

The fire also destroyed offices, rooms for computers and records at the Busia health unit.

BY DAVID AWORI

An assortment of essential drugs and medical equipment has been destroyed in a fire outbreak at Bulumbi Health Centre III in Busia District.

The fire, which broke out at around 8am last Wednesday in a drug store, is said to have been caused by an electrical short circuit.

Ms Jessica Amuge, the officer-in-charge of Fire and Rescue Services, said: "We received a distress call at about 9am that one of the buildings at the health facility was on fire. We responded immediately and found the drug store and records room burning," Ms Amuge told *Daily Monitor*.

She said five rooms, including a medical store, computer room, records room, facility offices, and a resting room for medical workers, were destroyed.

Mr John Ouma, the Bubolwa A Village Local Council chairman where the facility is located, said he received information about the fire shortly after 8am.

Mr Ouma said he was tending his garden when one of his neighbours alerted him about a fire at the health facility.

He said he quickly rushed to the scene to assist in putting out the fire using locally available fire extinguishers.

"We tried using extinguishers but the flames were too big and had already en-

Health centre loses drugs in store fire



A resident and health worker inspect the burnt drug store at Bulumbi Health Centre III last Wednesday. PHOTO/DAVID AWORI

gulfed all five rooms, making it difficult to put them out," Mr Ouma said.

He added that the fire was prevented from spreading to the entire building after officers from the Police Fire and Rescue Services came to the rescue.

Mr Lamu Wandera, the officer-in-charge at the facility, said the fire had completely gutted the drug store, destroying all medicines, as well as the computer room, medical equipment room, and records department.

"As a facility, we have nothing left because all the drugs have been burnt. The computers and medical records have also been destroyed," Mr Wandera said.

He said the facility's operations had

been severely affected, adding that they are unable to treat patients because all drugs and essential equipment were destroyed in the fire.

He said they are now referring patients to health facilities in Buwembe, Busitema, and Busia Health Centre IV.

Pain point.

I have been advised to seek treatment at a private facility or a government health centre, but I don't have money for transport or treatment,"

- Lydia Penzi, a patient

"What we urgently need are drugs so that we can resume providing services as we wait for the store to be reconstructed and computers to be installed," Mr Wandera said.

Mr Raymond Owino, who was at the facility following the fire incident, said the burning of the drug store has made it difficult for residents in the area to access medical services.

"Many patients will be forced to travel at least seven kilometres to access government health facilities, which may be difficult for expectant mothers and children," Mr Owino said.

Ms Lydia Penzi, who had been receiving malaria treatment at the facility and was due to complete her dose, said she had been advised to seek services elsewhere.

"I have been advised to seek treatment at a private facility or a government health centre, but I don't have money for transport or treatment," Ms Penzi said.

Chorish M... City Hall works kick off