

Lassa fever: Reps call for Diagnostic Centers.

Bankole asks House committees to give mid-term reports.

By: John Ameh, Abuja.

The House of Representatives has raised concerns over the increasing deaths in the Country caused by Lassa fever and cerebrospinal meningitis.

It resolved that the federal Ministry of Health should set up “treatment Centers equipped with diagnostic machines” in the six geopolitical zones of the country for the prompt control and management of Lassa fever.

In a motion by Mr. Patrick Ikhariale and 68 other members of the House on Wednesday, the lawmakers also expressed worries over the risk medical personnel attending to the Lassa fever patients were exposed to, a development that has led to the death of five medical doctors already.

He told the house that Nigeria already at the moment, had only one treatment center for the disease while “ignorance, illiteracy, poor personal and environmental hygiene couple with the absence of community based detection, warning and diagnostic centers” were aiding its widespread. He added that the disease was spreading to new areas such as Abuja where three deaths have been recorded. Around 300 lives reported die due to the disease in 10 out of 36 states in the last four months.

He said “70 percent of the still births in the country are attributed to Lassa fever and Meningitis and it is regrettable that 40 years after Lassa fever was discovered, the country has not been able to find the appropriate response to it. Also at Wednesday plenary, the speaker, Mr. Demeji Bankole, directed all committee chairmen to submit their mid-term reports before the third week of March.

The reports are to contain the details of the work done so far by the committees since the 2008/2009 legislative session of the house opened in June last year. Bankole said such details would contain information on assignments conducted, pending ones and the impact of oversight duties.

The speaker last year tied committee funding to the submission of quarterly reports on the performance of the committee by the chairmen.