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Daily Monitor
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Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau

Celebrating 60 years of quality healthcare

Medical bureau marks 60 years of providing quality healthcare

Achievements. Founded by the Church of Uganda and Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1957, UPMB has a network of 294 health facilities in Uganda.

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The Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB) has pledged to continue its work of providing quality healthcare to different communities in the country.

UPMB, which brings together Protestant churches in Uganda involved in provision of health services, is celebrating 60 years of existence, having been founded in 1957.

The executive director of the faith-based non-governmental organisation, Dr Tony Tumwesigye, underscores the institution's cardinal duty of working to improve the health status of people living in Uganda, especially the marginalised and the poor, in fulfillment of Christ's healing ministry.

According to Dr Tumwesigye, 80 per cent of the health facilities they serve are located in rural and remote areas.

He adds that the institution also has 10 health training institutions whose aim is to help train some health practitioners.

"Our health facilities provide preventive, curative and rehabilitative health care to various communities regardless of ethnicity, religious creed, gender and social economic status," he notes.

Founded by the Church of Uganda and Seventh Day Adventist Church, UPMB has a network of 294 health facilities in Uganda.

Dr Tumwesigye says the UPMB network complements government efforts to ensure good health for the nation.

"Institutional partnerships have been built at International, national and district levels with the aim of raising the profile of faith-based health facilities while at the same time strengthening recognition and integration of these health facilities into the national health system," he says.

"Our partner hospitals include Ruharo Mission Hospital, Kiwoko Hospital, Rugarama Hospital, Kisizi hospital, Bwindi Community Hospital, Kuluva Hospital, Cure Children Hospital-Mbale and Mengo Hospital, among others," he says.

The UPMB executive director says they provide special attention to enable member health facilities deliver a wide range of high quality health services.



A UPMB member of staff checks a consignment of drugs at their offices in Kampala. COURTESY PHOTO

"Our Secretariat implements grants from various development partners, supporting comprehensive HIV delivery, human resources for health, family planning and we are still expanding to meet the needs on the service ground," says Dr Tumwesigye.

He notes that over the years, the institution has registered numerous achievements in collaboration with other non-governmental and charity organisations to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

Partners

"In partnership with Medical Access, Joint Medical Store, UHMG and government, we are ensuring that there is an effective logistics and supply chain that is helping out in ordering and reporting of HIV related cases. We also ensure that reports are timely and accurate. We support implementing sites in inventory management and ensure that they maintain the recommended national stocking levels. We work towards minimising expiries and stock outs and supporting facilities to maintain good pharmaceutical practices," he says, adding that UPMB also strengthens warehouse-facility linkages as well as the entire supply chain of HIV, Reproductive health and Nutrition commodities and HMIS tools.

He notes that the institution has continuously improved the general performance of health centres through strengthening of management practices such as issuing of staff contracts, prompt salary payments and performance management.

Mr James Mwisigwa, the UPMB communications and advocacy officer, says the institution has conducted a number of trainings to build the capacity of health workers.

"We have carried out trainings to impart leadership and supervisory skills, and this was undertaken for facilities in northern Uganda and Karamoja region," he says.

Mr Mwisigwa also observes that UPMB operates a fully-fledged optical centre with a corporate branch in Kamwokya, a city suburb. He says this has helped more than 3,000 in-

the Mengo branch for ophthalmic care.

He adds that UPMB jointly worked with Joint Medical Store towards raising funds for re-roofing Kumi hospital.

However, he notes that the cost of health care service provision has gone up because of the expansion of services, increased demand due to population growth, the adoption of new medical technologies, and changes in patients' choices and expectations which is a challenge.

However, Dr Tumwesigye says as they celebrate 60 years of existence, they are grateful for the different agencies that have offered them support in fulfilling their mission of providing quality health services for the glory of God.

"We are grateful for the support of our different partners in all their capacities namely: The Ministry of Health, donors, district and community leaders, health service providers, and even our beneficiaries as well as our board members, staff and friends who made us achieve all this," he says.

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