

US agrees to help launch 'African CDC'

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Goal is to assist Africans to prevent, identify and respond to disease outbreaks.

(HealthDay)—An agreement to help create an African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was signed Monday by the United States and the African Union.

"The West African Ebola epidemic reaffirmed the need for a [public health](#) institute to support African ministries of health and other health agencies in their efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to any disease outbreak," U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Tom Frieden said in an agency news release.

"This memorandum solidifies the commitment by the United States to advance public health across Africa and global health security," he added.

The African CDC is scheduled to launch later this year with the creation of an African Surveillance and Response Unit. This unit will include an

emergency operations center that can coordinate and staff future health emergency responses on the continent, the news release said.

The 2014-15 Ebola epidemic, the largest in history, has killed more than 10,500 people in West Africa. But the need for an African CDC was recognized at a special summit on HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in 2013.

The African CDC "will help African countries effectively monitor public health, respond to [public health emergencies](#), address complex health challenges and build needed capacity," Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, chair of the African Union Commission, said in the news release.

Under the agreement, the U.S. CDC will provide technical expertise for the new African unit and advise on future development of the institution.

The U.S. CDC will also fund fellowships for 10 African epidemiologists to help staff the African CDC Coordinating Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and five regional collaborating centers in other areas of Africa.

The epidemiologists will be responsible for disease surveillance, investigations, analysis, and for reporting trends and potential problems.

"This is a landmark event in African ownership of improving [health](#) across the continent," Dr. Tom Kenyon, director of the CDC's Center for Global Health, said in the news release. "The U.S. CDC looks forward to engaging in this partnership for many years to come."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about its [global health work](#).

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