sinoe	0	182	0	30	0	1	0	181	6	0
Rivercess	0	38	0	70	0	0	0	77	14	0
River Gee	0	139	0	28	0	0	0	238	0	0
Gbarpolu	0	87	0	13	0	8	0	53	0	0
Grand Gedeh	0	72	0	14	0	3	0	74	0	0
Grand Kru	0	281	0	93	0	17	0	147	3	0
Lofa	0	748	0	96	0	31	0	685	20	0
Nimba	0	581	0	51	0	25	0	641	0	0
Bong	0	271	0	70	0	18	0	276	0	0
Grand Cape Mount	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bomi	0	165	0	12	0	0	0	109	70	0
National	0	8,199	0	1,241	0	457	48	7,107	462	3

Table 3: Number of cases currently in Treatment Units, Liberia, 16 March – August 21, 2020

Treatment Unit	New admissions	Cumulative admissions	Recoveries	Cumulative Recoveries	Currently in Treatment Unit	Total Males	Total Females
14 Military Hospital & Union Treatment Center, Montserrado	0	574	0	543	22	601	306
Chief Jallahlone Hospital, Gbarpolu	0	3	0	1	0	19	16
Jackson F. Doe Hospital, Nimba	0	5	0	1	0	5	5
E&J Medical Center, Nimba	0	16	0	16	0	9	14
Ganta Methodist Hospital, Nimba	0	1	0	1	0	23	8
AML Yekepa, Nimba	0	12	0	9	0	4	3
Pleebo Health Center, Maryland	0	14	0	10	1	5	2
JJ Dossen Hospital, Maryland	0	9	0	5	0	6	0
Martha Tubman Treatment	0	4	0	0	3	3	0
Rally Time Hospital, Grand Kru	0	3	0	1	1	3	0
Sasstown Health Center, Grand Kru	0	7	0	0	1	4	8
Behwan Health Center	0	3	0	0	4	1	2
Fish Town Hospital, River Gee	0	35	0	26	0	0	2
Robert Sport Treatment Unit	0	1	0	0	0	14	4
Liberia Government Hospital, Bomi	0	14	0	7	3	9	9
Tellewoyan Hospital, Lofa	0	13	0	12	0	5	4
Foya Hospital, Lofa	0	12	0	12	0	10	4
Curran Hospital, Lofa	0	5	0	4	0	2	2
Phebe Hospital, Bong	0	26	0	24	0	28	8
Liberia Government Hospital, Grand Bassa	0	4	0	3	0	2	4
Arcelor Mittal, Grand Bassa	0	5	0	5	0	3	4
LAC Hospital, Grand Bassa	0	41	1	39	2	19	13
St. Francis Hospital Treatment Unit, Rivercess	0	2	0	0	0	42	24
Duside Hospital, Margibi	0	39	0	34	0	1	1
F. J. Grant Hospital, Sinoe	0	5	0	4	1	7	7
Total	0	868	1	816	39	844	442

## II. Situation Context

Liberia reported its first confirmed case of the COVID-19 on 16 March 2020 in Monrovia, the country's capital. The COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve in the country, with the numbers of new cases and deaths rapidly increasing, although disproportionately between counties. This continues with strong implementation of public health measures in order to slow down this rapid growth in cases. The cornerstone of the response in Liberia is to find, isolate, test and care for every case, and to trace and quarantine every contact. Additionally, communities need to adhere to physical distancing, with good personal hygiene practices and cough etiquette. As of 21 August 2020, the country had recorded one thousand two hundred eighty-six (1,286) confirmed cases of COVID-19, including ten (12) death (CFR=0.9%) and 8,199 contacts registered. Montserrado County remains the Epicenter 907 (70.2%) of the confirmed cases including 8 deaths while the rest of the confirmed cases reported from; Margibi (67); Nimba County (55), Grand Bassa (48), Lofa (44); River Gee (36); Bong (35); Maryland (28); Grand Kru (18); Bomi (18); Gbarpolu (10); Sinoe (6); Rivercess (5); Grand Gedeh (7); and Grand Cape Mount (2). As Liberia continues to test all dead bodies regardless of the place of death, of the 82 dead bodies that tested positive for COVID-19, 27 of were community deaths, at the same time, 45 occurred in other health facilities. Due to prompt treatment at the treatment centers, Liberia recovery rate continues to improve at 816 (94%) as of 21 August 2020.

Liberia has embarked on more community testing to identify cases as majority of the COVID-19 cases in Liberia remain asymptomatic; this has aided in confirming more cases in hotspot communities and is leading to the interruption of community transmission.

All the 15 counties of Liberia have reported at least one confirmed case of COVID-19. On 12 July 2020, Rivercess county confirmed its first case since March 2020. Five counties are undergoing the 28 days count down with 3 days remaining for Bong county and 6 days remaining for Grand Cape Mount county, 11 days remaining for River Gee county, 22 days remaining for Nimba county and 24 days remaining for Margibi county to exist the epidemic phase as of 21 August 2020. A total of nine counties remain in epidemic phase while Gbarpolu county has moved to preparedness phase. The risk of transmission remains very high largely due to high population movements in Montserrado as the county is home to approximately 1,500,000 (1/3) of the country's total population, while local transmission mainly from contacts of confirmed cases has accounted for about 98.7% of the cases. It is also due to non-restrictive measures to isolate or self-isolate high-risk contacts from the general population, including families across the country.

## III. Public Health Actions initiated following confirmation

### 1. Coordination

- In an effort to reduce or mitigate institutional transmission, the Incident management system (IMS) has instructed all agencies of government including national and international partners that attend the IMS meetings to do voluntary tests for COVID-19
- The National IMS through the President Office has mandated all citizens to wear masks when leaving their homes to reduce or mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak
- The IMS led by the Minister of Health continues to visit hotspot communities in Monrovia to encourage voluntary testing and adherence to all health regulations
  - Facemask, Handwashing, Social Distancing of at least 3-6 feet, limit gatherings to no more than 20 people
  - Limit travel in and out of all responding counties with the exception for good and essential services
    - Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Gbarpolu, Nimba Counties
  - Churches, Mosques and other religious establishment limit attendance to 25% of the normal attendance and observe safe distancing and other health measures

### 2. Epidemiology and Surveillance

- Conduct a house to house search and community outreach for symptomatic suspected cases and volunteers.
- Surveillance activities including active case search, contact tracing, and case investigation using the WHO interim guidelines
- Active case activities have intensified at the county, district, health facility, and community levels
- A total of 144,847 households have been visited, of which 493 sick people were identified and referred for testing after meeting the COVID-19 case definition
- Data harmonization to reclassify cases are ongoing at national and sub-national levels
- Improved case detection in hotspot communities:
  - Over 42% upward trend observed in cases were detected after the initiation of the focused hotspot strategy for enhanced COVID-19 strategy in hotspot communities in Montserrado county
- Interrupting community transmission (by isolating confirmed cases)
- Partners to continue to provide technical, operational and financial support to national and subnational levels

### 3. Case Management

- A total of 39 case-patients are being managed at treatment centers across the country as at 21 August 2020
- Monitoring and testing high-risk contacts at POCs and isolation centers in affected counties
- Ensuring that treatment protocol and procedures are standardized across the country
- World Health Organization Country Office case management officer is supporting the Ministry of Health in mapping available treatment centers across the country to address increasing number of cases outside of the hotspot county, Montserrado county.

#### 4. Laboratory

- The laboratory has tested fifteen thousand four hundred fourteen (**15,414**) samples with 1,286 testing positive for COVID-19 with a positivity rate of 8.3% as of 21 August 2020.
- The country is using RT-PCR to test for COVID-19,
- Additional two GeneXpert regional laboratories have been established to improve turnaround time for COVID-19 samples from reception at the laboratory to testing and release of results to reporting county; but there is a plan to establish GeneXpert additional two regional laboratories
- COVID-19 EQA panel tested, results quality check and reporting in progress
- Specimens collection materials including swabs/VTM are pre-positioned in counties
- Encourage the public to go for voluntary testing or to report for testing if they develop symptoms
- Using mobile sample collection teams, conduct sample collection of all persons living within the marked dwellings
- Planned to operationalize two regional laboratories for COVID-19 testing
- The National Reference Laboratory is working closely with the surveillance team to enhance laboratory information management including tests per capita; positivity rate of specimens tested; and analysis of laboratory information based on sampling strategy to provide a better understanding of the country status

#### 5. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

- Increased health care workers infarction due to breach in IPC protocol in affected counties
- Reinforcing handwashing in all public areas in the county (markets, health facilities, public offices, checkpoints, etc.)
- Health workers risk assessment are ongoing in affected counties

#### 6. Psychosocial

- Continuous provision of cognitive-behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational therapy
- Psychoeducation, linking patients with their families and home-based support to cases, contacts, and relatives at POCs, Isolation centers, and treatment centers
- Distribution of food and non-food items to affected families and communities with high incidence is ongoing to encourage sample collection and testing

#### 7. Risk Communication and community engagement

- Encourage continues community engagement and participation.
- Encourage community mobilization by Superintendents and other community leaders to increase voluntary testing.
- Public transport should enforce preventive measures, including safe distancing and the use of facial covering.
- Elevate public messages that COVID-19 is still present in Liberia
- Airing of GoL-validated radio jingles on 18 stations across the country

### IV. Challenges

- Inadequate investigation of confirmed cases including their close contacts across the country
- Inadequate financial and logistical resources for response activities
- Enforcement of the public use of masks and the call for testing of high and low risk contacts including health care workers
- Unable to assess the impact of the messages disseminated by the response partners and GOL

### V. Next Steps/Recommendations

- National IMS to ensure that the required types of equipment are available at the National Public Health Laboratory for continuity of best practices
- Continuous active participation in Community Engagement, Risk Communication, and Protection Pillars, additional engagement in EPI/Surveillance Pillar
- Continue epidemiological investigations to link all the reported confirmed cases and their close contacts
- Mobilize additional resources to support ongoing response activities

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**For comments or questions, please contact**

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