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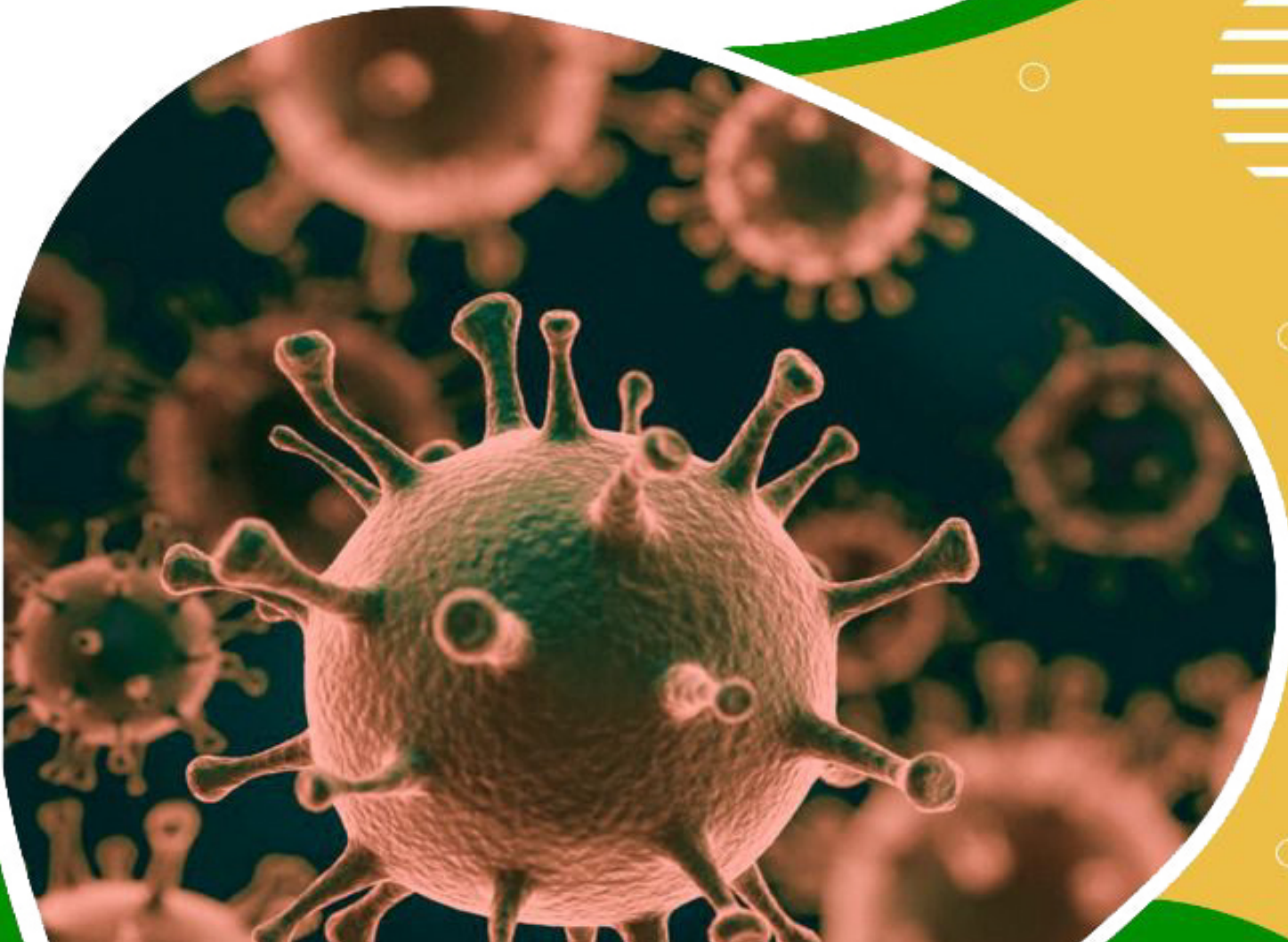
ECOPH

Academic News **Special Edition**

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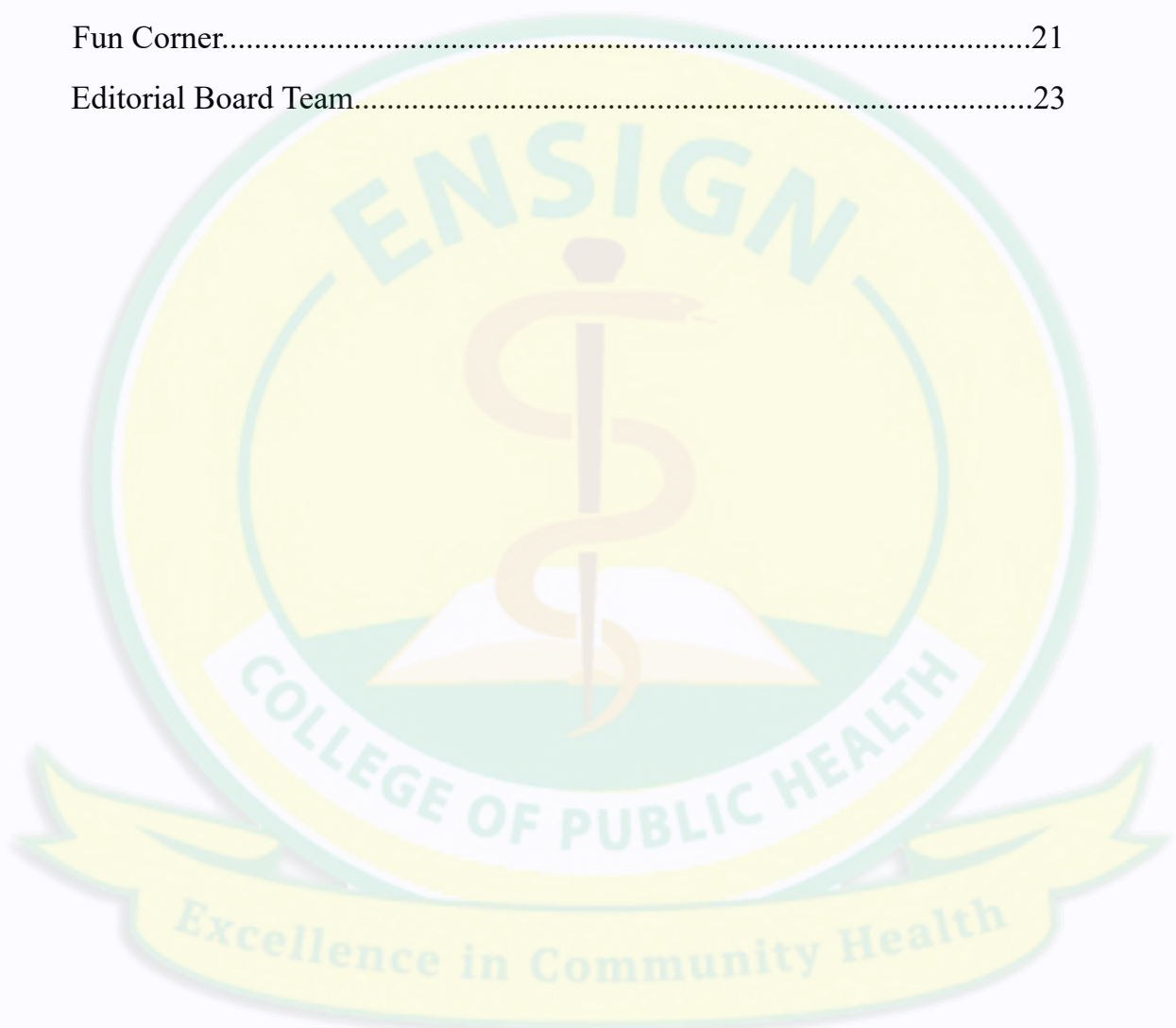
JULY 2020

SURVIVING THE ODDS



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Ensign College of Public Health Students, Staff, Faculty and Friends-

The past few months have demonstrated that we live in an unpredictable world. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us and seems set to continue to do so for some time. We have seen the passing and departures of people who have helped to make Ensign College of Public Health into a remarkable institution. We see the impacts of climate change affect our everyday lives. We have seen a changing world landscape as countries struggle to navigate the complex circumstances of our day. All of this reminds us to value what we do have and provides motivation for us to find ways to improve the world. And this is the essence of the field of public health – to find solutions to the greatest challenges that we face.

As we all know, Ensign College of Public Health has been directly impacted by the challenges of our day. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closing of campus, cancellation of important events and programs, and the development of new programming aimed at helping communities throughout the world respond to the ravages of SARS-CoV-2. It is, however, during these times of great challenges that we truly learn who we are, both as individuals and as institutions. What we have learned is that Ensign College of Public Health is a remarkable institution that thrives because of remarkable people. Our journey through these challenging times has only begun and the most challenging days are likely still to come. Yet, rather than be discouraged, we should see this as a time where we reach for the greatness within each one of us. We have the opportunity to face these challenges boldly with the confidence that we will persevere. We should each act in a way that in the future, when we look back at the COVID-19 pandemic, we will know that we helped humanity carry this great burden and we embodied the Ensign College of Public Health mission to help people live prosperous lives. I encourage all of us to be strong, be kind, be positive and be courageous. Be problem solvers. Find pathways through these challenging times and help others to do the same. We must all find the greatness within us, because the world desperately needs us to do so.

Professor Stephen Alder

President, Ensign College of Public Health

A SWITCH TO ONLINE LEARNING: A NECESSARY MOVE

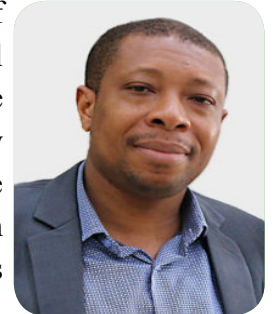


The decision by Ensign College of Public Health (ECOPH) to immediately move all classes for the 1st Year MPH program online in compliance to the President's directive to help curb the community spread of COVID-19 can be described as a great success. Faculty was able to deliver all lectures and conduct exercises and end of semester exams. To make room for the students who by their work schedules happen to be part of the national frontline workers on the pandemic, classes were taught from 6:00 – 9:00 pm each working day over the rest of the semester. The same virtual platform was used to assist the 2 Year students during the period to work with the assigned faculty supervisors on finishing their respective Thesis projects without physical contacts.

At the time when Universities across the country were called back to campuses to finish the rest of their semester work post the partial lockdown period, ECOPH students have instead started their end of semester break. This is another indication that ECOPH is unique in what it stands for and provides further backing to the meaning of the name ENSIGN; a pacesetter or a standard-bearer. Despite the great success chalked with this initiative, faculty observed few hitches and hope to get solutions to them to help improve online teaching or the hybrid of it since that is the way forward for learning/ teaching activities post the Covid-19 era.

Dr. Steve Manortey (Academic Head)

Using IT to enhance the delivery of Ensign's MPH program had always been part of the strategic plan. The COVID-19 and restrictions placed on operations of educational institutions presented a good opportunity for Ensign to actualize its plans to activate an online delivery of lectures. I am proud to say Ensign was one of the first tertiary institutions in Ghana to migrate its face -to- face interactions with students to online seamlessly. We are currently collating feedback from the students and faculty which will help us to make an informed decision on what measures to adopt to make Ensign's e-learning environment better, fit for purpose, and one of the best globally.



Mr. Patrick Kuma (Academic Registrar)



Online learning is appropriate for teaching large groups of students. This form of training is more convenient for students as compared to other forms of learning and allows for giving and taking questions virtually. It also encourages their active participation and creates visual impact.

Dr. Reuben Esena (Faculty)

The ECOPH e-learning is a good initiative especially as Ghana began recording COVID-19 cases. In my view, if developed properly, students can have access and partake in lectures where ever they are in the world. E-learning also serves as a means of reaching out to more students both locally and internationally as some may be interested in ECOPH's programs but may not be able to physically access it due to work schedules, distance among others. For Environmental and Occupational Health, students missed out on some programming softwares like QGIS, and RStudio because of lack of physical contact with the lecturer. Pre-recorded videos were considered but would not be as efficient as physical contact.

Dr. Simon Sovoe (Adjunct-faculty)

I think it was effective. Everyone tried to make the learning environment conducive. Instability of network connectivity was however one of the challenges I encountered. Another challenge had to do with family distractions and if I have to choose, I'll go for the in-class mode of learning unless the situation demands otherwise.

Lucy Makafui Nutakor (Student)

It was so unique and it also helped me a lot. I don't know how I would be able to come for class every week but with the online platform, I managed to be present all the time. In addition, the recorded lessons were also handy to supplement any deficiency. I however had challenges with network connectivity but the fact that I could fall on the recordings made it suitable. One other problem was the answer booklet. Its use posed a lot of challenges.

Moses Gyan (Student)

Peculiar to my circumstances, online learning has been helpful. I could make time to listen to the recorded lectures at my convenience. On the whole it is good and I considered the whole innovation as an unmerited answered prayer. It saved me from the stress of travelling to campus and its associated costs.

Sonita Twum-Barima (Student)

This mode of learning made me come abreast with how to use Google Meet, sending and receiving emails among others. Even though it is an entirely different avenue of learning we have explored, there was much learning therein for me.

Shelter Bobbie Agbeko (Student)

Personally, it has helped in reducing the stress of travelling and the risk of exposure to infected asymptomatic individuals. Though I was always present at the lectures, there were distractions from work. Also, although our class missed on some practical components of our lessons in STATA, QGIS and RStudio, we are optimistic we will catch up. It did not afford us physical interaction with lecturers and colleagues. On the whole and per the circumstances, it has been a good initiative.

Dr. Sedinam Adamaley (Student)



Henry has a background as a Physician Assistant and is a second year student at the Ensign College of Public Health. In 2019, he was shortlisted in the WHO Afro Innovation Challenge that sought to work on novel solutions to improve health outcomes and to address unmet health needs for Africa. In the same year, he represented Ghana as a youth delegate at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Nairobi, Kenya. Henry Ugorji engaged in a one-year internship with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ghana as a Program Assistant during which he participated in projects and programs that address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Maternal Health, Youth Inclusion, etc.

In February 2020, he was awarded a research grant by the Association of Accredited Public Health Programs (AAPHP) based in the United State for a project aimed at assessing the quality of Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. His project outcomes are focused on aiding healthcare facilities in Ghana, improving EmONC facilities and avoiding preventable maternal and neonatal mortality. His interests are in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Health Statistics. His vision is to help strengthen the public health systems in Ghana, Africa and across the world through Research, Innovation and Solution.

Henry Okorie Ugorji

THE LEADERSHIP CORPS ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

The Ensign College of Public health launched the Ensign Leadership Corps Program to help students develop skills through a series of public health initiatives. Students who enrolled in the 2019/2020 Leadership Corps program have led community, school-based, and other public health initiatives that have promoted health in various communities. Activities undertaken by students included radio programs, community service, school, and adolescent health education, just to mention a few. This year's activities have been successful due to the efforts and contributions of Professor Steve Alder, Staff and Faculty of Ensign, Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Bondah and the student leaders. This semester began with lots of initiatives being implemented by students, here are a few featured highlights. More details are featured in the associated links.

COVID-19 OUTREACH EVENT

Claudia Nana Atoo organized an outreach visit to the Shai Osudoku market to educate some market men and women on COVID-19 and also on how to manage stress and anxiety during this crucial time. False imaginations and myths about the pandemic were cleared as the traders questions were answered.

Acknowledgment: *Nana-Atoo Sylvia, Osafu Staney, Nana-Atoo Kevin, Claudia Nana-Atoo.*

COVID-19 POEM



Choice Muchina, a student, followed through with a beautiful poem titled “Lamentations to COVID-19” to show how the pandemic has affected humanity including increasing the global burden of disease and adversely impacting the socioeconomic way of life. She also gave a glimmer of hope stating that “humanity will surely rise against the pandemic”. ([Click the link to listen to her beautiful poem](#))

Acknowledgment: *Mrs. Choice Muchina, Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Bondah, Dr. Edward Sutherland, Dr. Sedinam Adamaley, Mr. Michael Blay.*

“IN THE MIND OF THE HEALTH WORKER”



This mini-project was a brief message to the public to sensitize them on the great sacrifice of our health care providers (front liners) during this pandemic period of COVID-19. The underlying was to motivate healthcare staff. ([Click the link to listen to her beautiful poem](#))

Acknowledgment: *Ms. Laretta Elloh-Donkoh, Mr. Michael Blay, Dr. Edward Sutherland, Mr. Curtis Conduah.*

WEINGLO FAMILY INTERNATIONAL LIVE INSTAGRAM SESSION



Weinglo Family International, an NGO dedicated to public health education and engagement had a live Instagram session for 2 hours with Victoria Partey Newman, a medical doctor and a student of ECOPH as a guest of honor. This interactive session was on the topic “Staying fit during COVID-19 era” and it focused on the need for proper personal hygiene, good mental health and proper dietary practices during this pandemic period.

Acknowledgment: *Weinglo Family International, Ensign Leadership Corp program, Dr. Victoria Partey-Newman, Gloria Andoh.*



LEADERSHIP CORPS WEBINAR

The second edition of the leadership corps seminar for the 2019/2020 academic year took place on 28th April 2020 via zoom to overcome restrictions imposed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Hosted by Professor Steve Alder, the students were trained on how to express leadership qualities during this period of the pandemic with special emphasis on models and approaches that ensure and promote collaborative efforts in leadership. All students who undertook an initiative this semester had memorable experiences and look forward to doing more in the coming semesters or continue even after they have graduated from Ensign. Want to see more?

[\(Click here for the comprehensive report on the many exciting activities undertaken by students\)](#)

HEALTH2GO ACTIVITY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Cast a Pebble in collaboration with the University of Utah, Ensign College of Public Health and the Ghana Health Service have over the past 4 years through the 'Health2Go' project contributed to reducing under-five morbidity and mortality in the Wawase CHPS Zone and in communities in the Barekese sub district as part of the Barekese Collaborative Community Development Project (BCCDP). Health2Go achieves these morbidity and mortality reductions through a set of processes and activities which are periodically undertaken. These activities include provision of high-quality equipment and supplies for Community Based Agents (CBAs) to carry out their roles, rigorous training of CBAs on recognizing child danger signs, treating common illnesses (malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea); effective disease prevention and health promotion; record-keeping, supportive supervision and monitoring of CBAs.

WAWASE AND BCCDP ACTIVITIES IN CONTEXT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Routine activities have continued since the launch of 'Health2Go' in the two aforementioned designated communities with reduced paediatric cases in health facilities in these zones and improved health literacy amongst community members amongst some of the successes achieved. The year 2020 has seen activities of CBAs being less intense and, in some cases, paused due to the advent of the novel coronavirus pandemic which as at June, 2020 had hit all regions of Ghana after the first cases were recorded in March, 2020. Scheduled CBA refresher trainings and supportive visits to the BCCDP were in turn suspended in this regard. Activities of CBAs were as well halted in the Barekese subdistrict of the BCCDP where cases of COVID-19 have been recorded. CBA activities in the Wawase CHPS Zone where no cases have been recorded till date have however been ongoing under strict observation of Infection Prevention and Control and physical distancing directives by the Ghana Health Service. The following brief provides the status updates of CBA activities between January-April, 2020.



Veronica bucket placed at a vantage point in the Aplah community, March 2020



Team of Supervisors during a supportive and monitoring visit in the Abobeng community, March 2020

SUMMARY OF CBA FIELD ACTIVITIES IN THE WAWASE CHPS ZONE

The period under review (January - April, 2020) saw CBAs in the Wawase CHPS Zone record a total of 867 home visits across all designated 6 communities (Aplah, Abobeng, Wawase, Atortorsi, Oblemanya, Piengua). CBAs in the Abobeng enclave conducted the majority of home visits. A total of 166 children were visited and registered for various morbidities and health events. Malaria was the commonest disease recorded amongst children under five years with 125 cases confirmed and successfully treated. Fifty-three (53) diarrhoea cases were detected amongst children which were as well successfully treated. Acute respiratory illnesses were the fewest recorded with CBAs detecting and treating 34 of these cases. For the period under consideration, six cases were referred to higher facilities within the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality and have been consistently followed up since the referral directive.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND RISK COMMUNICATION

While routine health service delivery continues in the Wawase CHPS Zone, health education and risk communication on COVID-19 have been well championed by CBAs. This has well been done in the BCCDP site of Health2Go, where CBAs even though have suspended activities, take every little opportunity to educate inhabitants on the COVID-19 pandemic. Inhabitants in the two designated Health2Go communities are encouraged to observe physical/social distancing, constantly wash hands with soap under running water or use hand sanitizers if hand washing materials are not available. Further education is as well provided on good nutritional practices such as the consumption of fruits and vegetables to boost the human immune system to help fight infections.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The acceleration of response activities towards the fight against COVID-19 in Ghana has seen a number of health activities postponed across the country to limit the transmission rate of the pandemic. 'Health2GO' in this regard suspended activities in affected areas (BCCDP) following a national directive on movement restrictions and ban on social gatherings. The Wawase CHPS Zone which had not recorded any cases and was hence not under the movement restriction directive continued with service delivery but under strict COVID-19 prevention protocols. Health2Go activities at the BCCDP area especially is set to resume normal activities with a proposed resumption date in July 2020. This will be coupled with a restock of medical supplies and other logistics in both Wawase and BCCDP sites of the project. A refresher training will subsequently be scheduled for CBAs at both sites with dates to be determined by the Health2Go Leadership in conjunction with personnel from the Ghana Health Service.

Mr. Gideon Kwarteng Acheampong (Project Coordinator, Health2Go)

CENTER FOR GLOBAL SURGERY (CGS) ACTIVITY REPORT

MOU UNIVERSITY OF UTAH, CGS - ENSIGN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH - CAPE COAST TEACHING HOSPITAL (CCTH)

The Center for Global Surgery of the University of Utah, Ensign College of Public Health and the Cape Coast Teaching Hospital signed a five-year memorandum of understanding in January, 2020. The three institutions plan to develop academic exchange and cooperation with regard to education and research amongst the three institutions, specifically exchange of professors and research scholars; exchange of scientific materials, publications and information; and collaboration in research and other scholarly activities as well as any other relevant areas of interest the various stakeholders may agree upon. Some project areas of focus include but are not limited to ENT focused projects, development of international Elective Resident Rotations, training workshops in Minimally Invasive Surgery and development of a Center of Excellence/ cancer registry focused on Women's Health. This MOU is the second of such between the Center for Global Surgery, University of Utah/Ensign College of Public Health and a Ghanaian institution. The first was with the Volta River Authority Hospital in the year 2018.

During this visit to Cape Coast, the CGS team led by Dr. Raymond Price, and Director of the NGO the Alliance for International Medicine, Dr. Nathan Richards, assisted by Dr. Moustafa Moustafa and Dr. Ousman Sanyang (both CGS fellows) took the opportunity to perform a successful laparoscopic cholecystectomy. Dr. Price also gave a lecture on Global Surgery activities at the department of Surgery, CCTH.

From left to right:

Director Administration, CCTH – Mr. F. Mensah-Acheampong

Chief Executive Officer, CCTH – Dr. Eric Kofi Ngyedu

Director Center for Global Surgery, UU – Dr. Raymond Price

Site Director West Africa, CGS - Dr. Edward Kofi Sutherland





AIM/CGS/CCTH Team



Dr. R. Price performing laparoscopic cholecystectomy at CCTH with team



Dr. Raymond Price and CGS Fellows (Drs. Moustafa Moustafa, USA and Ousman Sanyang, the Gambia)



Dr. Price giving a lecture at the department of Surgery, CCTH.

ON-BOARDING OF NEW CGS STAFF

A new CGS Staff was on-boarded this year; Dr. Grace Ayensu-Danquah (MD, MPH, FACS). Grace will serve as Assisting Site Director West Africa, CGS. Grace is a U.S trained surgeon specialized in trauma and critical care. She also holds a Master in Public Health degree and has special interests in making surgical care accessible to under-resourced populations through a public health approach.



Grace Ayensu-Danquah (MD, MPH, FACS)

CENTER FOR GLOBAL SURGERY – VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY HOSPITAL MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY TRAINING WORKSHOP

January 2020, also saw the first of a series of planned visits to our partner institution, the Volta River Authority Hospital Limited (VRAH) relating to the development of Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) capacity. The workshop session involved a brief introductory course on MIS for hospital personnel. There was a lecture in the morning followed by familiarization of MIS equipment procured by the VRAH.



STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING WITH VRAH

CGS/Ensign College of Public Health held its second strategic planning meeting with the VRAH partners to discuss areas of progress in Women's Health, Minimally Invasive Surgery and Quality Initiatives. This saw the team working as one to outline and strategize on next partnership steps and efforts which would benefit and engage the surrounding communities. This event was held at the Royal Senchi Hotel on the evening of Thursday, 30th January, 2020.



CGS & VRAH Team



A maiden student-led Cervical Cancer Awareness Symposium was organized by Sedinam Adamaley and Victoria Partey-Newman both medical doctors and students of Ensign College of Public Health with support from faculty and staff of ECOPH and under the auspices of the Centre for Global Surgery of the University of Utah on the Theme: “Your Health, Your Responsibility, Your Health, Your Wealth”. An interactive talk session with points buttressing regular cervical cancer screening, reducing the risk of getting cervical cancer and knowledge of the use of cervarix vaccine was shared. On the whole, about 100 people attended the symposium including queen mothers, community nurses, nursing students, researchers, high school students among others. The student-led discussion provided an opportunity for cross-field interaction and networking with the objective of bringing to the fore, a comprehensive approach to cervical cancer prevention, community education, health promotion, resource mobilization and management of cervical cancer.





NATIONWIDE ASSESSMENT AND MAPPING OF BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER SERVICES IN GHANA AND THE GAMBIA.

This is a research initiative being undertaken by CGS/Ensign and governmental partners to better understand the scope of services available for breast and Cervical Cancers within these two countries. Breast and cervical cancer care is undertaken by a mixed group of organizations, private as well government health facilities. To date, no comprehensive map exists of available breast and cervical cancer services in these countries. This project has the specific objectives:

- 1) To create and pilot a tool for assessing available breast and cervical cancer services at healthcare facilities, specifically hospitals.*
- 2) To identify and GIS map breast and cervical cancer services provided by Diagnostic Centers.*
- 3) To identify and GIS map breast and cervical cancer services provided by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's).*

From this, an emerging map of available breast and cervical cancer services will serve as a reference for improved resource allocation and also identify key areas of need and geographic disparities in available healthcare services. The survey is based on the Personnel, Infrastructure, Procedures, Equipment and Supplies (PIPES) tool, which has been used in many settings worldwide to survey facility essential surgical capacity.

GHANA STUDY:

The survey in Ghana is in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service through the Eastern Regional Health Directorate. Dr. Edward Kofi Sutherland and Dr. Moustafa Moustafa are the Principal Investigators. Administrative approval and Ethical clearance was sought from the Ghana Health Service and the pilot phase was initiated and successfully completed at the Eastern region after recruitment and training of 4 Research Assistants in March, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak the nationwide scale up was put on hold and to be resumed at a later appropriate date. Four additional Research Assistants have been trained and on standby for the scale up.



THE GAMBIA STUDY:

In February 2020, seven recruited Research Assistants were trained at a workshop in the Gambia. This occasion was graced by Dr. Ramou Njie who oversees the National Cancer Registry of the country. Also in attendance were Regional Directors and Heads of department of the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital. A comprehensive data collection has been conducted in the Gambia and the data is currently in analysis. The Principal Investigators are Dr. Ousman Sanyang and Dr. Edward Kofi Sutherland.



Dr. Victoria Partey-Newman (Student)

SOME COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE EFFORTS

The Ensign College of Public Health is providing continuous service to our communities by our medical team, faculty, staff and students in various roles during this pandemic period.

Service on the Municipal COVID-19 Emergency Response Team:

Dr. Sutherland volunteers as an advisor to the COVID-19 Emergency Response Team representing ECOPH at the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality.

Supporting a Training Workshop on Covid-19 Prevention Etiquettes for Heads of Pre-Tertiary Schools: This workshop was organized by the Ghana Education Service to equip heads of both public and private senior high and basic schools with safety protocols for the prevention of the pandemic. This training was jointly sponsored by the Manya Krobo COVID-19 Emergency Fund, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and the Ensign College of Public Health.

Supervision of COVID-19 Prevention Protocols in Senior High Schools: The Ensign College of Public Health is working together with the Lower Manya Krobo Health Directorate and the Ghana Education Service to provide health supervision to five (5) Senior High Schools in the Lower Manya Krobo District. This initiative is being driven by Ms. Rebecca Ametepey (College Nurse) and some students through the leadership corps programme: Deborah Charkie Charway, Philemon Amiteye and Henry Ugorji Okorie.

Activities conducted by the team included trainings for school staff on use of thermometer gun screening, placing and proper use of the hand washing stands, appropriate protocols for quarantine and reporting suspect cases, education on the proper use of face masks, proper hand washing, physical distancing among others. The main objective is to ensure compliance with COVID-19 prevention protocols as outlined by the Ghana health Service so as to reduce the risk of infection to the barest minimum in the assigned Schools.

TEAM ARCHIMEDES PROJECT – (ENA, H2GO, ECOPH)

This is a collaborative project between Engage Now Africa (ENA), Health2Go (H2GO) and Ensign College of Public Health (ECOPH) to contribute to the national effort to mitigate the community spread of COVID 19 within Ghana. It involves a Community and a Digital approach leveraging on community stakeholder partnerships and ENA's / ECOPH's / H2GO's experience and expertise in community activities. The aim is to adopt more of an academic approach to appreciate community members' current stage of preparedness in response to the laid out protocols of preventing the disease using tested health behavioral change models to inform intervention measures.

Communities in the Eastern, Volta and Ashanti regions of Ghana have been identified and being engaged in phased interventions. The project is being championed by Ms. Gabrielle Daines Gay, Chief Operating Officer of Ensign Global and Prof. Stephen Alder.

Dr. Edward Kofi Sutherland (Faculty)



ACADEMIC THESIS DEFENSE

To end the 2019/2020 academic semester, ECOPH presented eighteen (18) final year students for thesis examination on the 9th of July, 2020. The students orally presented and defended their research in various areas of public health. All students successfully passed and are eagerly awaiting graduation.



HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTITIONERS IN FIGHTING EPIDEMICS

Health research is a driving force for improving the performance of health systems and the health of individuals and populations. Even as COVID-19 has turned the world we knew upside down and is disrupting our health systems, we must ensure continuity of service delivery. Supply chains for treatments and other tools to fight COVID 19 and other infectious diseases must be maintained and protected.

Public health practitioners need to begin prioritizing health systems research especially in this COVID-19 era for innovative solutions and interventions in order to ensure disrupted health systems and continuous access to treatments and care to protect patients, communities as well as the healthcare workers whose efforts are already stretched and will be more so in the coming months.

For improved performance in controlling emerging and re-emerging diseases in developing countries like Ghana, healthcare system needs to be strengthened and funding for health systems research should be prioritized. Health systems research has much to contribute to understanding health systems and policies.

As public health practitioners, we must challenge ourselves to explore problem-oriented alliances with other disciplinary and topic-based groups who share the same concerns of strengthening our health systems especially in this era of COVID-19.

Augustine Kumah, RN MPH (Alumni)



HANDWASHING: A MODEST MEASURE WITH VERY GREAT RETURNS

Hand washing or hand hygiene, is the act of cleaning hands for the purpose of removing soil, dirt, and microorganisms to minimize the spread of influenza, prevent infectious causes of diarrhea, decrease respiratory infections, and decrease infant mortality rate at birth deliveries.

COVID-19 has led to increased awareness of the importance of washing hands with soap under running water to protect oneself from such an infectious disease. Hand washing with soap is the single most effective and inexpensive way to prevent diarrhea and acute respiratory infections (ARI), as automatic behavior performed in homes, schools, and communities worldwide.

Even though the need to wash hands has become an untimed event in moments such as with the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still very critical moments when handwashing becomes a must than an exercise of routine performance. The WHO in 2009 endorsed washing hands:

Before and after preparing food.

Before eating food.

Before and after caring for a sick person.

After using the toilet.

After changing the diapers

After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

After touching animal, animal feed, or animal waste.

After touching garbage.

Handwashing has come to stay with us and is essential for everyone including children all the time, even in moments when the need is more than compelling for its absolute relevance.

Stephen H. Afakorzi (Student)

FACE MASKS -THE DOS AND DON'TS



Face masks also known as nose masks have become mandatory in Ghana and the world over in the wake of COVID 19. The president of the republic of Ghana Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo lifted the lockdown on the and also imposed the compulsory wearing of face masks for everyone in public places as a preventive measure against the transmission of the virus. Many people already had started wearing face masks with some even going to the extent of making the idea of masks fashionable by matching them with their outfits. However, some variations have been noted in the way the masks have been worn, sewn, used and handled. Here are some of the dos and don'ts that should be

observed in using the face masks. The World Health Organization being the main body that sees to the health of all people in this world has spelt out very important protocols on how to use ***non-medical fabric masks***:

DOS	DON'TS
Clean your hands before touching the mask	Use a mask with damages
Inspect the mask for any dirt or damages	Wear a loose mask
Adjust the mask to fit your face without leaving gaps on sides.	Wear the mask under the nose
Cover your nose, mouth and chin.	Remove the mask where there are people within one metre
Avoid touching the mask	Use a mask that is difficult to breathe through
Clean hands before removing the mask	Wear a dirty mask
Remove the mask using the straps behind the ears or head	Share your mask with others
Store the mask in a clean resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to reuse it.	
Take the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag	
Wash the mask with soap or detergent preferably with hot water.	
Clean your hands after removing the mask	

Sharing is caring, share the information and help yourself and others to stay SAFE.

Choice Muchina (Student)

STIGMATIZATION, A THREAT TO COVID-19 RESPONSE

It is important for humanity to know that the novel coronavirus does not discriminate. It has no regard for whether you are old or young, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, each and every one of us is at risk of contracting the virus. However, stigmatization is building up in our communities with people being labelled, discriminated against, stereotyped and treated differently because of a perceived link to COVID-19. This comes with several adverse effects especially hampering our fight against the pandemic. Such behavior not only affects those with the disease but also their caregivers, family, friends and communities.

It is understandable that there is confusion and anxiety among the public because this is a new disease for which much is not known, humanity is scared of the unknown.

Stigma can:

- *Prevent people from seeking health care when they should.*
- *Cause people to hide their illness to avoid labelling and derogatory comments.*
- *Discourage others from practicing safety protocols and adopting healthy behavior.*

Stigmatization creates situations where the virus is more likely to spread resulting in difficulties with flattening the epidemic curve. To address social stigma, it is essential to spread facts, correct peoples' misconceptions, promote the importance of prevention and show support. Always remember it is facts, not fear that will help stop the spread of the novel corona virus, SARS-CoV-2.

Dr. Sedinam Adamaley (Student)

EFFECTS OF COVID-19: A FUTURE OUTLOOK

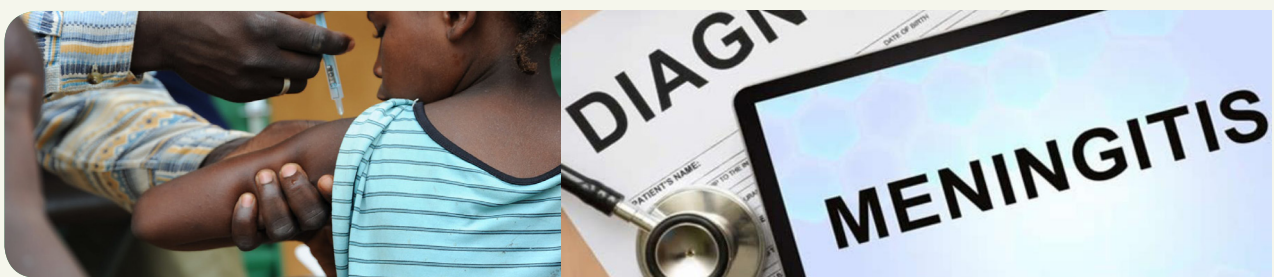
The initial warnings and public health measures were refracted through political lens, bolstering the creeping coronavirus' savagery attacks on even the most resilient health systems worldwide. In mid- May, 2020, the World health Organization opined that “the coronavirus may become endemic in communities just like any other viruses and may never go away”. Does COVID-19 confirm a probable reemergence of infectious diseases: a 5th phase of the epidemiologic transition?

In spite of this bleak prognosis, thanks to humanity's loyal friend; technology, the world is poised to survive the odds through the reengineering of more effective systems of organizing society. Yes our globalization is threatened! But countries are becoming more innovative and self-reliant. Environmental health is gradually improving. New working patterns and hygienic ergonomics are taking precedence in workspace planning. Education is progressively making the shift onto E- learning. The real value of our interconnectedness is becoming evident. Latest technologies in geospatial analysis are being deployed to revamp health systems. However, as we make this unprecedented shift, measures must be put in place to ensure all- inclusiveness in order to bridge already existing socio economic and health disparities. In the absence of a vaccine, nobody is safe until everyone is safe. Thus, while governments lax restrictive measures, let us avoid dense gatherings, practice proper respiratory and personal hygiene and be responsible for our own health.

Curtis Conduah (Student)

A DOUBLE HEALTH EMERGENCY: CEREBROSPINAL MENINGITIS EPIDEMIC IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM), an acute febrile illness which involves inflammation of the meninges (covering of the brain and spinal cord) is caused by new strains of bacteria: Neisseria Meningitis Serotype X and Streptococcus pneumonia. Symptoms include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, neck stiffness, convulsion and coma. It is endemic in Ghana, particularly the northern sector which falls within the meningitis belt of Africa with sporadic cases reported yearly during the dry season.



According to the Ministry of Health, as at 20th May 2020, there were 45 total deaths reported from the current CSM outbreak with over 315 cases in the Upper West and East Regions. Its average case fatality of 40% far surpasses that of COVID-19 (0.5%) within the same time frame implying that CSM has a higher case fatality rate compared to COVID-19 in Ghana. This can be attributed to much attention and resources being shifted to fighting COVID-19 although there might be other precipitating factors such as lack of vaccine for this new strain of bacteria. This has made its management difficult albeit the availability and effective treatment upon early reporting.

It is a growing public health concern since the magnitude of the outbreak is severe and unprecedented coupled with the slow pace of national response towards it. This can be attributed to the national health team being overstretched in managing COVID-19. It shows a need for health system strengthening, application of a broader health system thinking approach in crises management and prioritizing resilience building for Ghana's healthcare system for future health emergencies. It is important that other pressing needs of the healthcare system are not neglected during national responses to health emergencies.

Bernice Koiba Amoah Ayisi (Student)



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL REPORT

The current SRC executives of the Ensign College of Public Health took office in November 2019. The following persons now occupy the executive positions:

President: Stephen Henry Afakorzi

Vice President: Sonita Khairya Twum-Barima

Secretary: Laretta Elloh-Donkor

Organiser: Ama Korantema Owusu-Darko

Treasurer: Angela Otukuor Agor

Gender Commissioner: Victoria Partey-Newman (Dr.)

About a month after school reopened for the second semester in the 2019/2020 academic year, a national lockdown in response to COVID-19 was announced thereby making most tertiary schools including ECOPH move educational activities online. The student front worked together with the academic registry and faculty to ensure a smooth delivery of content throughout the semester. The SRC expresses gratitude for the great and dedicated work done by faculty, the registry and other staff of ECOPH to promote academic work.

The SRC plans to work in three directions: serving student interests, reaching out to the immediate and far out communities and giving back to ECOPH. Irrespective of the constraints of the nationwide lockdown period, the SRC is still bent on carrying out some of its programmes during the holiday period to make up for all the losses in time and contact.

As a result, cohort 6 had the first of a series of online Career/Personal Development seminars which will continue throughout the vacation. The SRC is also at the final stages of getting ECOPH SRC duly registered with GRASAG and the National Association of Public Health Students (NAPHS).

Again, the SRC has been able to get the payment of SRC dues ratified. Starting with cohort 6, all students will now be paying SRC dues to supplement funding from other sources to run its activities.

Cohort 6 was active and vibrant in the Leadership Corps programme, and through the SRC have shown goodwill towards it. We acknowledge and are appreciative of the vital roles being played by the college president, patrons and coordinator of the Leadership Corps programme.

Finally, the SRC wishes to singularly recognize the commitment, dedication and cooperation of all students in the activities of ECOPH. Wonderful people keep up with the good work; we hope to do more exploits in the coming days. Thank you.

Long Live ECOPH, Long Live ESRC

Stephen Afakorzi, SRC President.



Smiles

- Smiles are contagious, wear a mask.



Infectious diseases

An infectious disease enters a bar:

- The bartender says, “We don’t serve your kind in here.”
- It replies, “Well, you’re not a very good host.”



Control:

A statistician’s wife had twins. He was delighted. He rang the minister who was also delighted. “Bring them to church on Sunday and we’ll baptize them,” said the minister. “No,” replied the statistician. “Baptize one. We’ll keep the other as control.”



Professors:

Three professors (a physicist, a chemist and a statistician) are called in to see their dean. Just as they arrive the dean is called from his office, leaving the three professors there. The professors see with alarm that there is a fire in the waste basket.

The physicist says, “I know what to do! We must cool down the materials until their temperature is lower than the ignition temperature and then the fire will go out.”

The chemist says, “No! No! I know what to do! We must cut off the supply of oxygen so that the fire will go out due to lack of one of the reactants.”

While the physicist and chemist debate what course to take, they both are alarmed to see the statistician running around the room starting other fires. They both scream, “What are you doing?” To which the statistician replies, “Trying to get an adequate sample size.”



Baby Boom

If there’s a baby boom nine months from now, what will happen in 2033?

There will be a whole bunch of **quaranteens**.



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REST IN PERFECT PEACE

The Ensign College of Public Health mourns the loss of our dearly departed Board of Governors member, Dr. Joseph Kwesi Dugbatey and also our dearly departed staff Chef, Mr. Miguel Odoi.

May they rest in peace.



Dr. Joseph Kwesi Dugbatey
(1940 – 2020)



Mr. Miguel Nii Odoi Odoi
(1983 - 2020)



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(Academic Program Head)



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(Academic Registrar)



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