Push for Ebola cure continuing into new year

Global health experts are preparing to test new treatments for Ebola in West Africa that they hope will eventually vanquish the hemorrhagic fever.

The National Institutes of Health and GlaxoSmithKline PLC plan to test a vaccine among Liberian health workers. Similar rollouts are being discussed in Sierra Leone.

The World Health Organization hopes that work will yield a vaccine in 2015. But no one knows whether the treatment will prove safe and successful, or when it might be ready. Any vaccine would probably be given first to at-risk health workers, pharmaceutical company representatives say, meaning its role ending the broader epidemic would be limited.

Separately, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other groups are testing whether the antibody-rich blood of people who have survived Ebola can help new patients fight off the virus. Those small, complex tests will also take time to execute and review.

Meanwhile, Ebola is still spreading to new communities, though the rate of new infections is falling. Stamping out Ebola in the far-flung villages where it is appearing now could be more difficult than stopping the wave of cases that overwhelmed weak health systems from July through October. How rapidly the response evolves to tackle that shifting foe will help determine how high the death toll climbs in 2015, health experts say.

Read full, original article: Experts Rush to Find Ebola Treatments in 2015