

SECURING PUBLIC HEALTH: EVERYONE MUST PLAY A ROLE

Foreword

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Citation Style For This Article: Mazaba ML. Securing Public Health: Everyone Must Play a Role . Health Press Zambia Bull. 2019; 3(3); Pp 1-2

Welcome to yet another issue of The Health Press Zambia (THP-Z). The theme for this issue, 'Securing Public Health: Everyone Must Play a Role' emphasises the fact that health security is a responsibility for all, be it individuals, communities, institutions, Non-profit organisations, Governments and beyond.

The European Commission's Global Health Security Initiative defines the term "health security" as one used "to describe preparedness for and response to serious health incidents that are cross-border in nature and that pose a risk to security, destabilize economies, disrupt social cohesion, and affect the critical business of government." [1].

The World Health Organisation in its constitution emphasises that "the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States." [2]. This probably takes into account the fact that health is determined by various factors and so to ensure it is well secured all these factors must be addressed. The health teams alone cannot mitigate all the factors threatening the health security of the populations they are responsible for.

Lessons learnt in previous outbreaks indicate that multisectoral strategies are key to public

health and emergency management leading to a secured healthy population and environment. It is important that all stakeholders in the public, policy makers and implementers understand the vital role they play in safeguarding the health of populations; public health emergency, including preparedness, response, and recovery are a responsibility to be shared by all sectors in society.



Figure 1: Multi-sectoral high level support to disease outbreak response

Key to public health security is a collective action supported by all stakeholders; from government officials and professional first responders to directors of nongovernmental community organizations, private-sector executives, volunteers, and individual citizens. The Zambian Government recognises the importance every individual, institution and

organisation plays in securing health for its populations and as such has reformed its approach in public health and emergency management: The national Action Plan for Health Security, various disease specific epidemic preparedness and response plans are all multisectoral in nature. The epidemic preparedness and response committees and rapid response teams are also multisectoral and multidisciplinary in nature.

Recently a deliberate effort to engage community leaders including religious and traditional leaders is a deliberate effort to ensure all stakeholders are a part of and understand their role in public health security. Read more about this in the editorial entitled 'Universal health coverage through engagement of traditional and religious leaders' and the perspective article 'Communique for traditional and religious leaders health indaba – Lusaka'

Also of interesting read in this issue we publish, a policy brief on hepatitis, an update on the public health security in Zambia.

THP-Z invites all those not yet subscribed to the publication to do so on <http://znphi.co.zm/thehealthpress/>. We also look forward to your submissions of articles. Read more on public health issues within Zambia and the globe at large on <http://znphi.co.zm/thehealthpress/>.

LIST OF REFERENCES

1. Maria Politzar. URL: <https://www.devex.com/news/working-toward-global-health-security-strategies-and-challenges-90727>
2. World Health Organisation. Health Security. URL: <https://www.who.int/health-security/en/>