

Concern. The drafter of the Bill says patients are detained for long periods in health facilities and subjected to abuse over non payment of bills.

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KAMPALA. Parliament yesterday authorised Busiki legislator Paul Akamba to draft a Bill that seeks to prohibit health service providers from detaining patients over nonpayment of medical bills.

Justifying his request for leave of the House to enable him draft the Bill titled; The Patient's Rights and Responsibilities Bill, 2017, Mr Akamba said detaining patients was rampant, adding that something needed to be done urgently to help Ugandans.

"In some instances, patients are detained for long periods in health facilities and subjected to abuse, including denial of vital services, by health workers," Mr Akamba said.

"This is not only psychologically distressing but potentially

New Bill to stop hospitals from detaining patients

economically disastrous and can result in some of the poorest people sliding further into poverty," he added.

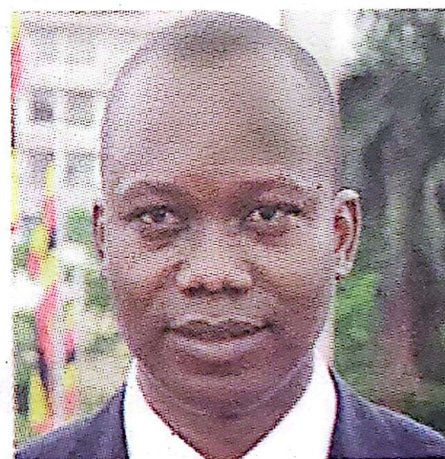
Mr Akamba said detaining patients is an infringement on their human rights.

However, the State Minister for Health, Ms Sarah Opendi, opposed the motion, saying it will have financial implications.

Ms Opendi said there is a Patients' Charter which addresses Mr Akamba's concerns.

She said the National Health Insurance Bill will address the issue of treating patients.

"Although [the Health Insurance Bill] has not come, the final draft



Drafter. MP Paul Akamba

is due to be presented before the Cabinet," Ms Opendi said.

However, Mr Akamba said the

Patients Charter of 2009, which should protect patients, is not legally binding and therefore, not enforceable.

He said the Bill will also spell out the responsibilities of patients and the relationship between the patients and the healthcare givers.

The State minister for Planning, Mr David Bahati, disagreed with his colleague, saying until Mr Akamba has drafted the Bill, it will not be possible to say what impact it will have on the Consolidated Fund.

The Clerk to Parliament now has to facilitate the publication of the Bill in readiness for its First, Second and Third Readings.