

Buganda donates sh200m sickle cell testing kits

By Andrew Ssenyonga

The kingdom of Buganda has donated sickle cell test kits worth sh200m to help fight the disease in various hospitals across the country.

Sickle Cell Solubility test kits can be used to detect the sickle cell trait of sickle cell disease hemoglobin, as well as other sickling hemoglobin. The test kits will provide reference laboratory testing services.

The 60,000 testing kits were donated to the Government through the Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL) as part of the proceeds from the Kabaka Birthday Run 2017.

While receiving the kits at CPHL in Butabika on Friday, health minister Jane Ruth Aceng said the testing kits will help in the new-born screening programme and also start the teenage screening in high burden districts.

"We thank Kabaka for accepting to partner with us. At first we thought the kingdom would only help in sensitisation and raise awareness about the disease to the public, but we are grateful that we are seeing more fruits," she noted.

Aceng noted that the national



Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga hands over kits to Aceng. This was on Friday at Butabika, Luzira in Nakawa division, Kampala. Photo by Dickson Kulumba

sickle cell survey 2015 revealed a high burden of the disease across the country, with a national trait average 13.3%, and disease burden of 0.73%.

"Forty-nine of the 122 districts

have sickle cell trait above 15% while eight districts have sickle cell traits above 20%," she said.

It is estimated that every year, about 20,000 babies are born with sickle cell disease, but 80%

die before their 5th birth day. Aceng noted that over 20 sickle cell clinics have been setup in the 20 pilot high burden districts where the identified patients are receiving care.