Medical workers decry abuse of nurses' attire

MBALE

By Saudha Nakandha

Health professionals have protested the continued use of nurses and midwives' attire during introduction parties and called for ceremonies and punishment of the culprits.

The concerns were raised last week during a multi-stakeholder workshop organised by the African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST) at the Mount Elgon Hotel in Mbale district.

David Kyaligonza, the vice-chairperson Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC), noted that it is increasingly becoming the norm for some women to appear dressed like nurses during marriage introduction ceremonies. The ladies often carry out mock immunisation of the visiting party.

He demanded tough action, during a session on proposed amendments to the nurses regulations. The participants, who welcomed the proposal, said such acts undermine the nurses and midwives profession. They recommended those who abuse the uniforms be jailed for three months or fined sh2m.



The council wants nurses' uniforms restricted to the profession

BETWEEN THE LINES:

The Council said some women often carry out mock immunisation at marriage introduction ceremonies.

They stressed that regulating the use of uniforms would help restore their dignity.

"The nurses and midwives are at the forefront of saving lives, but masqueraders are everywhere. They are abusing the profession. Isn't there any traditional wear they can get to suit this role?" he wondered.

Robert Kirunda, a lawyer, explained that for the proposal to become regulation it has to undergo an elaborate process, starting with the First Parliamentary Counsel in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, then proceed to Cabinet and subsequently be tabled in Parliament.

Dr Vincent Ojoome, the ACHEST monitoring and evaluation director, asked the public not to engage in acts of masquerade.

The Allied Health Professionals' Council registrar asked that a body be instituted to comprehensively regulate activities of public practitioners to enable sustainable efficient health service delivery.

"The current Act only caters for regulation of private sector. Who is watching over the public?" Mpiima queried.

Mercy Mwanja, the quality assurance manager UNMC, said the move would help enhance the nurses and midwives image.

"The uniform is part of our image; the public identifies us by it. This regulation will ensure it is used appropriately," she noted.

The multi-sector workshop was aimed at strengthening the counsel's mandate of enforcing standards, validating continuing education requirements and sanctioning providers who fail to comply with requirements among other roles.

The Allied Health Professionals Act, which empowers the Allied Professionals Council came into force in 1996.

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