

The Republic of South Sudan



Ministry of Health

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Press Statement

Ministry of Health Launches Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) to strengthen epidemiologic capacity of the public health workforce to ensure national health security

28 March 2022, Juba - In order to address the need to improve field epidemiology capacity for early detection and rapid response to infectious disease outbreaks and other public health threats at all levels of the health system, US CDC, WHO and partners developed a three-tiered pyramid model for Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) implementation. At the base of the pyramid is the 3-months Frontline FETP that targets public health workers at the local level, the middle of the pyramid is the 9-months Intermediate FETP for regional level health workers and at the peak is the 2-years Advanced FETP for national level public health managers.

To address the epidemiologic capacity gaps at the local and subnational levels of the health system and strengthen the country's public health systems and programs as well as fast track attainment of International Health Regulation (IHR (2005)) core capacities for prevention, detection and response to public health threats, in November 2021, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the US CDC, World Health Organization (WHO) country office and AFENET started implementing a frontline FETP, a 3-month in-service field-based training program focused on detecting and responding to diseases and events of public health importance or international concern. Participants learn and practice the fundamental skills used in frontline surveillance including use of case definitions, disease detection and reporting, summarizing of data using simple tables and graphs, case investigation, outbreak investigation and response, surveillance monitoring and evaluation, and data analysis and interpretation for decision making.

Inadequate skilled workforce, especially at the local and subnational levels of the health system for implementation of the 2005 International Health Regulation (IHR) core requirements for prevention, detection and response to public health emergencies as well as the absence of a field epidemiology training program in the country, were among the major findings of the 2017 joint external evaluation for the Republic of South Sudan. In order to address these gaps, the South Sudan national action plan

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for health security (NAPHS), 2020 – 2024, has prioritized the implementation of field epidemiology training for public health workers at the national and subnational levels.

Today, 28 March 2022, the ministry is proud to graduate the first cohort of twenty-one (2 National, 10 State, 2 Administrative Area and 7 County) Surveillance Officers on the Frontline FETP.

Through subsequent cohorts of frontline FETP graduates, the MDH plans to have a network of well-trained surveillance officers and other public health workers in country who will contribute to increased capacity to recognize public health problems pertinent to the population, increased completion and accuracy of surveillance data reporting and analysis at state and county levels, increased capacity to provide descriptive analysis of a public health problem and stronger culture of data-based decision making. Also, the frontline FETP graduates will play a critical role in scaling the implementation of the WHO African Region I DSR third edition, that the country recently adapted to strengthen its public health surveillance system.

The Ministry of Health would like to assure the people of the Republic of South Sudan of its commitment to ensure national health security by working with development partners like US CDC, WHO, AFENET and other partners to address the field epidemiology capacity gaps in the country as reported in the Joint External Evaluation for International Health Regulation (IHR) core capacities for prevention, detection and response to public health events.

For more information, Contact:

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