



*United States Mission Sierra Leone*  
Public Affairs Office

**Press Release**

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Freetown

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**U.S. Embassy congratulates First Cohort of Intermediate Disease Detectives**

On Friday, July 27, Charge d’Affaires Tomekah L. Burl attended the graduation ceremony of the first cohort of the Intermediate level of the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP). The FETP—run by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS)—trains Sierra Leonean public health professionals in epidemiology, surveillance, and outbreak response. The first cohort of 11 graduates are now trained to rapidly detect and respond to outbreaks in the country, and are counted toward the country’s goal of one epidemiologist per 200,000 population, or 39 epidemiologists.

The U.S. government, through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), is committed to supporting impactful programs like FETP in Sierra Leone. The GHSA mission is to prevent, detect, and respond to disease threats. The Government of Sierra Leone has shown global leadership in establishing and implementing these critical programs.

FETP in Sierra Leone forms the cornerstone of a joint U.S.-Sierra Leonean effort to build disease surveillance capacity. The establishment of FETP-Frontline in Sierra Leone in June 2016 and the FETP-Intermediate in September 2017 is helping build a trained public health workforce at the district and community level across Sierra Leone. There has been marked improvement in disease surveillance, outbreak response, and communication skills in public health workers.

In order to continue to support efforts for the sustainability of the program by MOHS, current participants of the Intermediate program served as mentors for the last cohort of Frontline. Mentoring is an important aspect of the FETP, and provides ‘on-the-job’ training experience and guidance outside the classroom. These strategies assist in developing the public health workforce in Sierra Leone to improve epidemiologic capacity to evaluate and strengthen public health surveillance systems, investigate and control outbreaks, and conduct field studies to address public health priority issues.

The United States Government is a proud and committed partner in these efforts. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation, in establishing the FETP program, is serving the critical needs of the public health system so that we never again experience a public health crisis the size and with the devastating impact of the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

For more information about FETP visit: [www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/fetp](http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/fetp) and [www.sierraleonefetp.com](http://www.sierraleonefetp.com)

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