



Emory Global Health Connection

Building Bridges for Better Health

February 2018

The International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) Assists Partner Countries in Strengthening their Public Health Capacity

The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa was a humanitarian crisis that laid bare the need for a stronger public health infrastructure in the region.

During the epidemic, Liberia suffered the largest

percentage of the 28,616 Ebola-related deaths, painfully illustrating the need for a resilient health system that could effectively control the spread of the disease. According to the 2017 Liberian Act to Establish a National Public Health Institute (NPHI), the Ebola Virus

outbreak exposed weaknesses in Liberia's

health care system and underscored the need for the country to establish its own national public health institute to address future public health crises.

With support from The U.S. Secretariat of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), which is based at the Emory Global Health Institute (EGHI), Liberia established a

national public health institute (NPHI). IANPHI's support of this effort included leveraging the expertise of its partners, which included the

Nigerian Institute for Medical Research, the U.S

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Emory's Rollins School of Public Health, the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET), the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health

Interventions Network (TEPHINET), and the Task

Force for Global Health. IANPHI member institutes supported their partners in Liberia by helping to develop a new national organizational plan and strategic framework. IANPHI also assisted in the development of NPHI communication platforms that included an NPHI website. The result was a



The Honorable Tolbert Nyenswah, Director General of the National Public Health Institute of Liberia



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strong foundation for the new National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

Launched only one year ago, NPHIL has already made great strides in revitalizing Liberia’s public health infrastructure and health services to both prevent and prepare for future epidemics and other public health crises. Since opening, NPHIL, with the help of EGHI’s [CHAMPS program](#), has reduced laboratory response time to test samples for Ebola from 90 days to 24 hours, diverted contaminated food shipments, responded to and solved mysterious outbreaks, and provided public health information on multiple platforms that have reached over one million readers.

Liberia is just one example of IANPHI’s reach. Since its inception in 2006, the organization has worked on more than 75

global projects to link and strengthen government agencies responsible for public health in countries across the globe.

Envisioned and founded by Dr. Jeffrey P. Koplan, Vice President for Global Health at Emory University and former head of the U.S. CDC from 1998-2002, and Dr. Pekka Puska, former Director of the National Public Health Institute of Finland,



Dr. Jeffrey Koplan, Vice President for Global Health at Emory University; Co-founder and former president of IANPHI.

IANPHI’s mission is to bolster global public health capacity by creating, connecting, and transforming the world’s public health agencies. Under the leadership of Drs. Koplan, Puska, and former Emory

“Liberia’s Health Sector can help create the enabling environment for NPHIL to contribute to the investment plan to build a resilient health system. A system that will not collapse like during 2014/2015 unprecedented Ebola crisis that will only bend during crisis.”

The Honorable Tolbert Nyenswah, Director General of the National Public Health Institute of Liberia-NPHIL

office IANPHI Director Courtenay Dusenbury, MPH, the organization developed 17 projects to strengthen the public health capacities in low-

resource countries within its first year. Initially having 39 national public health institutes from around the world as members, IANPHI’s membership sky-rocketed over the next decade,



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with a current total of 108 national public health institutes in 93 countries.

Since 2006, IANPHI has played a key role in strengthening NPHIs using an evidence-based international framework called the Framework for the Creation and Development of National Public Health Institutes. This framework serves as a road map to create and/or strengthen interested national public health institutes around the world.

Through peer-to-peer evaluation of institutes, IANPHI creates an environment that facilitates the sharing of expertise, addresses priority needs, and raises standards among all public health institute members. The organization builds networks for its members who share characteristics such as geography, language, and programmatic issues. This collaborative platform also facilitates the development of research and programs in various countries to address similar issues globally.

Through a series of case studies, IANPHI has created a formula for building successful, purposeful, and impactful national public health

institutes. Using a holistic approach for combating public health diseases, nearly five billion people from 93 countries are currently benefiting from the work of IANPHI. This program accelerates the exchanges between the 108 international public health agencies to share best practices on an array of public health topics such as infectious diseases like Zika and chronic diseases such as diabetes. Together, the network leverages expertise to strengthen public health systems around the world.

In 2017, Ellen Whitney, MPH, was named Director of IANPHI's U.S. Secretariat. "IANPHI remains committed to its work providing technical assistance and support to its members to help strengthen their public health capacity, which in turn, helps strengthen their global health security," said Whitney.

To learn more about IANPHI and its programs and activities, please visit the [IANPHI website](#) and the most recent [IANPHI Newsletter](#).