



Uganda Public Health Fellowship Program Supports COVID-19 Screening at Points of Entry

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On Jan 30, 2020, WHO declared the current novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and on 13th March 2020, it was declared a pandemic following an increase in cases in multiple countries outside China. In response, several measures were implemented to prevent and control possible case importations from China. These measures include heightened surveillance for rapid identification of suspected cases, patient transfer and isolation, rapid diagnosis, tracing, and follow-up of potential contacts.

Currently, Uganda has responded by tightening screening at the ports of entry to ensure that all travelers from the countries affected by COVID-19 are recorded and followed up. While Uganda has not put a ban on travels from COVID-19 hotspots, the Ministry of Health requires that all travelers from the affected countries self-quarantine for 14 days. If you have traveled through Entebbe international airport in the last 2 months, you must have encountered the determined health officers donned in protective wear including a disposable apron, gloves, and face mask.



The screening process involves taking body temperature and observing other flu-like symptoms and cough. Travelers are required to fill in health forms detailing recent travel history from phone contacts, place of residence while in Uganda, and duration of stay and purpose of visit.

These travelers are then followed up for 14 days to ensure they are observing self-quarantine. While Uganda has not registered a case by 15 March 2020, messages have been widely shared with the population on what precautions to take to avoid spread including hand washing, minimizing social interaction (crowds), and avoiding handshakes and hugging among others.