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Health workers monitoring system checks absenteeism in Iganga

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IGANGA. Iganga District has registered a 40 per cent decrease in the health workers' absenteeism from 50 per cent in 2014.

The 10 per cent reduction is attributed to the biometric monitoring machines that were introduced by the government in district health facilities in 2014 to curb absenteeism of workers in public and private not for profit health facilities across the country.

The project implemented by Ministry of Health in partnership with IntraHealth International, under the Usaid funded Strengthening Human Resource for Health (SHRH) is yet to analyse its impact in the rest of the districts.

Dr David Muwanguzi, Iganga District health officer, said after installing the monitoring machines, they decide to issue payments to employees for only days worked, which he said, has motivated health workers and reduced absenteeism at work with an overall goal of having a performing work force.

"At least 20 health workers have so far gone without pay and several others have had their names scrapped from the government payroll because they are either away attending to their private businesses or absent without approval," Dr Muwanguzi said.

In total, Iganga District has 66 health facilities, 16 which are private not for profit, 23 health centre IVs, 14 health centre IIIs, 12 health centre IIs and one general hospital.

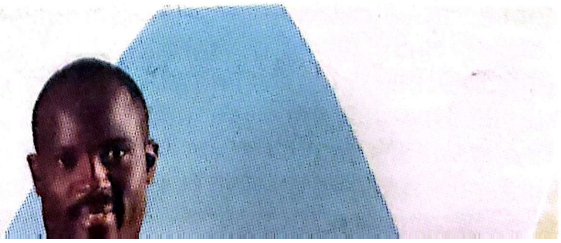
Dr James Wako, the director of Iganga Hospital, said before the introduction of the system, some of their staff had a tendency of coming in the morning, sign in and leave, then return in the evening to sign out.

"This was the case until the introduction of the system where everyone is supposed to login and also record the days they have attended work. With the introduction of this system, many workers were affected on the payroll as they got little money, which made them to become responsible and active at work," Dr Wako said.

As an organisation, Mr Vincent Oketcho, chief of party IntraHealth, said the organisation is helping to enhance the implementation of government plans.

"Our target is to reduce absenteeism in the country by 50 per cent by 2019," he said.

According to Ministry of Health, when the programme started in 2014, it found out that 52 per cent of health workers in public sector were not showing up or came to work but left early.



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