

Hepatitis B worries Mbarara schools

MBARARA

By Abdulkarim Ssengendo

School headteachers and directors in Kashari South, Mbarara district, have asked the Government, the education ministry and that of health to provide funds for a massive vaccination against Hepatitis B in their schools.

Uganda has a high prevalence of Hepatitis B varying across the country. The headteachers and school owners in Kashari are worried that the disease might spread across schools if infected students are admitted in their school.

Simon Twinamatsiko, the headmaster of Tropical Secondary School, said schools receive many students. Some students come from districts where Hepatitis B has been reported to be high. He said schools alone cannot afford to raise the funds required to vaccinate all students.

Twinamatsiko said teachers are also at a high risk because many are not immunised against the disease.

"It is expensive for a parent in Kashari and other parts of the country to raise shs100,000 for a full dose. You find a school has over 1,000 students, so that means if you are to immunise all students, you would require about shs100m, which is expensive," Bam Akakimpa, the director Bam Model School, said.

The comments were made during a consultative meeting for directors and headteachers of private schools in Kashari South.

The meeting, which took place at Bwizibwera Church of Uganda, was organised by the area Member of Parliament, Nathan Itungo, to address challenges affecting private schools in the area.

The district education officer (DEO), Gabriel Ahimbisibwe, called for intervention from



Some of the headteachers who attended the meeting raising their concerns. Photo by Abdulkarim Ssengendo

ON THE GROUND

■ The Mbarara district education officer, Gabriel Ahimbisibwe, called for intervention from the central government, saying the district alone cannot raise funds to support schools in immunising students.

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"It is a big concern in our communities and to us as a district. We appeal to the

Government to think of an intervention so that our learners are immunised. Hepatitis B shouldn't be a threat to us," Ahimbisibwe said.

Itungo promised to take their concerns to the relevant government authorities for intervention.

He advised them to always go for testing to know their status and go for vaccination.

He urged people in his constituency and other areas to take care of their lives and avoid getting infected by the deadly disease. He told them Hepatitis B is transmitted through exposure to infected blood and body fluids including semen and vaginal fluids.

"Hepatitis B recently claimed

the life of our fellow MP of Ruhama and many other Ugandans have died of it," Itungo said.

The headteachers also called

for government support for private schools.

The DEO called on schools to observe all requirements and guidelines set by the Ministry

of Education and Sports, including good hygiene, licence and opening on the official day.

Ahimbisibwe called for teaching of morals and protection of pupils and students in school.

Isingiro district decries fake scholarships

Meanwhile in Isingiro district, parents have raised concern over mushrooming schools, which convince parents to give them their children, deceiving them that they are going to give them scholarships and in the end their children are dumped and abandoned in towns.

"Some deceive parents to give them their children that they are going to study under bursary, but a short period of time they are abandoned," Eng. Johnson Mubangizi, the chairman board of governors Kigaragira Vocational School, said.

The Rev. Kizinduka Amwine, the education secretary of Ankole Diocese, condemned cheating of exams and called on teachers to always prepare their students early enough.

He also asked the Government to always release capitation grant early, so that the learning environment is good for students to study. Amwine emphasised holistic nurturing of students so that in future they are not involved in bad practices like corruption.



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