



# ***LMHRA Monitors COVID-19 vaccine Safety and Adverse Events (Side Effects) Following Vaccination***

As thousands get COVID-19 vaccination shots in Liberia, the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority (LMHRA) has deployed teams from its Pharmacovigilance & Clinical Trials Department to monitor the Safety and Adverse Reactions of the AstraZeneca ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (AZD1222) vaccine, which was brought to Liberia.

The collection of Adverse Drug Reaction Reports (side effects) remains a cardinal function of the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority (LMHRA) in guiding health policy managers to make informed decisions that will ensure the safety of medicines and health products in the country, as it is stipulated in the LMHRA Act of 2010.

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented level of public interest in vaccines. In Liberia, purported reports of adverse events (side effects) have led some people to express concerns about getting vaccinated, delay getting vaccinated or even be strongly opposed to vaccination. Clear and consistent communication is therefore essential to support people in making the choice to be vaccinated. The LMHRA wishes to report that so far, few minor problems have been reported and no deaths have conclusively been linked to the vaccines.

During the vaccination process, the LMHRA teams visited the following facilities: 14th Military Hospital, SOS Hospital, St. Joseph Catholic Hospital, Duala Market, Waterside Market, ELWA Hospital, SDA Cooper Hospital, JFK Medical Center, Redemption Hospital, Duport Road Health Center and the James N. Davies, Jr. Memorial Hospital in Neezoe, Paynesville. The teams also monitored the vaccination process at the Paynesville Red-Light Market, Old Road Joe Bar Market, Johnsonville Market and the Clara Town Market.

The key objectives of the monitoring outreach were to: i) follow-up on the assessment of benefit, effectiveness, unpleasant effects and risk of the vaccine candidates (Astrazenica-COVID-19 and nOPV2 Vaccines) currently being used in Liberia; and ii) to improve patient care and safety in relation to the use of the vaccines and other medical or health products.

In order to document and trace any side effects, the LMHRA teams provided temporary registration forms to facilities to capture details of patients and ADRs to enhance traceability, after onsite training of vaccinators, encouraged vaccinators to utilize the AEFI (adverse effects following immunization) booklets to record and report ADRs, and the LMHRA teams initiated follow-up calls to some participants at health facilities and homes.

LMHRA would like to note that it is very important that healthcare professionals not only diligently report any adverse events they see in their patients, but also encourage people who are vaccinated to immediately report adverse events to their healthcare professionals



or to the LMHRA through its HOTLINES: 0888-140-555/0777-140-555. Reporting all relevant events will help us to assess the possible role of the vaccine in causing the side effect and assists in identifying safety issues relating to the vaccines or medicines.

When these side effects are reported, LMHRA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, are able to take decisive action if a safety issue is identified. These actions might include: issuing safety communications for patients, healthcare professionals and the community; updating the product information or consumer information for the vaccine; preventing the release of a particular batch of vaccine; and, taking other regulatory actions such as restriction of vaccine authorization to a particular subgroup of the community or revocation of authorization for use.

As Coronavirus (COVID-19) once more ravishes the world over, the Management of the Liberia Medicines & Health Products Regulatory Authority (LMHRA) is urging her staff, partners, pharmacies, importers and the entire citizenry of Liberia to follow all health protocols as mandated and laid down by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL).

LMHRA Management is therefore admonishing residents of Liberia and the general public to properly and always wear their masks at all times while in the public; wash our hands as many times as possible; ensure social distancing of a minimum of three feet from each other.

LMHRA also encourages all COVID-19 Positive Persons and their Contacts to comply with health authorities and related health rules by keeping their phone lines open, self-quarantine and by submitting to quarantine and observation measures.

The LMHRA further calls on all residents of Liberia to turnout at the various Covid-19 vaccine facilities and take their dose as the ‘**VACCINE IS SAFE**’. Having taken the vaccine and feeling different or uncomfortable, you may call LMHRA’s hotlines: 0888-140-555/0777-140-555.

With our collective efforts and collaborations, we can defeat and eradicate this deadly global pandemic in Liberia and the world.

God Bless Us All & God Bless Mama Liberia!

**Signed:** **Pharmacist Keturah C. Smith**, BSc., B.Pharm., RPh., MPCPharm  
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