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November 29, 2021

Date:

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PRESS STATEMENT ON YELLOW FEVER **AND THE COVID-19 SITUATION**

The Ghana Medical Association having been involved with the management and containment efforts of the double burden of Yellow Fever outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic, do hereby state as follows:

1. *Yellow Fever outbreak in Ghana*

Our country is currently managing an outbreak of Yellow Fever. The outbreak which was first detected in the Savanna region has since spread to 8 regions and unfortunately 40 persons have died (as of 26th November 2021). We express our deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones to this disease.

The Ministry of Health has put in adequate measures to contain the situation with appropriate case definition, case management and vaccination measures. We urge all persons in Ghana, especially those in the affected areas to cooperate with the ongoing vaccination exercise and report any suspected cases (the development of fever and yellowing of the eyes within 14 days of the fever) to the nearest health facility for appropriate diagnosis and management.

We commend the tremendous efforts by our public health physicians and all health workers who are braving the odds to help the nation combat the current outbreak.

2. *The COVID-19 pandemic*

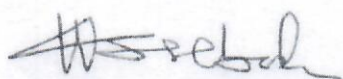
It has been gratifying to note the downward trend of active cases of Covid-19 in Ghana that saw us record zero new cases on some days in the past few weeks and we commend all stakeholders for the efforts to achieve this feat. The GMA is also pleased with the increased availability of vaccines in the country.

We, however, note with grave concern the discovery of the *omicron variant* of COVID-19 in some countries in the world. With several mutations noted on the spike protein of this mutant strain, it is still unknown if this new strain may evade immunity acquired from past infection or vaccination. Data available from Southern Africa shows that in the Gauteng Province the R_0 (1.93) of this variant is higher than that of the Delta variant (R_0 of 1.47). This means this new variant may be potentially more infectious than even the Delta variant.

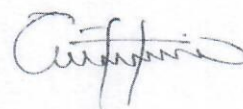
In the light of the discovery of the omicron variant and with the impending festive season in Ghana, the GMA calls for improved efforts to prevent the nation from entering into a fourth wave. To achieve these, we encourage all Ghanaians to avail themselves for vaccination against COVID-19. Government should continue with efforts to secure more vaccines for the nation. We urge Government to continue all efforts at limiting importation of COVID-19 by increased testing at the ports of entry as well as sequencing of all positive cases to enable prompt detection and containment of mutant strains such as the omicron variant.

All persons must ensure strict adherence to the existing Covid-19 prevention protocols at all events/activities from now on wards and especially during this festive period.

Thank you.



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