

# **POSITION STATEMENT BY THE NIGERIA SOCIETY** **OF PHYSIOTHERAPY ON THE EBOLA VIRUS** **DISEASE (EVD) IN NIGERIA**

The outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Lagos, Nigeria over a couple of weeks ago through the index case Mr. Patrick Sawyer who imported EVD to the country a lot has happened and has left very little to be desired. There has so far been 6 reported deaths as at today 31/08/2014, 16 confirmed cases and over 300 people under surveillance who had secondary contacts with the index case. There is a surveillance action taking place in the coal city of Enugu and the first Ebola death outside Lagos has been reported in the Oil city of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Currently there are 5 West African Countries battling this scourge Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and now Senegal. The fatalities are huge and the death toll is in thousands. These news and figures are alarming with the dynamic of situation changing; a potential escalating to threaten the very essence of our dear nation. The healthcare sector in Nigeria has endured a sweltering time in recent weeks largely based on disharmony amongst the care-givers but in the face of this adversity concerted efforts need to be made to salvage the situation that affects our wellbeing as healthcare providers. This time has come for all of us to form a united front to fight the scourge of EVD.

Our noble profession; Physiotherapy is positioned to prevent diseases, promote health and restore function in event post- injury or disease(like EVD, HIV and so on) . This in-turn means maintaining **close contact and proximity** within our professional ethics and jurisdiction with patients at all times in the aforementioned instances using best practices to ensure desirables outcomes as required. As “**our hands aid healing and recovery**” we are passionate

and committed to ensuring the best care for the good people of our nation. In the wake of the EVD, it is pertinent to realise that Physiotherapists will be involved in the care and management of patients with EVD.

It is significant to tackle the bane of the EBOLA VIRUS outbreak in West Africa which has been classified by World Health Organization as “an ‘extraordinary event’ and a public health risk to other countries”. The Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) has been monitoring the EVD situation with close attention and wishes to make the following positions known:

1. We commend the President Good Luck Jonathan, GCFR, the Honourable Minister of Health, Prof Onyebuchi Chukwu, Federal Executive Council (FEC) and other related governmental agencies for the quick response towards management of EVD victims, containment and prevention of the potential epidemic of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) so far. A lot still needs to be done to make Nigeria Ebola Virus free in the coming months.
2. We assure the Federal Government of the NSP’s full support in the cause to empower and educate Nigerians in the wake of this outbreak and play our roles as it is related.
3. The approach to tackle this EVD requires all synergy between the health care professionals and the good people of the nation. All Nigerians need to exercise all necessary precautionary measures and imbibe good hygiene habit.
4. Urge the Federal Government to provide and facilitate all necessary surveillance steps to identify possible clusters and cases.
5. Implore the Federal Government to adopt the strategies proffered to tackle this menace as highlighted by World Health Organization (WHO) following the emergency meeting which

held by teleconference on Wednesday, 6 August 2014 from 13:00 to 17:30 and on Thursday, 7 August 2014 from 13:00 to 18:30 Geneva time (CET). The consensus should serve as a benchmark in our own planning locally. Some of which are already in place but sustainability should be ensured. For more on the WHO materials on EBV, please click here:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/> . Additionally, a useful resource is the Centre

for Disease and Prevent and WHO collaboration document entitled Infection Control for Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers in the African Health Care Setting. For more information please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/abroad/vhf-manual.html>

6. Equip facilities with the necessary materials and equipment to receive patients and isolate in a suspected case and then transfer to the isolation and quarantine zones efficiently.
7. The Federal Government should use all possible media outlets and social platforms to engage in the public service messages on the EVD and kick start a strong campaign on preventive measures.
8. All suspected cases should be approached (taking all precautionary measures and should be isolated accordingly) as would be a confirmed case until proven otherwise within professional ethics and guidelines. These patients are expected to be treated without stigmatization and humanely despite the limitations.
9. We will continue to show our support for our nation in the face of this adversity and our thoughts and prayers will continue until the storm is over and beyond.
10. We enjoin and appeal to all Nigerians to join the battle against EBOLA VIRUS by keeping calm and not switching to

panic mode. Empower ourselves by becoming more knowledgeable about the condition and taking adequate preventive measures.

11. Endeavour to report suspected case(s)/ symptoms to the feedback channels as set up by the Government.
12. Adopt the proper hand washing code. For more information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
13. Follow up updates and additional information on these feedback channels: Toll free telephone number 0800 EBOLA HELP(0800326524357)  
www.ebolaalert@ebolainfofmohng  
twitter account: @ebolainfofmohng, www.ebolaalert.org
14. We will update relevant information from time to time on our dedicated page on the NSP website <http://www.nigeriaphysio.org/ebolavirusoutbreaknigeria>



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