

Nurses deserve 100% pay raise

Anyone who has ever been admitted or attended to a patient in a hospital knows that nurses deserve a salary increment for the hard work done in improving the health of Ugandans. Since nurses are the proverbial alpha and omega in terms of our health, the following issues should be taken into consideration:

They are understaffed given that one nurse does a work that should have been done by many more of them. They have gone through formal education and attained requisite qualifications. They are accountable to the Nurses' Council hence they should be paid a decent salary that can sustain them. Besides, in many government hospitals, there are not many unskilled workers such as porters and cleaners. Nurses are often, on top of their scope of work, forced to do such work.

There are many instances where some public health facilities have shortage of doctors yet when an emergency arises, it is the nurses who will handle the cases to save a life. The same applies when there are no social workers – nurses must run around doing what was supposed to be done by a social worker.

Nurses often handle patients in



situations that subject them to risks like contagious diseases. Besides, nurses work under poor conditions, for instance, where hospitals have no medicines, equipment and other supplies, inadequate security, etc.

Nurses who go to work abroad do not just do so for fun or to experience different culture. Rather they leave because they feel that they are being taken for granted by government that pays the peanuts. Uganda loses specialised nurses yet a government that cares about its people should ensure that nurses paid well and provide better work environment.

I believe that the government can afford to increase nurses' salaries by

100 per cent considering that it is not lack of money, but the problem is poor prioritisation. When you visit an emergency room, you will notice the great role nurses play. They provide hands on care to patients, make patients feel comfortable, and assist in many aspects of patient care from dispensing medicine to drawing blood to simply comforting their patients.

Nurses also have extensive educational requirements. Depending on the level of nurse, they may need education ranging from a specialty diploma to a specialised graduate. A nurse practitioner has responsibilities similar to those of a doctor.

Considering the nurses education level, devotion to the medical profession, and the extent of their duties (some of which may be risky), there is no doubt that theirs is a job that deserves higher pay.

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