

Lack of interpreters hindering health services

JINJA

By Jackie Nambogga

Health workers have expressed concern over the Government's failure to recruit sign language interpreters at hospitals to effectively handle people with hearing and speech impairment.

Juliet Nampala, a midwife at Njeru Health Centre III in Njeru municipality, Buikwe district, said such challenges affects the dumb and deaf when it comes to medical attention. Nampala narrated how she received a dumb mother and how they both encountered difficulties with communication.

"After examining her, I realised that she was anaemic and had other infections, which needed me to explain to her the type of food she needed to eat to restore blood in the body, but I was not able to communicate with her," she said.

Nampala went with the mother to her home, where she met a relative and explained what they needed to do.

On the second visit, Nampala referred her to the Jinja Regional Referral Hospital, where she thought they had officers in sign language. Instead, Jinja Hospital also did not have.

According to Jessica Namugoya, a senior



Nsungu with three of her four children at her home in Nakanyonyi village

nursing officer at the Jinja Regional Referral Hospital, they depend on a volunteer who interprets for them.

It is also for these challenges that the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga has asked the Health Service Commission to consider recruiting health workers with skills in sign language to bridge the gap.

Kadaga's directive follows an outcry by Christine Nsugu, who petitioned her over the multiple challenges people with disabilities encounter while seeking health services. She said dumb people lack privacy on health matters, yet some information needs to remain between a health worker and patients.