

Report on the National Research Ethics Board (NREB) Stakeholders Engagement Workshop

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026

Venue: Corina Hotel, Sinkor, Monrovia

1. Introduction

The National Research Ethics Board (NREB) convened a one-day Stakeholders Engagement Workshop to reinforce ethical oversight of research in Liberia and strengthen collaboration among government institutions, research organizations, and international partners. The workshop brought together representatives from the Ministry of Health, NPHIL, LMHRA, PREVAIL, academic institutions, and community leaders.

The event served as a platform to launch new national guidelines, present draft legislation, and engage stakeholders in dialogue on strengthening Liberia's research governance framework.

2. Objectives

- Official launch of the **National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Humans**, the **Emergency Trials Review Guidelines**, and the **NREB Regulation**.
- Introduction of the draft **National Research Ethics Authority Act (NREA Act)**.
- Reinforce NREB's mandate as Liberia's primary regulatory authority for human subjects research.
- Identify strategic next steps to strengthen ethical oversight and institutional capacity.
- Promote compliance with national and international standards for biomedical and clinical research.

3. Workshop Proceedings

Opening Session

- **Registration & Introduction (8:30–9:05 AM):** Participants were welcomed and registered.
- **Prayer:** Rev. Tayee opened the session with an invocation.
- **Welcome Remarks:** Dr. Lawrence Sherman, Chair of NREB, emphasized the Board's mission to safeguard participant rights and uphold ethical standards.
- **Keynote Address:** Delivered by Dr. Stephen B. Kennedy, highlighting the importance of ethical oversight in strengthening Liberia's global research competitiveness.

Technical Presentations

- **Overview of National Ethical Guidelines:** Presented by Mrs. Gloria Mason Ross, Executive Director of NREB.
- **Emergency Trials Review Guidelines:** Detailed by Mrs. Ross, focusing on rapid review mechanisms during public health emergencies.
- **NREB Regulation:** Presented by Dr. Luke Bawo, outlining regulatory frameworks for compliance and enforcement.
- **Draft NREA Act:** Introduced by Dr. Moses Massaquoi, underscoring the need for a statutory authority to institutionalize research ethics governance.

Launch Ceremony

The Vice President of the University of Liberia formally launched the National Ethical Guidelines, Emergency Trials Review Guidelines, and NREB Regulation.

Stakeholder Remarks

Representatives from MOH, PREVAIL, LMHRA, UNC/Enable, and other partners expressed strong support for NREB's leadership role and reaffirmed their commitment to ethical research practices.

Closing Session

- **Closing Remarks:** Dr. Sherman outlined next steps, including capacity building, improved communication channels, and sustained stakeholder collaboration.
- **Lunch Break:** Networking opportunities followed the formal program.

4. Key Outcomes

- Successful launch of national ethical guidelines and emergency review procedures.
- Broad stakeholder endorsement of NREB's mandate and regulatory authority.
- Consensus on the importance of passing the draft NREA Act to strengthen NREB's legal framework.
- Identification of priority areas for training, including informed consent, adverse event reporting, and data governance.
- Strengthened partnerships between NREB, government institutions, and international collaborators.

5. Recommendations

- Institutionalize **annual stakeholder engagement workshops** to maintain dialogue and transparency.
- Accelerate legislative approval of the **National Research Ethics Authority Act**.
- Expand training programs for ethics committees, investigators, and community representatives.
- Enhance coordination between NREB, NPHIL, LMHRA, and international partners to streamline oversight.
- Develop simplified guidance documents and communication tools for protocol submission and review.

6. Conclusion

The Stakeholders Engagement Workshop marked a significant milestone in Liberia's research governance landscape. By launching national guidelines and reinforcing NREB's mandate, the event strengthened the foundation for ethical, transparent, and globally competitive research. The active participation of diverse stakeholders underscored a shared commitment to protecting research participants and advancing scientific integrity in Liberia.

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