

# CDC *in* SIERRA LEONE



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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began working in Sierra Leone in the 1970's, focusing on Lassa fever. In 2008, through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), CDC began supporting Sierra Leone's HIV response. A CDC country office was established in Sierra Leone in 2015, focusing on global health security and Ebola response. CDC works closely with Sierra Leone on strengthening laboratory, surveillance, emergency management, and workforce capacity to respond to disease outbreaks. As new health threats emerge (e.g., COVID-19) CDC and national partners are well-placed to leverage past successful initiatives and rapidly respond to new public health challenges.



10 key epidemic-prone diseases, like COVID-19, Ebola, yellow fever, cholera, and influenza, can now be detected through laboratory diagnostic testing



More than 215 graduated from the Intermediate and Frontline FETP courses



Trained 42 FETP graduates as contact tracing supervisors



Trained 410 Community Health Workers and volunteers to conduct contact tracing



More than 700 CDC staff served on over 1,000 deployments to Sierra Leone during the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak



185 community health officers across 14 districts have graduated from the Community Health Officer Management and Leadership Training Program



25 hospitals and 14 districts are prepared to implement the national IPC guidelines



CDC has supported adaptation of a system for electronic data capture in the field (case investigation, contact monitoring, etc.)



Trained 50 laboratory technicians in expert malaria microscopy



In 2018, worked with partners to develop National Action Plan for Health Security and JEE assessment Update



SLED – Sierra Leone Ebola/ Epidemiological Database - helps people in Sierra Leone find the graves of loved ones who died during the Ebola epidemic



Sierra Leone became an official PEPFAR country in FY 2021. PEPFAR has increased its investment in Sierra Leone to support the National HIV Response

## COVID-19

Global health security investments and decades of global cooperation and support to respond to outbreaks, control HIV, TB, and malaria, eradicate polio, and prepare for influenza and other pandemic diseases have built strong foundations upon which to attack the coronavirus pandemic. In Sierra Leone, CDC is supporting response coordination, surveillance, diagnostic capacity, quarantine management, case investigation, infection prevention and control, and risk communication activities.

## Field Epidemiology Training Program

CDC supports Sierra Leone through the establishment of a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), which provides field epidemiologists—or disease detectives—the necessary skills to collect, analyze and interpret data that contributes to evidence-based decisions. Three levels of training—advanced, intermediate, and frontline—develop national and local surveillance capabilities to investigate outbreaks before they become epidemics.

## Global Health Security

In today's connected world, disease threats can spread faster and more unpredictably than ever before. CDC helped Sierra Leone reach the targets outlined in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), a global partnership launched in 2014 to help make the world safer from infectious disease threats.

Working closely with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) and other partners, CDC provides expertise and support across the 11 technical areas, including disease surveillance, laboratory systems, workforce development, and emergency management, as well as immunization, and antimicrobial resistance. Additionally, CDC supports the establishment of a national public health institute that will serve as a central structure for public health functions.

In 2018, Sierra Leone worked with partners, including CDC, to develop an annual National Action Plan for Health Security and Joint External Evaluation (JEE) assessment update. Sierra Leone was among the first countries in Africa to undergo the JEE process. This helped partners more clearly understand the country's needs and provided guidance for external resources to address these gaps. Shifting focus to Sierra Leone's priorities for health security helps the government align domestic resources to continue to build and sustain capacity.

Sierra Leone has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world, as well as one of the highest mortality rates for children under age five. CDC is partnering with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the MOHS to stand up the Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS) network to better identify, understand and prevent the causes of death in children under age 5.

## Ebola

The 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak, was the largest in history and Sierra Leone suffered the highest number of deaths. CDC provided technical and strategic support in epidemiology, infection prevention and control,

case management, health promotion, laboratory diagnostics and systems strengthening, emergency management, border health, and research, including the Sierra Leone Trial to Introduce a Vaccine Against Ebola (STRIVE). CDC supported the establishment of the Sierra Leone Ebola/Epidemiological Database (SLED), used to describe and better understand morbidity and mortality from Ebola, and risk factors that contributed to the epidemic. SLED also helps people in Sierra Leone find the graves of loved ones who died during the Ebola epidemic.

## Capacity Building in Public Health Management and Leadership

CDC supported the MOHS to launch the Community Health Officer Management and Leadership Training Program in 2016. Modeled after FETP, the six-month program includes classes and field assignments.

## Infection Prevention and Control

CDC began training healthcare workers in infection prevention and control (IPC) during the Ebola epidemic. IPC is key to combating antimicrobial resistance. CDC assisted the MOHS in establishing a national IPC program and a national IPC certificate course. Sierra Leone now has a national IPC policy and guidelines, and CDC helped start a national IPC certificate course. CDC continues to strengthen capacity and sustainability of IPC as a key component of combating antimicrobial resistance.

## Laboratory Systems Strengthening

CDC helps strengthen Sierra Leone's laboratory network through investments in the Central Public Health Reference Laboratory and workforce development of laboratory technicians.

## HIV and Tuberculosis

For the past 10 years CDC, as an implementing partner of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS (PEPFAR) in Sierra Leone, has helped improve the quality of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) services. CDC has helped build high-quality laboratory systems to support HIV and TB testing, such as HIV viral load and early infant diagnosis and TB drug susceptibility testing.

Sierra Leone became an official PEPFAR country in FY 2021. PEPFAR has increased its investment in Sierra Leone to support the National HIV Response.

## Malaria

Malaria remains one of the highest burden diseases in Sierra Leone. The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) is led by USAID and co-implemented with CDC in 24 countries in Africa, including Sierra Leone. A CDC resident advisor provides technical advice to the National Malaria Control Program to enhance the implementation of malaria interventions, including entomologic surveillance, insecticide resistance testing, and improved data monitoring and usage. CDC supported the roll-out and evaluation of preventive treatment to reduce infant morbidity.



### CDC STAFF

- 4 U.S. Assignees
- 12 Locally Employed



### AT A GLANCE

Population: > 7,813,215  
Per capita income: > \$1,580  
Life expectancy: F 56 / M 54 years  
Infant mortality rate: 75/1,000 live births

Sources:  
World Bank 2019,  
Population Reference Bureau



### TOP 10 CAUSES OF DEATH

1. Malaria
2. Lower respiratory infection
3. Neonatal disorders
4. Ischemic heart disease
5. Diarrheal diseases
6. Stroke
7. HIV/AIDS
8. Congenital defects
9. Tuberculosis
10. Meningitis

Source:  
GBD Compare 2019, Sierra Leone



For more country information  
[www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/sierra-leone/](http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/sierra-leone/)