

Lives improve after getting machines

By Denis Mubiru

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, in January delivered a donation of medical equipment to Kalangala Health Centre IV.

Kadaga solicited for the donation during her trip to the US to attend the Uganda North America Association (UNAA) convention.

The medical equipment, worth billions of shillings, was sourced from Medi-share in the US in a process that started in 2013.

Other equipment were donated to Kakuuto Health Centre IV in Rakai district and Kamuli Health Centre IV.

With a focus on maternal health and infant care, the equipment included foetal scanners, infant warmers, delivery beds, electrical surgery unit, aesthetic unit, oxygen concentrator, lab equipment and wheelchairs.

Impact

Kalangala district health officer Dr Hilary Bitakaramire says the equipment came at a time when they were most needed by the islanders, especially those at Bugala Island.

"The theatre was equipped with the necessary facilities. We have conducted about 400 caesarian births since. That never happened before," Bitakaramire says.

He explained that items such as gloves were always in short supply. Today, the equipment are in use and the situation at Kalangala Health Centre is not as bad as it used to be.

He appealed to the Speaker to lobby for more equipment to the health centres in Kalangala.

"The equipment were only donated to Kalangala Health Centre IV, but we have other health centres on remote

islands that lack equipment. If more are provided, it will reduce on number of people coming here. The theatre here is overcrowded and if other health centres are equipped, I think it will be good," he says.

Willy Lugoloobi, the Kalangala district chairperson, explained that there has been a reduction in the number of referrals to Masaka Hospital from Kalangala because now medics can carry out surgeries.

"We, however, call upon the health ministry to fulfil its promise to the people of Kalangala. Last year, health minister Ruth Acheng promised us that this year our health centre will be upgraded to hospital status," he said.

Lugoloobi adds that if the centre is not upgraded to hospital status, donation of more equipment may not be useful. He urged the Government to provide more equipment to the health centres.

Prossy Atuku, a resident at Kalangala B in Kalangala town council, who recently gave birth to a baby boy by caesarian birth, thanked the Speaker for the donation. She says she does not know what may have happened to her during the time of birth if the centre did not get the donation of the equipment.

"I call on mothers to stop rushing to Masaka, the equipment are in place, lets utilise them. The theatre is equipped with the necessary facilities to help with caesarian birth," she says.

Kalangala is made up of 84 islands, with only 18 health centres. Two centres are at the level of Health Centre IV, five Health Centre III and the rest at the level of Health Centre II. The only health centre that can handle emergencies is Kalangala Health Centre IV.