



NATIONAL MEDICAL STORES

WORLD PHARMACY DAY



NMS congratulates all the pharmacists in the country on their day celebrated on 25 September 2017.
 Mr. Moses Kamabale the General Manager is grateful to all the pharmacists in the country for ensuring rational use of medicine and their availability in these facilities to make it easy for NMS to fulfill its mandate.

Mr. Moses Kamabale - NMS General Manager

'NMS committed to effective and timely delivery of drugs'

National Medical Stores (NMS) is mandated to procure, store and distribute essential medicines and medical supplies to all public health facilities in the country. Mr. Moses Kamabale, the NMS General Manager, speaks to Daily Monitor's Derrick Wandera about the company's latest innovations, challenges and achievements.

Give a brief background of National Medical Stores and its mandate. NMS was established by an Act of Parliament in 1993. It is mandated to procure, store and distribute essential medicines, vaccines and medical supplies to all public health facilities in the country. NMS has a modern 7200sqm warehouse in Entebbe which is used for the orderly receipt, storage and packing of supplies destined to GOU Health facilities.

In the recent past, there have been consistent complaints that there are no drugs in public hospitals, a blame that has partly been put on NMS. What is your view on this?

We do not know why some of these hospitals don't have medicine. It also depends on which facilities are complaining; there are hospitals that are not supposed to get medicine from NMS. Thereafter, they come out and say they do not have medicine. NMS has enough stock of medicines and distributes to all government hospitals and health centers on a routine basis against the orders made to us by health facilities.

What measures has NMS undertaken to ensure effective and timely delivery of drugs?

We have introduced the SMS delivery system. Through a message, we inform different stakeholders indicating that NMS has dispatched a consignment of medicines on a particular date. After delivery, the recipients have to check the items and then we receive a message confirming receipt of the medicines.

This initiative has helped to combat complaints from different health centres of failure to receive the medicine. With this system, we can now track all the medicines from the time it leaves until it reaches its destination.

There are incidents of government drugs ending up in private clinics and hospitals. What is NMS doing to stop the theft of government drugs?

NMS leadership has come up with embossment of all medicine. All medicines and medical supplies are now embossed with a seal "UG NOT FOR SALE".

NMS has also come up with the "LAST MILE DELIVERY SYSTEM" for medicines and other medical supplies to ensure that medical supplies reach the END USER at all government health facilities across the country safe and on time.

In what ways is NMS ensuring that it receives fast feedback about their services from public health facilities and the general public?

We have adopted NMS Smart Care, a set of online tools (including mobile APPS - NMS SMART CARE APP and NMS LMD APP in Google Play Store) that enable public health facilities and the general public to give and receive feedback on the medicine and medical supplies delivered by NMS in real time.

NMS Smart Care offers different channels through which public health facilities and the general public are able to send feedback to NMS based on their convenience. NMS Smart Care further gives NMS visibility on deliveries made in real time, when the delivery was made, who received the supplies and if there are any issues related to the delivery. Below are the channels that can be used to access NMS Smart Care.

NMS delivers medicine up to a facility's doorstep. We deliver medicine to all health facilities from RRHs, general hospitals, HCIVs, HCIII's and HCII's through a system called Last Mile Delivery.

How does NMS Smart Care work?

Every request is received, assigned a unique ticket number which you can use to track the progress and responses on that particular request anywhere online. For your reference NMS Smart Care provides complete archives and history of all your support requests. A valid email address is required to submit a ticket. To send us feedback or complaint, click on 'Open a New Ticket'

You can also send us your request or feedback over the phone. Go to your messages, type the word FEEDBACK, leave a space, type your message and send it to 6090.

If your feedback is in regard to a particular order number, type the order number, leave a space, type your message and send to 6090. The system



Medicine in transit amid poor road network

will receive the message sent over the phone and keep you updated on the progress of the feedback/complaint through SMS.

Who are some of the NMS partners in the transportation and delivery of medicine?

NMS contracts private transporters to deliver the medicines from district headquarters to individual lower health facilities. The in-charges of lower health facilities receive the cartons containing medicines accompanied by delivery notes specifying medicines in each carton. The in-charges and another member of the community or security organization then open the cartons to confirm that medicines received are exactly what is indicated on delivery notes and are in good condition then proceed to sign and stamp the delivery notes.

What key achievements has NMS registered so far?

We have created and maintained a vigorous high performance driven culture among staff; NMS is now an admirable corporation that prides itself for its contribution to the health sector in Uganda. We have aligned the human

resource manual with the best human resource practices and employment laws of Uganda. We have also attracted and retained the best employees that are committed to move the corporation to greater heights and introduced a staff medical insurance cover for staff, their spouses and four dependents. We have also ensured transparent recruitment of staff on merit and created and operationalized 9 regional customer care offices in order to create NMS visibility in the whole country.

What are some of the challenges that you face in NMS?

Our main challenge is the limited space of operation. We have very small space for expansion and yet there is a growing population. Our budget is also still insufficient and sometimes we face challenges of the poor road network during transportation of goods.

The other challenge is the misuse of drugs where some government officials and vehicles are always seen transporting medicine out of the country. Besides, many Ugandans have not yet embraced disease prevention measures; they do not sleep in mosquito nets, drink non-boiled water and eat with unwashed hands has.

NMS Preventive Health message

In Uganda, 75 per cent of the diseases that we take to health facilities are preventable. This means that out of every 100 patients that come to our health facilities, 75 of us would not be there if we took responsibility for our health and did the following:

1. Slept under an insecticide treated mosquito net every day
2. Took our children for immunisation and ensure that they complete all the doses and for all the immunisable diseases.
3. Always used helmets when on motor cycles and safety belts when travelling in motor vehicles.
4. Washed hands with water and soap after every visit to the toilet/latrines and before eating food.
5. Ensured that there is a latrine for every household.
6. Drunk boiled clean water.
7. Brushed/cleaned our teeth after every meal.
8. Promoted peaceful co-existence and reduced crime that affects health of the population as assaults, rape, defilement and accidents.
9. Ensured healthy eating, regular exercise and avoided drugs and Tobacco use.
10. Had regular check-ups and screening for detection of diseases like Diabetes, High Blood Pressure and Cancers from qualified Health personnel.
11. Used family planning method of our choice.

Then, for the 25 people out of 100 who have done all the above but still need treatment, the Hospital beds, health workers and medicine would be sufficient for them.



New modernised and well equipped NMS stores

What advice would you give to the users of medicine?

I would emphasize prevention before cure. It's better for one to keep away from a disease other than wait for medication because every medicine has a side effect. So for one to avoid some of the side effects, you better prevent the disease. Statistics indicate that 75 per cent of patients that show up in hospitals shouldn't have been there in the first place.

What is your final word?

I urge people to embrace preventive measures to prevent diseases that have been disturbing the country for a while now. I thank the Ministry of Health because through them, government has bought land and we shall be growing bigger and expanding soon.

To let us know how better NMS can be of service to you, please contact us on Toll free: 0800 122221 (UTL), 0800 200015 (MTN), Tel: +256 414 320089 / 320507
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