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Issue Brief

Monitoring National and State Level Allocation of funds to tackle COVID-19



Introduction

The first case of the Corona virus (Covid-19) was recorded in Nigeria on the 28th of February, 2020. Today, over 230 cases exist, with confirmed case presentations in 14 states and the FCT¹. Interventions from government at both national and sub-national levels were announced, including funds allocated in the fight against the pandemic. However, the source of this Covid-19 intervention fund since its initiation and its implications on the health budget line has been a source of major concern to Nigerians. This brief follows the funding trail, focusing on whether or not the funds allocated/spent thus far on the Covid-19 has been sourced from the 2020 health budget.

Covid-19 Intervention Fund; tracking the money

In the 2020 budget, 620 million naira was allocated by the Federal Ministry of Health as part of the measure to contain the Covid-19 virus outbreak in the country². So far, a total of 386 million naira was disbursed to both Port Health Services Department of the Ministry and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control by the end of January. Following the outbreak on the 28th of February, an additional 15 billion naira was released to Lagos state government and the NCDC as part of the special intervention fund³ and this was not derived from the health budget line items. Even though the source of the 15 billion naira was undisclosed, we noted that the government had received financial supports against Covid-19, a step that has helped the country received over 19.4billion naira from corporate bodies, groups and individuals⁴. Most recently, the government is seeking the approval of 500billion naira from the National Assembly to create a “Crisis Intervention Fund” in the fight

¹ NCDC, <https://twitter.com/NCDCgov>

² Solomo Ayado. FG budgets N620m to fight coronavirus-Ehanire, Business Day Newspaper, February 6, 2020. <https://businessday.ng/coronavirus/article/fg-budgets-n620m-to-fight-coronavirus-ehaniire/>

³ Channels TV. COVID-19: Buhari Approved Immediate release of N15bn to Lagos and NCDC, March 26, 2020. <https://www.channelstv.com/2020/03/26/covid-19-buhari-approves-immediate-release-of-n15bn-to-lagos-ncdc/>

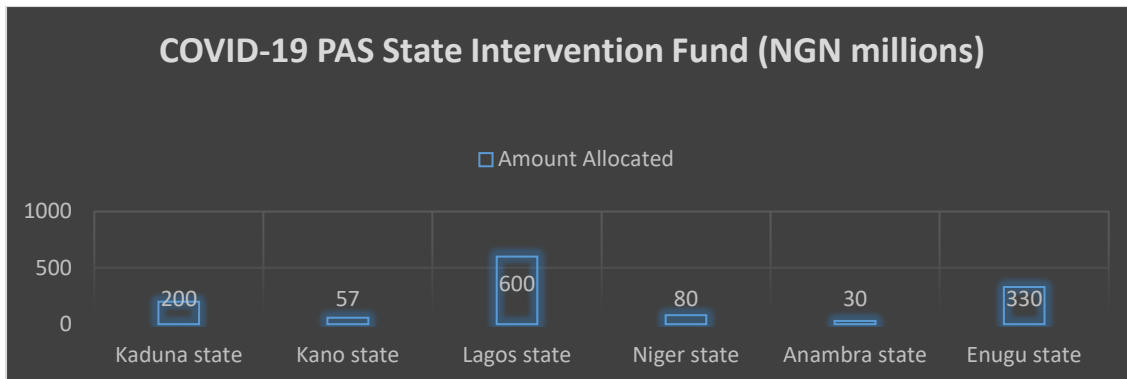
⁴ Nduka Chiejina, Fed Gov Set up Special TSA Account for Covid 19 Donations, The Nation Newspaper, 7th April 2020. <https://thenationonlineng.net/fed-govt-sets-up-special-tsa-account-for-covid-19-donations/>

against pandemic⁵. Thus, the health allocation for this fiscal year remain as was approved. Any amendment of the 2020 budget whatsoever would now depends on the consideration of the National Assembly to meet current reality⁶.

At the sub-national levels, three PAS-project states (Kaduna, Enugu and Lagos states) have cases of Covid-19 recorded as of today. Of these states, Lagos with the highest number released 600million naira to fight the pandemic long before support intervention⁷. This fund according to the Lagos State public health department was sourced from the state emergency fund. The state has also gotten various interventions and 10billion naira support grant from the federal government. In Enugu state, 330million naira was allocated with 20 million released to get isolation centers ready as an emergency fund for covid-19.⁸ In Kaduna, the State Ministry of Health budgeted 38million naira for Public Health Emergency, although 200million naira was believed to have been allocated specifically for covid-19 pandemic as a special intervention fund. Currently, the state has recorded only 5 cases.

However, in Niger State, 60million naira was released as Covid-19 emergency fund⁹. The Niger State Government had earlier budgeted 80 million naira for Public Health Emergency Interventions in the 2020 Appropriation Law¹⁰. Similarly, 347 million naira is provided as part of the intervention fund in Kano State which initial release of 57 million naira was released in Kano state¹¹. This fund was drawn from the Kano Health Trust Fund (KHET Fund) and Emergency Preparedness and Response budget line. In Anambra State, 20million naira was released, and the source of the fund is yet to be ascertained¹².

Chart 01: Covid-19 PAS State Intervention Funds



⁵ Queen Esther Iroanusi. Coronavirus: FG seeks Approval of N500b Loan for intervention Fund, Premium Time, April 4, 2020. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/385985-coronavirus-fg-seeks-approval-of-n500bn-loan-for-intervention-fund.html>

⁶ Azinmazi Momoh Jimo, et al. Nigeria may review 2020 budget over coronavirus, The guardian Newspaper, 05, March 2020. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-may-review-2020-budget-over-coronavirus/>

⁷ Lagos public health department, Lagos State Ministry of Health.

⁸ <https://dailypost.ng/2020/03/18/covid-19-enugu-govt-approves-n320m-relocates-state-isolation-centre-to-esut-teaching-hospital/>

⁹ Niger States Ministry of Health.

¹⁰ Niger State Appropriation Law, 2020.

¹¹ Kano State Ministry of Health

¹² Public health department, Enugu State Ministry of Health

Table 1: Covid-19 Intervention Funds

	<i>Amount Released #</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
Federal Government	15.386billion	15 billion from Emergency fund And 386 million from Health Budget line.	The FG has proposed another N500bn special intervention fund to NASS. This new arrangement is not from the health budget lines.
<i>Subnational governments</i>	<i>Amount Allocated #</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
Kaduna State	200million	Kaduna State Special Approval Emergency Intervention Fund on Covid-19	The fund was not derived from the health budget lines.
Kano State	57million	Kano Health Trust Fund (KHET Fund) and Emergency Preparedness and Response Budget Line.	A provision of 347 million as part of the intervention from initial release of 57 million was released.
Lagos State	600million	Emergency fund	-
Niger State	80million	Emergency fund	N80 million was budgeted for Public Health Emergency Interventions in the 2020 Appropriation Law with 60 million naira released. It could not be established whether or not the money was obtained from this health emergency fund.
Anambra State	30million	N. A	---
Enugu State	330million	Emergency fund	Out of the allocated sum, 20 million naira has been released.

Funding Implications of Covid-19 on Child and Family Health

Most of the funds released so far by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria on Covid-19 were not sourced from the health budget line. It seems allocated fund for this kind of emergencies are meager, making the government consider alternative sources to combat the pandemic. However, various health capital allocation remains intact, although the current economic downturn may have an adverse effect on the government's ability to make funds available for their executions. The various States are also incapacitated; with internally generated revenue at a standstill. Important to note is that there is the possibility of poor budget performance if strong efforts are not in place to address the current situation, as government revenue continues to vitiate due to the lockdown policy across the country with pending implications on its current health financing potential.

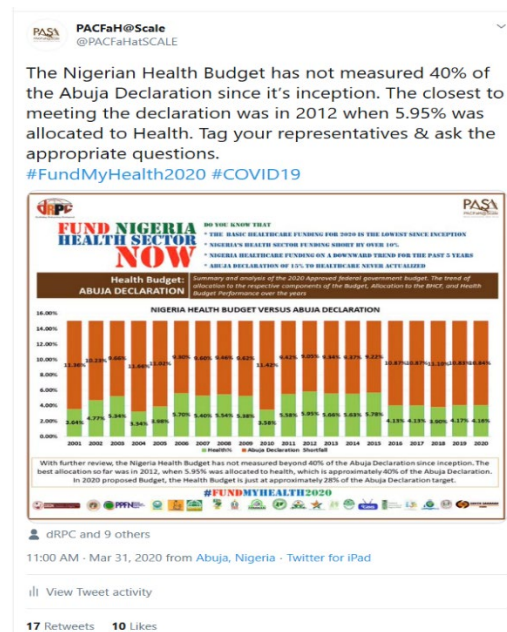
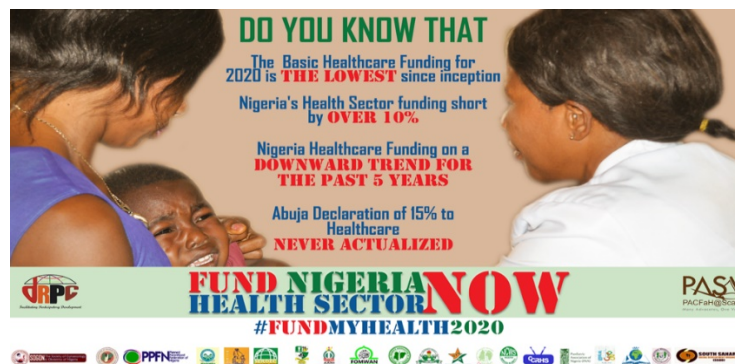
How PAS partners are ensuring the preservation of the health budget

PAS partners at both national and subnational levels are engaging with government through a month-long media campaigns with special focus on getting the government to preserve the 2020 health budget. The lockdown period provides a rare window of opportunity to gain the attention of policy makers who are already glued to the media for updates. The rationale for this campaign is

embedded in the realization that complete attention of government at the state and federal levels is focused on Covid-19 exposing other segments of the health sector now facing possible neglect. The health sector also faces the possibility of budget cuts in favor of the pandemic or ex post facto to replenish deficits. The impact of this neglect or the use of the 2020 approved health budgets at all levels to fight Covid-19 may result in catastrophe for the health sector post Covid-19 pandemic.

As a coalition of health and social accountability partners, PAS partners are engaging with government to get their commitments on the preservation of the health budget. In Kaduna, PAS Kaduna coalition is working with Kaduna State MNCH Accountability Mechanism (KADMAN) to engage the Governor of Kaduna state. In Kano state, PAS Kano coalition is engaging with the Kano state governor. In Niger, PAS Niger coalition is working through the Open Government Partnership Niger to engage with the Niger state Governor while in Lagos, AANI-PAS Lagos has been working to engage the Lagos state Governor and the commissioner for health to preserve the state health budget.

PAS National coalition partners are continuing targeted social media campaigns to the National Assembly, Federal Government of Nigeria and the FMOH to preserve the health budget.



Reflections and Recommendations

The government needs to be proactive with healthcare. Since a significant number of individuals will still be affected by various health issues besides from the Covid19 pandemic requiring medical attention, efforts should be made to ensure prompt releases on health care funding with nothing stopping the various health ministries across the countries from executing various health capital projects. The funds realized or allocated in the fight against covid19 should be an added advantage to improving the health care issues in the country. Hence, we recommend that;

1. The upcoming budget review as proposed by the federal government should not affect the 2020 allocations to the health sector instead should improve on the spending for various critical health needs on Nigerians.
2. The government should consider transparency and accountability by ensuring judicious utilization of available resources to improve the health system. This will prevent a high mortality rate. As mortality rates this year may depend on how well both human and materials resources can be mobilized to fight not just the Covid-19 pandemic but other related challenges.
3. CSOs should be included as accountability mechanism in the distribution/disbursement of the palliative measures at various committee levels to prevent mismanagement.

References

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