

Artisanal gold miners at the Lujnji Mining Site, Mubende District use a motor engine to crush rocks. Many youth in Mubende have embraced small scale gold mining.

PHOTO BY JOSEPHINE NNABBAALE



Dilemma as hospital workers are ordered out of staff quarters

Tight situation. The health workers say they are financially constrained.

BY FRED MUZAALÉ
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

KAYUNGA. Health workers at Kayunga Hospital are stranded after authorities gave them a one-week ultimatum to vacate the hospital staff quarters to pave way for the renovation and expansion of facility.

Last week, the Ministry of Health officials led by the ministry's undersecretary, Mr Ronald Ssegawa, handed over the construction site (hospital) to Arab Contractors Uganda Ltd.

Built in 1973, the 44-year-old hospital had never been renovated, save for some painting done about eight years ago.

Recently, government announced it would spend about Shs70b to

renovate the facility.

According to government the construction works are expected to take a period of two years.

While meeting hospital staff last week, both the deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Mr Robby Odyeny Ocen, and the district chairperson, Mr Tom Sserwanga, said they don't expect to see any health worker at the staff quarters after expiry of the one-week ultimatum.

The announcement caused panic and anxiety among many health workers who said they have no money for rent.

"The salary we get is too small to enable us pay for accommodation. They would have provided us with alternative accommodation during this period when the renovations are being carried out," one female medical worker, who preferred anonymity, lamented.

The hospital medical superintendent Mr Jehu Mulwani

ISSUES

Poor state. Many of the health facilities in the countryside, which were constructed before and after independence, are currently in an appalling state, but two years ago government embarked on a programme to give them a facelift and nine of them have so far been renovated and re-equipped.

offices would remain operational at the facility while other services such as HIV clinic, surgery, dental clinic, admissions, and others would be moved to Kangulumira, Ntenjeru and Bbaale Health Centre IVs.

"This means patients seeking such services would have to go to those health centres," Dr Mulwani said.

Kangulumira Health Centre IV is located about 15 miles from Kayunga Town, while Bbaale Health Centre is about 45 kilometres and Ntenjeru is about three kilometres from Kayunga hospital.

Mr Ssegawa revealed that the hospital will be expanded twice its current size while the staff quarters and hospital structures will be renovated and re-equipped.

Currently, the hospital's piped water and sewage systems are broken down while the medical equipment are old as some are not functioning, especially in the operating theatre.

Kayunga health workers asked to vacate houses

Voices

FROM PAGE 9

"This means patients seeking such services would have to go to those health centres."

JOHNNIE MULWANA,
HOSPITAL MEDICAL
SUPERINTENDENT

"The salary we get is too small to enable us pay for accommodation. They would have provided us with alternative accommodation during this period when the renovations are being carried out."

FEMALE HEALTH
WORKER, KAYUNGA
HOSPITAL

"When the one week given to them elapses, we shall seal off the site."

SIMON KANKU,
HOSPITAL SENIOR
ADMINISTRATOR

When *Daily Monitor* visited the staff quarters last weekend, a section of health workers had started vacating the houses

"We have nothing to do but to comply with the directive (to leave the staff quarters)," one of the nurses who was packing her belongings said.

Appeal

Another nurse at the facility said the planned renovation could have been done in phases rather than leaving them to suffer.

"Looking for alternative accommodation couldn't have been a problem but we currently lack money for rent since we are planning to take back our children to school," she said

Mr Simon Kanku, the Kayunga Hospital senior administrator, however, said the consolidated salary of all medical workers include; accommodation and transport allowances adding that providing free accommodation to staff is just to "motivate them."

"When the one week given to them elapses, we shall seal off the site," he warned.

Mr Sserwanga said the district is financially constrained to pay rent for the affected staff.

However, some medical workers have found accommodation very far from their work station which may again lead to poor service delivery as they would not be in time to attend to emergency cases.

Situation at the hospital

Broken and rusted beds, stained mattresses and a caving ceiling is what welcome you as you enter the hospital main wards.

Officials at the hospital say the water system broke down years ago, forcing them to close the toilets.

The hospital has 100 beds but according to statistics, it handles about 150 cases every day.

It also serves patients from neighbouring districts of Buikwe, Luweero, Kamuli, Nakasongola, Buikwe, Apac and Mukono.

briefly

Clerics accuse govt

Minister usa