

Why sanity must prevail in Uganda's healthcare sector

As you try to digest the myriad of communications for and against the ongoing doctors' strike, I oblige you to appreciate that a functioning healthcare system is good for every Ugandan and, therefore, do not be deceived by mere rhetoric. Rather, let us all aspire for the best healthcare possible for all citizens.

I want to remind readers that up to mid '70s, Uganda had a fairly advanced and well-functioning health system in place in Eastern and Central Africa. However, this unfortunately became eroded and has since become so dysfunctional that we are now a laughing stalk of even our young neighbours.

While the country superintends over one of the most sick (sic) healthcare systems, we still derive some pride in the fact that Uganda has one of the best medical schools in the world, producing highly sought-after medics. This represents a dichotomy of missed opportunities and reflects badly on our inability as a national to seize and follow strategic directions.

I also wish for all of us to exercise caution as we debate for or against the medics' strike. In all probability,



nobody, including the mighty, will thrive in a malfunctioning healthcare system. Sadly, we have lost our dear ones because of preventable and sometimes avoidable deaths.

So a sober reflection on the next course of healthcare in Uganda is what we should be asking for now. If sanity prevails over sentiment, the country stands a huge chance of rapid socio-economic transformation anchored in a healthy population that predates a healthy nation and the attendant cascade of benefits.

Uganda must move to harness its geographical advantage in the region so that we should be talking of medical tourism bringing lots of revenue

to our country. And it is not too late. We can seize this opportunity to turn the bend and alas! We shall reclaim our position as regional leaders in healthcare. Already, there has been educational tourism in the health training institutions despite their unsatisfactory standards, implying an improvement in these areas will come with exponential revenue to the country.

Revolutions do not emerge from the blue, but as a consequence of many factors, which the medics know best. A repression of such ideas would be suicidal and anti-development. Therefore, all efforts should be geared towards achieving a collective way forward. It is also worth noting that healthcare relies a lot on bringing the best ideas together to harness best practices which are complemented by technology.

A monopolistic approach of ideas would lead to the crushing of the proverbial train and you can literally see nobody wants to crush while seeing. So if I were government, I would dialogue with healthcare professionals.

Dr Julius K Kuule,
jkkuule2000@yahoo.com