

**PRESS BRIEFING ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF
ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE TO THE CENTER FOR HUMAN VIROLOGY
AND GENOMICS NIMR ON WEDNESDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2017**

Nigeria Gets the First Internationally Accredited Public Medical Laboratory at Last

The Research Laboratory of the **Center for Human Virology and Genomics (CHVG)** in the Microbiology Department of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) has recently been adjudged to conform to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 15189:2012 standards, making it the first public medical laboratory in Nigeria to attain this status. This Center, with unique accreditation number M0588, has been listed as a South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) Accredited Medical Testing Laboratory.

The scope of the accreditation covers the following:

1. Molecular Diagnostics

- a. HIV-1 Drug Resistance Testing
- b. HIV-1 Viral Load
- c. HIV-1 EID
- d. HBV Viral Load
- e. HCV Viral Load

2. Serology

- a. HIV ELISA
- b. Hepatitis B Surface Antigen ELISA
- c. Hepatitis C Antibody ELISA

3. Clinical Chemistry

- a. Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT)
- b. Cholesterol (Total)
- c. Creatinine
- d. Glucose
- e. Urea

Generally, laboratories produce test results used in clinical and public health settings to improve health outcomes. This depends on the accuracy of the testing and reporting,

however, these services have been bedeviled with numerous challenges resulting in unreliable results, lack of confidence and under-utilization of many laboratory services. The benefits of SANAS international accreditation include the following:

- SANAS Accreditation clearly demonstrates that NIMR CHVG is capable of generating technically valid results which improves our rating nationally and internationally
- Minimizes quality costs which comprises of failure, appraisal and remedial costs
- Data generated from the NIMR CHVG are more than ever before scientifically credible, legally defensible and they possess documentary evidences required for Global Trade.
- NIMR as a research institute has gained more recognition and status with this accomplishment

Unfortunately, accreditation of medical laboratories in Nigeria is uncommon, and until now, none of the nation's 5,349 medical laboratories had been able to attain such international accreditation. The CHVG, previously known as the Human Virology Laboratory, however, began implementation of quality management system (QMS) in 2006 in the quest to improve laboratory services. In 2008, it conformed to the requirements of ISO 9001:2008, making it the first research and diagnostic laboratory to be certified in Nigeria. Upon the launch of the Strengthening Laboratory Management Toward Accreditation (SLMTA) training program in Africa in 2009, Nigeria embraced the program and 24 of the 344 Nigerian laboratories supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) were enrolled. The research laboratory at CHVG happened to be one of the 24 laboratories enrolled for the program in 2010 and it was then supported by APIN Public Health Initiatives (APIN). The SLMTA program successfully improved the quality of the laboratory systems. In August 2016, the CHVG with the support of APIN and CDC, Nigeria applied to SANAS for accreditation. By February 2017, the assessment was conducted and the seven non-conformities raised were cleared in August 2017. In the same month, we received the Approval Committee notification of an award of ISO 15189:2012 accreditation with effect from 25th August 2017. This therefore, makes the research

laboratory at CHVG the first medical laboratory to have such international recognition in Nigeria.

The CHVG collaborates with many stakeholders including Ministries of Health, Universities, Teaching Hospitals, associations of professional medical bodies, Pharmaceutical companies, Non-Governmental Organizations, International agencies, etc. The laboratory has provided diagnostic support for the antiretroviral therapy programme for HIV/AIDS patients both within and beyond the Institute since 2002 and has supported the viral hepatitis programme since 2004. As a research laboratory, we welcome collaborations with interested researchers.

The laboratory has on its profile, experienced and highly skilled personnel who are involved in facilitating several national and international trainings and the facilities in the laboratory are very conducive and have been used for such trainings. The laboratory is currently mentoring some other laboratories in the implementation of Quality Management System in preparation for international accreditation to ISO 15189:2012.

Today, we are pleased to have you all present here to witness the presentation of the SANAS international accreditation Certificate to our management.

**Dr Rosemary Audu,
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