

## Sasse Alumni Association Inc

"An Alumna Association of the Ex-Students  
of St. Joseph's College, Sasse-Cameroon"  
A 501 (c)3 Charitable Organization



SOBA AMERICA

### President Fote's message - January 2021

Hello SOBAN SOBA America,

Greetings. I hope you had a great month of December, and I hope you and your family are staying safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. I just want to take a few minutes and bring you up to speed with what's been happening at SOBA America this past month, and upcoming January plans.

### Happy New Year 2021

On behalf of the National Leadership Team, I wish you and your family a happy and blessed New Year 2021. This has been a challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic. We pulled through and we can look forward to a better 2021 as the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine brings hope in this fight.

May 2021 bring great tidings to you and your family. may it strengthen our brotherhood in SOBA America.



### SOBA America mourns fallen member - SOBAN Dr. Godfrey Fondinka



The cold hands of death once again stuck our SOBA America family on December 18th, 2020 when SOBAN Dr. Godfrey Fondinka was called home by the Lord. Dr. Fondinka, SOBAN number 2155 of the 1971 class died in Fayetteville, NC of complications from COVID-19. He leaves behind his dear wife Dr. Florence, four kids - Tuma(22), Ghinna (20), Babila (15), and Kahmali (12), many family, friends, and patients to mourn him.

As a family practice physician running an urgent care practice, Dr. Fondinka was at the frontlines treating COVID-19 patients. He fought a brave fight, but in the end lost his battle against COVID-19.

Dr. Fondinka was a registered member of SOBA America and SOBA Carolinas chapter. I have expressed heartfelt condolence, on behalf of SOBA America, to his wife with whom I had stayed in close contact during his illness.

Please join me to pray for his family during this difficult time. Our prayers go to his family during this difficult time. We also condone with the class of 1971 and SOBA Carolinas who lost one of their own. As a registered member of SOBA America, our fallen brother shall be honored with our official SOBA America Final Farewell protocol at his funeral. Details of his funeral plans shall be provided in due course.

May his gentle soul rest in peace with the Lord.

## Administration Updates

### SJC Vision task team completes its work



As part of our administration's desire to convey SOBANS' vision about the path forward for our alma mater, I commissioned a task team to brainstorm. Their mission was to come up with bold ideas that can be implemented to transform SJC Sasse into a truly legendary and historic institution in Cameroon and Africa. Nothing was off the table.

I am pleased with the work that the team has done. Vice-President Ngassa, chair of the task team has submitted a detailed report with visionary and forward thinking ideas. In the coming weeks and months, my administration will engage Bishop Bibi (proprietor of SJC Sasse), SJC Sasse authorities

and other stakeholders including SOBANS to begin considering the proposals put forward by the SJC Vision Task Team. We will keep you posted as things unfold. In the end, we hope to have a framework in motion that will bring Sasse College up to the standards that we have come to expect and enjoy in prestigious institutions here in the US and Canada - from an infrastructural, management, academic and historic standpoint.

I want to thank the members of the SJC Sasse Vision Tak Team - Vice President Prof. Felix Ngassa (Chair), Emeritus HRH Michael Fondungallah, Emeritus Akeing Tiku, Emeritus Dr. Aloys Ibeagha, President Derick Forchason, SOBAN Evaristus Enongene, Czar Frank Ekwelle, Emeritus Harry Akoh Asa'na, President Richard Esibe. Thank you for your service to SOBA America.

## 2021 SOBA America National Convention

As we enter into the second half of our 2020/2021 fiscal year, we need to start thinking about our upcoming National convention on Memorial Day weekend. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to cancel our 2020 in-person convention. We are monitoring the situation closely.



Our administration is committed to having a national convention that will encompass the key elements that our SOBA America National convention should have - an intellectual enrichment segment with invited speakers giving talks on topics of interest and importance to SOBANS consistent with the convention theme, a general assembly during which we will conduct the business of SOBA America and a social gathering for SOBANS to mingle. How we accomplish that is not clear at this point. We are looking at all options - in-person convention, virtual convention, or a hybrid with elements of both.

We will continue to watch the COVID-19 pandemic situation as the vaccine rolls out to the general public and how it affects local, state and federal regulations and directives regarding travel and gatherings both locally in the Dallas area and nationally in the US and Canada. We hope to make a final determination as early as possible, hopefully in February, so SOBANS will have ample time to plan for whatever convention we will hold. In the end, we will be guided in our decision making by safety considerations for SOBANS and their families.

## SOBA America TV Winter Broadcast coming soon



Our Winter broadcast for SOBA America TV Network shall be airing later this month. The SOBA America Team is working hard to bring you important news and information on a wide range of topics.

SOBA America TV Network helps SOBANS and our community stay current with news stories, updates on

SOBA and SJC Sasse news and events, as well as provides in depth analyses and a balanced perspective on socio-economic, health and other topics of interest.

In our Fall broadcast that aired just before the US presidential elections, SOBA America TV presented a critical analysis of the key issues in the election with important information to help voters. We also covered the band project in great detail, and much more. Subscribe to our SOBA America TV YouTube channel

today so you can get updates on broadcasts by clicking on the link below, then click on the red SUBSCRIBE button.

**SUBSCRIBE to SOBA America TV Network by clicking here, then click on SUBSCRIBE**

## **COVID-19 Vaccines - Our shot at finally beating the COVID-10 pandemic. Take your shot!**

As the world continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, we have one more weapon in our arsenal against COVID-19 - the vaccine. This, together with social distancing, handwashing, mask wearing and other behavior modifications, is the way out of this pandemic. Unfortunately, the highly polarized political climate coupled with a less than stellar history of government run vaccination plans in the US has



**Photo: President Fote getting the COVID-19 Vaccine.**

created a lot of skepticism around the two COVID-19 vaccines approved in the US and Canada thus far - the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the Moderna vaccine.

As an emergency physician on the frontlines of the COVID-19 battle, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of COVID-19. While we all see the daily death count rise in the US and Canada everyday as stark reminder of the seriousness of this disease, there is one element that we don't hear about as much on TV which has affected a large proportion of COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms. These are the subset of patients we call the long haulers - who suffer long lasting, sometimes debilitating symptoms long after they are COVID-19 negative. Some of the most common long haler symptoms include coughing, ongoing and sometimes debilitating fatigue, body aches, joint pain, shortness of breath, loss of taste and smell (even if this didn't occur during the height of illness), difficulty sleeping, headaches and brain fog.

The COVID-19 vaccine is our best shot, as a community, to finally defeat COVID-19 and prevent all the potentially devastating effects that even mild infections can cause for a long time. After having done research and studied the literature and evidence around the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, I feel very confident about their efficacy and safety and I strongly recommend that you consider taking it when it becomes available to you if you haven't yet done so. That is why I gladly took the vaccine On December 22nd. **[In fact, I was the first person in my hospital to take the vaccine. \(Click to watch\).](#)**

In my latest COOVID-19 update to SOBANS, I explain how the Prizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines work. **[CLICK HERE TO WATCH OUR COVID-19 UPDATE ON THE VACCINE FROM SOBA AMERICA TV NETWORK.](#)**

I'd like to take a few minutes and address some questions that many have asked me and hopefully dispel some myths about the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

**How were Prizer, BioNTech and Moderna able to come up with a vaccine in under one year when other vaccines have taken years to develop in the past?** Scientists had a head start. The vaccines were built upon decades of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses. Long before COVID-19 was on the radar, the groundwork was laid in large part by two streams of research, one at the NIH and the other at the University of Pennsylvania — and because scientists had learned a bit about other coronaviruses from prior SARS and MERS outbreaks. The messenger RNA technique was a large focus of these studies.

**Are the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines safe?** These vaccines are tested, safe and effective. More than 70,000 people volunteered in clinical trials for the two vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) to see if they are safe and work to prevent COVID illness. Volunteers included Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asians and others. To date, the vaccines are 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 with no serious safety concerns noted in the clinical trials. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Health Canada independently reviewed the data to make sure the vaccines are safe and can prevent people from getting COVID-19 before they approved the vaccines in the USA and Canada respectively.. Like all drugs, vaccine safety continues to be monitored after they are in use.

**Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?** No, you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

**Can I get a reaction from taking the vaccine?** Like any medication, you could have a reaction. So far, there have been only two reports of serious reactions to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. The most common side effects include temporary reactions like a sore arm, headache, or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.

**Will the mRNA vacciness by Prizer/BioNTech and Moderna alter my DNA?** No. Messenger RNA (mRNA) does not enter the nucleus of the cell where our DNA resides. They therefore cannot alter our genetic makeup.

**How do these mRNA vaccines work?** mRNA vaccines have strands of genetic material called mRNA inside a special coating. That coating protects the mRNA from enzymes in the body that would otherwise break it down. It also helps the mRNA enter the dendritic cells and macrophages in the lymph node near the vaccination site.

mRNA can most easily be described as instructions for the cell on how to make a piece of the “spike protein” that is unique to SARS-CoV-2. Since only part of the protein is made, it does not do any harm to the person vaccinated but it is antigenic.

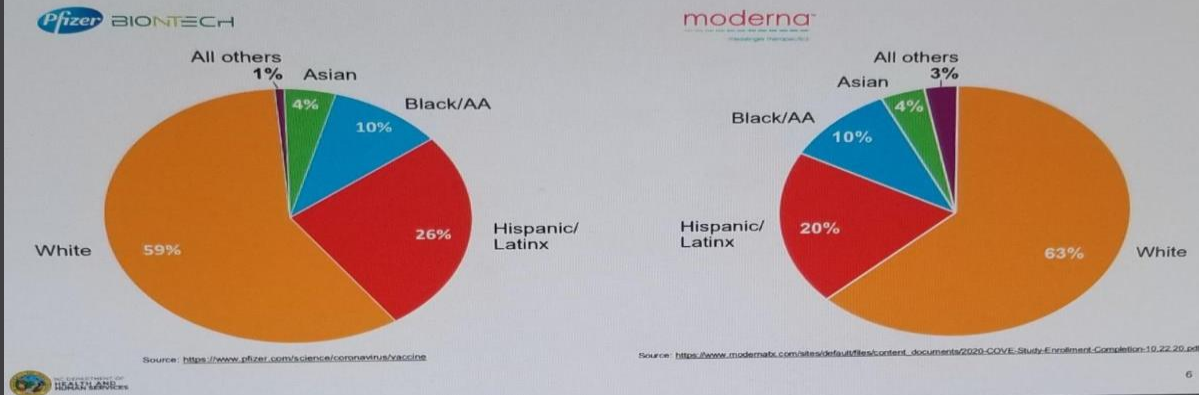
After the piece of the spike protein is made, the cell breaks down the mRNA strand and disposes of them using enzymes in the cell. It is important to note that the mRNA strand never enters the cell’s nucleus or affects genetic material. This information helps counter misinformation about how mRNA vaccines alter or modify someone’s genetic makeup.

Once displayed on the cell surface, the protein or antigen causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies and activating T-cells to fight off what it thinks is an infection. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means the immune system is primed to protect against future infection.

**Can I still take the COVID-19 vaccine if I have had COVID-19 before?** Yes. Current thinking is that patients who recover from COVID-19 have some level of immunity for a short period of time. However, it is unclear how long the immunity lasts and how strong it is. There have been cases of re-infections. Consequently, the current recommendations are to still take the vaccine which offers much stronger levels of immunity.

**What is the difference between the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the Moderna vaccine?** Both vaccines are mRNA vaccines. They both have over 95% efficacy and both require two doses - 3 weeks apart for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 4 weeks apart for the Moderna vaccine. The main difference between the two is the fact that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine needs to be stored at ultra-cold temperatures while the Moderna vaccine does not require such extreme cold storage conditions.

**There have been intentional efforts to recruit volunteers from historically marginalized populations.**



[Register online with SOBA America today by clicking here](#)

## Celebrate Each Other Initiative

**January 2021 Spotlight - SOBA Arizona, SOBA California, SOBA Carolinas, SOBA Delaware, SOBA Georgia, SOBA Montreal, SOBA New England**

**Leading the way in membership registration with 100% chapter registration renewal from last year**

In this month's Celebrate Each Other Initiative, we celebrate the chapters that rose to the occasion and renewed registration of 100% of their members from last year with SOBA America for 2020/2021 fiscal year. As we continue to build an all-inclusive SOBA America, our chapters have a vital in helping getting their members registered nationally. Seven chapters - Arizona, California, Carolinas, Delaware, Georgia Montreal and New England lead the way with a perfect 100% renewals of their members from last fiscal year. Most of them also had new members registering with SOBA America for the first time.

Our administration seeks to build an all-inclusive SOBA America that is highly functional and has value to all its members. Our goal is to leave no SOBAN behind. That is why it is important that we partner with chapters to get SOBANS in the US and Canada to register and be part of our SOBA America family. We want every SOBAN in the North American continent to feel at home in SOBA America. This is Your Association. Together, we can build a powerful brotherhood that will strengthen those bonds we formed in SJC Sasse. Together, we can build a solid platform that can serve as a building block for mentorship, networking, business and investment opportunities and many other initiatives that our administration is working on. The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down our work on some of these, but we will get back on track and continue the transformation of SOBA America. We need YOU to be engaged and be part of this transformation.



While December 31st is the deadline for members to renew their membership and avoid any lapse in benefit eligibility, it is never too late for SOBANS to register. If you have not yet registered or you know any SOBAN in the US or Canada who has not yet registered for 2020/2021, I urge you to do so or encourage them to do so promptly. Registration after December 31st triggers a 6 month probation period for financial benefits and a few other benefits. However, the earlier you register, the earlier the clock starts and the earlier you can become eligible for full benefits. In addition, there are certain benefits to membership that become activated immediately you register regardless of when you register. Our membership discount program is a popular benefit in this category. As a registered member of SOBA America, you get discounts to products and services in over 2,000 businesses in the US and 400 businesses in Canada. These discounts are for everyday purchases that you make like oil changes for your car, back to school items, travel, pizza and many more,. You need to register online at our website to gain access to the membership portal in order to take advantage of our SOBA America Membership Discount Program.

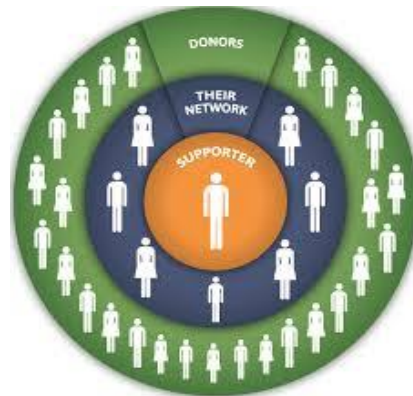
*Do you have a story to share? Let us Celebrate you. Email us at [info@sobamerica.org](mailto:info@sobamerica.org)*

[Click here to RENEW your membership online today](#)

## SMILE – Amazon Smile Partnership for fundraising

### Help raise money for Sasse Alumni Association with Amazon Smile

As you know, Sasse Alumni Association has partnered with Amazon to raise money when you shop using Amazon. We need you to help us raise money. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price for your eligible Amazon Smile purchases if you select Sasse Alumni Association as your charity. Click on this link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/02-0602143>, sign onto your account and Sasse Alumni Association will be selected. Remember to go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) when you shop instead of Amazon.com to get this fundraising.



Please share this information with your family and friends. Every cent counts. Help us sow a seed in the life of a young child in Sasse who may be helped by these donations.

**CLICK HERE to make Sasse Alumni Association your charity with Amazon Smile**

**Click here to RENEW your membership online today**

## Thank you for reading

On behalf of the NLT, I wish you and your families a blessed month of January. Together, we will continue the transformation of SOBA America. Team work makes the dream work. Stay safe.

SOBANLY  
Bertrand Fote (Sir 4te)  
Your Servant-in-chief

[Visit our Website](#)

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STAY CONNECTED

