

# Africabio Enterprises, Inc.

## Newsletter

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### LabWeek 2017 Flashback

#### Africabio Enterprises, Inc

“Lighting the Way to Standards” was the theme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual **Celebrate Lab Week** hosted by Africabio Enterprises Inc.

The conference provides a forum for laboratory professionals to share knowledge and experiences in order to strengthen laboratory systems. This year included: **Quality Management Systems, Safety and Prevention, and Initiating Microbiology**, amongst other critical topics. Africabio also introduced the Alpha-test product of Biolinx, an online continuing education program for laboratory professionals that will allow for continuous updating of skills. A major gap for technicians in-service. Held in Liberia on April 25 - 26, 2017 at the Monrovia City Hall, amidst the stalking reality of another potential infectious disease outbreak, this time in Sinoe County, it emphasized the critical need to improve diagnostics in Liberia.

“Looking at the current situation as it relates to health, it is expedient that we put more into our labs since these are the driving forces in the world of diagnostics,” one of the Technicians stated.

The conference brought together a diverse group of professionals including Lab Techs from both the public and private sectors, as well as clinicians, County partners that align with laboratory system strengthening in Liberia and internationally.

Attending the conference was the CEO of African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) Dr. Ali Elbireer, who provided an Africa- perspective on building **The Standards of Labs in Liberia and beyond**.

Dr. Dougbeh Chris Nyan, a Liberian researcher, was well received by an audience of laboratory technicians proud to hear about his clinical research in the development of a multiplex diagnostic array that detects those infectious diseases of concern to Liberia and globally. He led a panel focused on **The Importance of Lab in Research**, where he motivated the lab techs and other partners with an inspiring session. For the first time in three years, this conference included exhibits focusing on new diagnostics equipment as well as opportunities for lab techs to try these analyzers during scheduled demonstrations.



**A panel discussion on the Role of Diagnostics in Patient Care**



**Pictorial from the Lab at Phebe**

**An Interview with Mr. Saturday Quellie, County Diagnostic Officer, Bong County**  
**By: Ma-Hawa Ngaima**

On June 23, 2017, during an engaging, informative and insightful interview with the County Diagnostics Officer (CDO) of Bong County, Mr. Saturday Quellie, he answered questions on major updates and highlighted current improvements projects unfolding in the Lab at the Phebe Hospital.

**Ms. Ngaima: Please give me a brief history of the Lab at Phebe Hospital.**

**Mr. Quellie:** Firstly, there are two laboratories at the Phebe hospital. They are: the clinical lab and the Ebola Virus Disease laboratories.

The history of the clinical labs dates as far back as 1965. After the 2003 civil crisis, I took over the lab. Initially in 2011, we only had lab aides running all of these labs. Later in 2011, I was able to convince the management to hire technicians and those techs were the best four out of the graduating class of the Phebe paramedical school. As I speak, to date, we have 14 Lab Techs working in both Labs.

During the heat of the Ebola crisis in 2014/2015, we did not have enough machines to test whether the patient had Ebola or another disease until after many days later, when the patient is long dead. Presently, we have at our disposal, the Real Time PCR Machine to test for Ebola and Ebola survivors.

**Ms. Ngaima: What is the extent of the modernization at the Phebe Lab?**

**Mr. Quellie:** Phebe laboratory was able to win an impactful award for medical technology from NOCAL. We have moved away from routine testing which we used in the lab from the time I joined up to 2011. We now use quick test to diagnose blood sugars, Hepatitis B and C, H pylori, syphilis using both the rapid test for conservation.

Microbiology that means we do bacteria culture and sensitivity and also biochemistry. I can say we now run liver, kidney and metabolic profile tests. Just recently, we've added another piece of equipment, the de-ionizer machine which purifies our water for the biochemistry machine. The third service point is the advanced hematology machine which enables us to do the complete blood count, CBC.

The award we won during the Lab Week in April as "**The Best Laboratory**" brought in an opportunity for us at the Phebe Lab. In terms of the EVD lab, after many lobbied with the U.S Navy Defense Department, we can now successfully conduct tests with the Real-time PCR machine, which brings the Ebola result the same time instead of many days. This technology can also conduct HIV virus load which detects the amount of virus in a patient undergoing treatment.

**Ms. Ngaima: What would say are some major challenges you face in the Lab as we speak?**

**Mr. Quellie:** The first challenge for both the clinical and EVD labs is Space and lab techs. We need more space, especially for the EVD lab. The additional service points we've added requires more staff to carry out the work. The next big challenge right now at the lab is the issue of electricity. The machines that we use at both labs require a certain standard of electrical infrastructure. We are focusing on these as we move ahead.

# Partner Corner

## **JHPIEGO and its Work in Liberia**



**David Vessellee of Jhpiego and Lamin Myers Phebe Lab Tech conducting test at the Phebe Lab**

Jhpiego is an affiliate organization of the John Hopkins University in the United States, innovating ways to save lives. In Liberia, Jhpiego works to strengthen the clinical sites for laboratory institutions and provide effective teaching skills for faculty members. This is in partnership with pre-services institutions through the Maternal and Child Survival Program/Human Resources for Health (MCSP/HRH) Project in both Montserrado and Bong counties.

Jhpiego liaises with The Medical Laboratory Association and key laboratory Pre-service Education (PSE) stakeholders in Liberia to develop the national standards for the PSE. To adequately achieve this, Jhpiego has conducted the following trainings and technical updates for lab PSE schools:

- Leadership and management development training for faculty, coordinators and administrators from the PSE Institutions was held. Participants of this training are currently working on action plans developed from the training to strengthen their management system to achieve accreditation requirements from the regulatory bodies
- Laboratory Quality Management training workshop for faculty and preceptors was held
- Effective Teaching Skills for faculty and Preceptors from Phebe, TNIMA and Mother Pattern College of Health Sciences trainings were conducted
- Set up a Technical Working Group (TWG) for MLT PSE Standards
- Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) curriculum was revised and a review workshop was conducted.
- Purchased vehicles to enhance MLT student clinical rotations at the PSE schools. These vehicles will be turned over to the schools in 2017.
- Hired full time instructors for the three MLT pre-service institutions.
- Conducted a MLT Career Day in Bong and Montserrado counties.

## **Strengthening Laboratory Management Toward Accreditation (SLMTA)**

The African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) SLMTA/SLIPTA initial training was conducted in Monrovia from February 20 – 24, 2017. Liberia is the 68th country to pursue the SLMTA implementation. This is very important as Ministry of Health strives to improve Liberia's integrated, tiered, laboratory system for better clinical diagnostics and emergency response to infectious agents. The MoH partnered with the U.S Center for Disease Control (CDC) and ACCEL in this effort.

According to the 2015 ASLM survey, there are 415 accredited medical laboratories on the African continent, of which 381 (81%) are located in South Africa, followed by Kenya with 21 (4.5%). Only one third of the African countries (17) have accredited laboratories.

SLIPTA represents a framework to encourage, support and recognize the implementation of quality management systems (QMS) in medical laboratories in a progressive orderly manner. SLMTA QI projects were issued to all participants after the first workshop. ACCEL's Lab team made site visits to monitor progress of SLMTA quality improvement projects and also mentor the lab staff on-site. Candace B. Eastman, CEO of Africabio Enterprises, Inc. was invited to provide certificates at the SLMTA closing Ceremony on Friday August 4, 2017. The SLMTA training was designated for all County Diagnostics Officers in Liberia.

### **On Going Events**



In line with the official start of campaign season in Liberia, Africabio is sponsoring a Campaign for Better Diagnostics in Liberia. The campaign seeks to draw attention to the importance of prioritizing laboratories in our Country. The aim is for Liberians to recognize the importance of compelling candidates in their Districts and those seeking the Presidency to put issues high on their agenda. The campaign is a two months intensive awareness effort focused on the need to improve labs in Liberia. It will include students from high schools and universities, community dwellers, and institutions across Liberia driving this message. Now is the time to give preference to good science and the ability to diagnoses in Liberia. The underlying thing is for everyone to foster the need to discuss transformative issues.

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