

Kiruddu, Kawempe and Naguru elevated to referral hospitals

By Mary Karugaba

Cabinet has approved the elevation of Kiruddu, Kawempe and Naguru from health centre IV to referral hospital status.

The move means the three hospitals will be under the ownership and management of the health ministry, have their own votes from the national budget and provide more special health services.

Sources that attended the cabinet meeting on Monday said the decision came after Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and the health ministry started clashing over the ownership of the three facilities.

While KCCA insisted that the three hospitals should remain under their management, the health ministry argued that the facilities should be upgraded to referral level to decongest Mulago National Referral Hospital that is under renovation.

The policy is that referral

hospitals are managed directly by the health ministry, while health centre IVs are managed by the district local administrations.

The three hospitals were built on land that previously accommodated KCCA's health centres. China-Uganda Friendship Hospital, built by the government of China, was the first to be built where KCCA's Naguru Teenage Information and Health Centre once stood. It was handed over to the Government in January 2012 after completion.

KCCA also argued that they had only offered their buildings to help Mulago Hospital get refurbished and not to be taken over by the Government.

Later, the ministry argued that once upgraded, the three hospitals would be turned into training and research centres since they are located within the city.

"Given their proximity, Cabinet agreed that they should be retained as semi-autonomous (referral

WHAT THE MINISTRY SAYS ABOUT THE MOVE

**Sarah Opendi,
State minister of health**



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hospitals) so that once completed, Mulago Hospital would play its role as national referral. We don't expect people with simple illnesses such as malaria and cough to go to Mulago without a referral letter," a source from the health ministry said.

State minister of health Sarah Opendi confirmed the development, arguing that the

three hospitals would change ownership in June this year when renovations at Mulago are complete.

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to handle and allowed the ministry to take them over," Opendi said.

The Kampala-based health facilities are currently being used as satellite hospitals of Mulago Hospital.

If the plan succeeds, KCCA will now remain with a few health centre IVs such as Kiswa, Kitebi, Kawaala and Kisenyi.

Kawempe and Kiruddu hospitals were upgraded with funding from African Development Bank and the Nigeria Trust Fund.

Opendi told *New Vision* that the Public Service Commission would soon start the process of verifying and recruiting workers for the three hospitals.

Opendi, however, appealed to the finance ministry to avail funds to enable the hospitals perform as semi-autonomous institutions.

While appearing before the parliamentary health committee last month, Ministry of Health officials said they needed about sh5b and sh3.2b

for Kiruddu and Kawempe to operate as autonomous institutions.

They also complained about the expenses needed to construct a sewage system for the hospitals.

According to Opendi, the ministry needs not less than sh30b to construct a sewage lagoon to resolve the current sewage problems at the hospitals.

"Currently, we spend sh16m every two weeks to empty the septic tank, a cost which has become very expensive. We need a permanent solution," she said.

The MPs asked the Minister of Health, Jane Aceng, to spray the mosquitoes in Kiruddu Hospitals.

But Aceng amused members when she referred to them as just "nonsense" mosquitoes that do not spread malaria.

"These are just nonsense mosquitoes and do not cause malaria. Yes, we need to spray them, but we also need a permanent solution," she said.