

Govt to dismiss medics over low output, absenteeism



Stakeholders at the launch of the Ministry of Health Client Charter and Service Delivery Standards (2025-2030) at Ministry of Health headquarters, yesterday. PHOTO/MOH

The Ministry of Health launched the Health Service Delivery Standards with an aim to elevate service delivery.

BY TONNY ABET

The government is set to intensify efforts to dismiss medical personnel found guilty of absenteeism and low productivity, as part of a broader push to enforce accountability in public health facilities.

This was announced during the launch of the Health Service Delivery Standards (SDG) and Client Charter for 2025-2030 at the Ministry of Health headquarters yesterday.

The initiative aims to elevate health-care quality, boost transparency and responsiveness, and centre citizens in service delivery.

Dr Diana Atwine, the ministry's permanent secretary, emphasised a shift from mere discussion to decisive action against persistent absenteeism, describing it as a "cancer" that must be eradicated with zero tolerance.

She highlighted that the government invests heavily in recruitment and salaries, yet many health workers are absent from their stations.

"We have been talking about absenteeism. The has come to act," Dr Atwine stated.

She noted constraints in supervision, particularly in facilities under local government, calling for a whole-of-government approach.

Dr Atwine revealed that names of medical personnel recommended for dismissal have already been received.

NEW SERVICE PLAN

The Health Service Delivery Standards (SDG) will underpin institutional strategies, budgets, performance plans, and monitoring systems, while introducing client satisfaction as a key performance indicator.

"We have 'presenteeism' without output. I am calling upon our supervisors to hold people accountable. We must act... Let us dismiss the bad apples in our midst," she added.

The new standards and charter will underpin institutional strategies, budgets, performance plans, and monitoring systems, while introducing client satisfaction as a key performance indicator.

The document also details patients' rights and obligations and provide ave-

nues for getting feedback from patients to improve service delivery.

Deputy Head of Public Service Jane Kyarisiima Mwesiga acknowledged ongoing achievements but stressed persistent gaps like long waiting times and quality issues, driven partly by weak performance management, poor supervision, absenteeism, and negative attitudes among some workers.

"The client charter and service delivery standards are significant in addressing these issues because they reflect the ministry's commitment to improving accountability, transparency and responsiveness in service delivery," she said.

According to details from the Ministry, the SDG document will also serve as a basis for formulating individual employee performance plans, and systems for monitoring and evaluating health interventions.

Highlighting findings in the yet to be released report on health service delivery, Ms Kyarisiima, said: "The very first is the challenge is weak performance management and supervision. It contributes to absenteeism, dual employment, poor work ethics and negative attitudes among some health workers," she said.

Progress

According to Dr Atwine, it is not all gloomy as there are still so many health workers who are doing their best to ensure health indicators improve despite some "bad apples."

"Ministry of Health has made many strides. For example, we have maintained our commitment to ensure that our children do not die of preventable diseases. We have also maintained and ensured that above 90 percent of our children in the country are immunised," she added.

She also highlighted improvement in life expectancy to 68 years and reduction in maternal deaths.

"Ministry of Health takes pride in ensuring that in the last five years, we have significantly reduced maternal mortality. I believe that we are champions in maternal mortality reduction in the region," she added.