

Health workers share wards with patients



On duty. A health worker opens a room for patients at Ngomba Health Centre II recently. PHOTO BY PEREZ RUMANZI.

Renting. A survey done by this newspaper indicates that many health workers live outside their duty stations.

BY MONITOR TEAM
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WESTERN UGANDA. Many health workers deployed in rural health centres in Ntungamo, Mbarara, Sheema, Kabale, and other districts lack accommodation at their work stations.

A survey done by *Daily Monitor* indicates that many health workers live outside their duty stations. Many of those who stay at their work stations have to improvise.

In Ntungamo District, only 12 per cent of the health workers are accommodated at their work stations, according to district health officer, Dr Richard Bakamuturaki.

Health workers at Rubaare health centre IV and Rugarama, Kayonza, Ruhaama, Rweikiniro and Kitondo health centre IIIs,

sleep in patients' wards.

Health workers at Rwashamaire, Bwongyera and Kitwe health centres share small rooms.

At Ngoma Health Centre III, health workers have turned a kitchen for a sub-county employee into a house.

Ms Prescudia Tumuhimbise, an enrolled nurse at Rweikiniro Health Centre III, said they sleep in a room formerly used as Anti-Retroviral Therapy clinic. Apart from the officer-in-charge of the health centre, the rest, 14 workers, rent accommodation outside the health centre.

"Lack of accommodation has affected service delivery, causing absenteeism, late reporting to duty, early closure of health centres and sometimes theft of equipment," Dr Bakamuturaki said.

The officer-in-charge of Rubaare Health Centre IV, Dr Innocent Twesiime, said for provision of health services to improve, a lot needs to be done

about staff welfare.

"Some health workers have been refusing to be transferred to some places due to lack of staff houses," Dr Twesiime said.

A recent survey on the state of health facilities in Ntungamo District done by the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) under Advocacy for Better Health programme, found that welfare of health workers is poor, which translates into poor service delivery.

"For long, we have blamed health workers for not doing their work but it's high time the stakeholders worked on their accommodation. You can't expect proper services at a health centre where a worker travels for more than 8km every day. What if there is an emergency... how can this health worker help?" Mr Edison Baherezibwa, the manager Advocacy for Better Health at URCS, said.

Ntungamo Woman MP Beatrice Rwakimari said health workers' welfare needs immediate attention.

Sheema District

In Sheema District the situation is not any different.

Dr Gelvase Twine, the officer in-charge of Shuuku Health Centre IV, shares a house with four other health workers, including a female midwife, who sleeps in the garage.

Other health workers sleep in the Outpatient Department room and fold their beddings in the morning before operations begin.

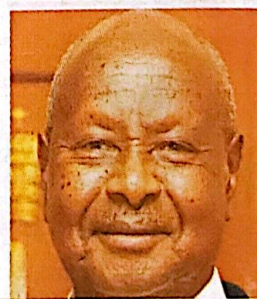
The Sheema District health officer, Dr Johnson Kabwaishe, said they have advised health workers across the district to share the available housing facilities.

Kabale District chairperson, Mr Patrick Besigye Keihwa, said government should reinstate Primary Health Care (PHC) funds it withdrew three years ago and the money be used in the construction of staff houses, wards, placenta pits and latrines.

Dr Cranmer Mugisha, the officer-in-charge of Bwizibwera Health Centre IV, said 18 out of the 34 workers at the facility rent at the nearby town.

Reported by Perez Rumanzi, Felix Ainebyoona, Alfred Tumushabe, Robert Muhereza & Fred Anyine.

PRESIDENT AWARE



President Museveni acknowledges that health workers lack accommodation. He said at the inaugural cabinet meeting at State House in Entebbe on June 23 last year that that government would devise means of providing houses.

"In order to consolidate service delivery in education and health care, we must revive the policy of institutional houses for teachers and health workers. Either by using self-help (hydra-form machines) or any other method, the issue of houses for health workers and teachers must be resolved," he said.

injures woman

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RDC advises residents

BUNDIBUGYO: Bundibugyo Resident District Commissioner Godfrey Mbetegyerize, has asked residents of Rwenzori sub-region to reconcile to end conflicts in the region. He said most conflicts in the region

Works secretary censured

KASESE: Kasese District Council has censured Mr Patrick Muthanaba, the secretary for works and technical services for alleged incompetence and abuse of office, among others. The

Gambling worry leaders

IBANDA: The chairperson of Bufunda Division in Ibanda Municipality, Mr Benon Keimusa, has expressed worry over the increasing gambling activities in the area. Speaking to *Daily Monitor* in an