

"They want to prevent the hands of Kenyans so that they can refuse

... she said. This means that there is a two-week window within which to re-

to expect one last opinion poll before the elections on August 8.

Am I related because we come from the same region? Not that I know of now," she said.

Plan to extend health scheme to private hospitals hits snag

BY JOHNSON KANAMUGIRE
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RWANDA. The government's plans to extend the coverage of the community health insurance (Mutuelle) to private health facilities remain in limbo as the low premiums charged are at odds with the cost of services outside the public health system.

Rwanda Social Security Board director-general James Gatera said a study had been commissioned to guide adjustments to the Mutuelle and RAMA [employee health insurance fund] scheme policies as the

government seeks to deliver universal access to all levels of healthcare for citizens.

However, he could not disclose further details citing the sensitivity of the matter. But, he confirmed the scheme's sustainability was one of the aspects under study and could inform possible policy change including the structure of premium.

"Any decision will have to be based on findings of a thorough study. It has been going on for a month now, so we cannot talk about it at this stage," said Mr Gatera.

According to sources familiar

with ongoing talks between the government and private health service providers, reconciling the cost of services at private health facilities and the static contributions to Mutuelle remains a major sticking point.

"We have been working with the government to come up with a kind of partnership that would allow Mutuelle patients to benefit from the infrastructure provided by the private hospitals and clinics. But, this is not something that can be done overnight," said Partha Sarathy, an Indian investor and shareholder in Kigali-based Legacy Clinic.

Partha said the implementation of the plan still requires a public-private-partnership to facilitate accommodation of Mutuelle cardholders in private health facilities.

Private and for-profit healthcare providers account for just more than 10 per cent of Rwanda's healthcare system, but their state-of-the-art medical equipment, technology and specialist medical personnel make their services more preferred by medical insurance cardholders.

However, this excludes majority of the population, who are covered under the Mutuelle scheme.

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