

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there were 11.7 doctors for every 100,000 people in

just Makerere graduating health professionals and more recently, we have given our referral hospitals a

doctors, the health sector will just ensure it has a few more doctors, a slightly better stocked

situation of few

Prof. Wilton S. Kezala, medical professional

Role of private health training institutions

Priate (for profit), tertiary training institutions in Uganda started training nurses and midwives as far back as 1999.

At that time these institutions were very few, but now they are about 46.

Currently and comparatively, there are 15 Government and 29 faith-based health training institutions that train nurses and midwives in the certificate and diploma programmes in the country.

All nursing and midwifery training institutions including the training institutions for allied health professionals, which are about 46 in the country, operate under the authorities of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Health (MoH) and National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) that offer operational licences to them.

The Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) of MoES and NCHE accredit the training programmes of the institutions and the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board (UNMEB) and Uganda Allied Health Examination Board (UAHEB) of BTJET assess the students and award certificates and diplomas to successful candidates, respectively.

The output of qualified nurses and midwives by the health training institutions in the country has been increasing at a rate of about 20% from 4,544 for the year 2011 to 8,654 for the year 2016 for the last six years, according to UNMEB figures. It is estimated that each private health training institution graduates about 60 nurses and midwives on the average, each year.

If we consider the 46 private health training institutions that are operating in the country, we can estimate about 2,760 qualified nurses and midwives being produced by these institutions each year in addition to those being produced by the Government and Faith-based institutions.

The private health training institutions



were established to add value to production of more qualified health professionals needed to meet the health needs of the majority of Ugandans especially in the rural areas.

A combined effort of the Government, faith-based and private institutions in the production of adequate qualified health professionals can result in a force that can combat the severe shortage of health professionals (nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health professionals) in the country. The main goal is to produce enough health workers who can meet the health needs of the people throughout the country.

In addition to the production of health workers at the certificate and diploma levels, the private universities in the country also produce health professionals such as doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals at the degree level.

This also has boosted the number of trained health professionals in the country. Both the private tertiary health training institutions and the private universities have played a big role in the production of health resource for health for Uganda.

In order to produce quality health professionals for the country, the private health training institutions have formed an association which is aimed at assisting the

health institutions in the training of quality health workers. The association is called "Uganda Private Health Training Institutions Association (UPHTIA)" which was formed in October 2014.

It is registered by the registrar of companies which gave the association a Certificate of Incorporation No. 190858 dated October 16, 2014. Since then the association has carried out important activities that are aimed at strengthening the operation of the private health training institutions in the Country.

Besides the production of qualified health workers, private training institutions also engage in activities that enhance the professional levels of their staff. For example, they assist some of the staff to go for further studies to become health tutors, health managers or other specialised professionals. Furthermore, the institutions provide employment to people who work in the different positions of the institutes, thus lessening the burden of the Government to give them employment.

From the above statements it is clear that private health training institutions provide vital services to the Ugandan citizens.

To carry out better services the institutions, therefore, need strong support of the Government. For example, representatives of UPHTIA should be part of the Government teams that (a) inspect private health training institutions, (b) accredit the programmes of the private health training institutions and (c) select students in the JAB selection committees.

In addition, the Government should also assist the private health training institutions in purchasing more computers and skills laboratory equipment which are very essential, but very expensive.

This will enhance quality training of health professionals for the country.

The writer is the chairman of the Uganda Private Health Training Institutions Association