Ghana Country Profile: Health Care Waste Management (HCWM) in the Context of COVID-19

September 2020

Background Information on HCWM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>30,417,856¹</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National entities in charge of HCWM</td>
<td>Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal solid waste (MSW) generation</td>
<td>3,538,000 tonnes/year²</td>
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<td>Health care waste (HCW) generation</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site vs. off-site treatment</td>
<td>On-site and off-site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care waste exports?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National solid waste management law</td>
<td>The Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29) 296(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National solid waste strategy</td>
<td>The National Sanitation Policy (MLGRD, 1999 &amp; revised 2010)³</td>
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<tr>
<td>National HCW management law</td>
<td>Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control and Management Act, 2016</td>
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<td>National HCW policy</td>
<td>Health Care Waste Management Policy for Ghana, September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>National HCW management strategy</td>
<td>National Guidelines for Health Care Waste Management in Ghana, September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>National guidelines or standard operating procedures (SOPs) for HCWM</td>
<td>Health Care Waste Management Policy for Ghana, September 2019</td>
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</table>

Policy and Planning Environment

- Waste management in Ghana is a multi-sectoral effort with the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) playing key roles as implementers and regulator respectively. The overall responsibility for implementation is discharged through the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies which are directly under the MoLGRD.²

- The main goal of the HCWM policy is to provide direction for effective, efficient and safe management of health care waste through the adoption of best available technologies and best environmental practices to prevent injuries, infections and other hazards, and to protect and promote public health and the environment for sustainable development.

- The Health Facilities Regulatory Agency was set up to license facilities for the provision of public and private health care services. It has an important responsibility for proper healthcare waste management in health facilities.²

Legal Framework

Ghana has signed and ratified the Basel, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions. Ghana has also signed the Bamako Convention (a treaty of African nations prohibiting the import of any hazardous waste, including radioactive waste as well as clinical waste from health care in hospitals, medical centers and clinics).

The following laws are relevant in the context of HCWM²:

- The Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994 (Act 490)
- Environmental Assessment Regulations, 1999 (LI 1652)
- The Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462)
- National Building Regulations, 1996 (LI 1630)
- Town and Country Planning Act, 1945 (CAP 84)
- Food and Drugs Law 305b [1992]
- Mortuaries and Funeral Facilities Act, 1998 (Act 563)
- The Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29)
- Public Health Act of Ghana, 2012 (Act 851)
- Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control and Management Act, 2016 (Act 917)

¹ The World Bank
² A Global Snapshot of Solid Waste Management to 2050, World Bank, 2018
³ Health Care Waste Management Policy for Ghana, Ministry of Health, September 2019
Two surveyed government officials responded that there were service disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all eight HCFs reported no service disruptions.

Emergency procedures in place among surveyed HCFs include: On-site open burning, sending untreated HC waste to landfills and using industrial furnaces to incinerate HC waste.

The existing legal documents which directly provide additional guidance on health care waste management include:


The respondents also identified the lack of PPE, waste contamination, container scarcity and improperly tied bags as major concerns for waste handlers.

The respondents also identified the lack of dedicated funding for operations, lack of infrastructure, and lack of coordination:

Options for Improvement/Opportunities

- Enact national legislation to enforce the existing policy guidelines.
- Ensure funding to increase capacity of HCW collection, transportation, storage, treatment, and disposal systems.
- Provide adequate containers, HCW bags and PPE for waste handlers to avoid service disruptions.
- Increase training for personnel at HCFs regarding proper waste segregation, handling and final disposal.
- Conduct continued monitoring to identify any new challenges.

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