

Francis Kateh, United Methodist physician, among volunteers for Ebola vaccine

by [E Julu Swen](#) in the [March 18, 2015](#) issue

Francis Kateh, a United Methodist physician, was among 12 volunteers who took an Ebola vaccine as the first large-scale trials of two experimental vaccines against the deadly virus began in Liberia.

“I had to come forward to take it since it is my duty to encourage people to volunteer their services in participating in this Ebola trial vaccine process,” said Kateh, chief medical officer of the Jackson F. Doe Memorial Hospital in Tappita, Liberia.

Scientists hope to immunize 30,000 volunteers. Kateh said he weighed the dangers of taking a trial vaccine, but decided to go ahead. He testified before Liberia’s legislature that the vaccine was in the best interests of the Liberian people and the rest of the world.

“There must be Liberians who will be in the front line of this clinical trial process no matter what the outcome will be,” he said.

Although cases inched up shortly after the first anniversary of the epidemic in January, Ebola cases have steadily declined in Liberia, but there is still danger of resurgence, according to the World Health Organization. In Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, there were more than 9,000 deaths confirmed or probably caused by Ebola as of late February.

Kateh, former administrator of a United Methodist hospital, hopes that church officials will “offer their medical facilities for the Ebola trial vaccine when the request is made by the government of Liberia.” —United Methodist News Service