

ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS, GHANA (AHSAG)



43RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS, GHANA (AHSAG)

Ho, Volta Region

5th – 8th November, 2019

Communiqué

PREAMBLE

We, the Association of Health Service Administrators, Ghana (AHSAG), met in Ho, Volta Region from 5th – 8th November, 2019 on the occasion of our 43rd Annual General Meeting and Continuing Professional Education (CPE) programme. And having deliberated extensively on the conference theme “**Effective Contract Management in the Public Sector – The Role of the Health Service Administrator**” and related matters, we present below our comments and decisions for the consideration of Government and Stakeholders.

Effective Contract Management in Health Facilities

AHSAG recognises the critical role that private contractors and suppliers play in the delivery of public goods and services including quality and equitable healthcare. At the institutional level, there is the growing need to outsource certain services through service contracts and equipment placement agreements. We also recognise that weaknesses exist in managing contracts and agreements in the health sector generally and in Health Facilities in particular.

As Managers of Health Facilities, we are committed to the judicious use of public funds through effective contract management to achieve value for money. We agree to further improve our knowledge and skills in contract management and negotiations to effectively monitor contracts in Health Facilities within the framework of public private partnership (PPP) to improve patient care.

To this end, we urge the Ministry of Health and its Agencies to actively engage key stakeholders in health service delivery at every stage of planning and execution of national health programmes and projects.

Appointment of Health Service Administrators

Given the central role that management plays in every organisation including Health Facilities, AHSAG is deeply concerned about the delay in the appointment of qualified Health Service Administrators to various public Health Facilities across the country. We underscore the importance of having trained professionals with the requisite managerial capacities to ensure the effective and efficient management of health resources to deliver quality health care as envisaged in Section 30 of the Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospitals Act, 1996 (Act 525). We, therefore, urge the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service to give sufficient priority to the appointment of Health Service Administrators and other support service staff such as Health Estate Managers and Clinical Engineers in their annual recruitment plans.

Management Development Programmes for Health Service Administrators

Health Service Administrators practice in a very dynamic healthcare environment driven by technology. Recognising the impact of technological advances in the delivery and management of health services in Ghana, we call on the Ministry of Health to re-introduce overseas fellowship and exchange programmes for Health Service Administrators to improve their skills and knowledge to keep pace with emerging health care technology and interventions in health service delivery.

Health Infrastructure

As Ghana's population grows, we recognise the importance of meeting the rising health needs to accelerate socio-economic growth and development. The provision of adequate health infrastructure, therefore, cannot be overemphasised in our quest to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030. Having tracked the development of health infrastructure with keen interest, AHSAG commends Government for the completion and commissioning of some key health facilities during the year. This is by no means a major step towards the attainment of UHC in Ghana.

We note in particular the introduction of the Just-In-Time Drone Delivery of life-saving health commodities such as blood and blood components to complement the existing distribution channels to service delivery points. We appreciate the public interest and the huge investment made by Government in this endeavour and hereby call on Managers and Directors charged with the responsibility to establish the Distribution Centres to do so with high sense of stewardship to the good people of Ghana. It must be emphasised that no excuses for failure would be tolerated by the public.

We, however, wish to draw Government's attention to the many other uncompleted health projects scattered across the country whose completion must equally be prioritised to expand health service delivery to underserved communities while at the same time absorbing the increased number of unemployed health professionals including Health Service Administrators.

Expansion of Health Facilities in Newly Created Regions

AHSAG welcomes the creation of six (6) additional administrative regions to deepen the decentralisation agenda and bring development closer to the people. We commend Government and Ghanaians in conducting and participating in a successful referendum in this regard. AHSAG is committed to the establishment of effective and efficient administrative systems at the newly created Regional Health Directorates to support the transformation of health service delivery underway in the new regions. To this end, we urge Government to prioritise the expansion of health facilities and related infrastructure in the new regions such as Regional Health Directorates, Regional Medical Stores, Regional Referral Hospitals, and Staff Housing Units for effective health service delivery in the respective regions.

Patient-Centered Care in Health Facilities

AHSAG remains deeply concerned about reports of poor attitudes by some health workers and the general lack of education on the Patient's Charter. We recognise the need to improve health education and promotion among the public to enable patients make informed decisions and participate in their own health care.

As we pursue UHC, we urge Health Policy Makers, Health Professionals and Health Facility Managers to do so with renewed focus on Patient-Centered Care (PCC) taking into consideration client's preferences, wants and needs. The Ministry of Health and its Agencies should take

immediate steps to sensitise the general public, health workers and other stakeholders on the Patient's Charter to improve quality of health service delivery in Ghana. We also call on Health Facility Managers to enforce the approved Codes of Conduct for health workers in line with the established disciplinary procedures without fear or favour.

Health Sector Reforms

AHSAG reaffirms its full support for the health sector decentralisation process being pursued by Government within the framework of the National Decentralisation Policy and Action Plan. This will occasion a major reform in the health sector since the mid-1990s when the Ministry of Health was restructured leading to the separation of policy formulation from implementation by service delivery and regulatory agencies.

A robust sector-wide health management information system is essential for planning and implementation of health programmes that are responsive to the health needs of the people of Ghana. However, weak coordination of policy actions in the deployment of ICT in the health sector has resulted in disparate health management information systems installed in the various Health Agencies. We, therefore, call on the Ministry of Health to provide decisive leadership to integrate the varied information systems at the various Health Agencies into a central data repository through a common interoperability platform.

NHIA Claims Payment to Health Facilities

AHSAG renews its support for a thriving National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) which is critical to achieving UHC in Ghana. We note in particular the steps being taken by Government to improve the sustainability of the NHIS. We, however, remain concerned about the persistent delays in the payment of claims to Health Service Providers by the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) in spite of repeated appeals to expedite claims payment. Prolonged delays in payment of NHIS claims impact negatively on sustainable delivery of cost-effective universal health care by service providers.

SIGNED:
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PRESIDENT, AHSAG

SIGNED:
BERNARD FIIFI POLLEY
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