



ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS, GHANA (AHSAG)

Miklin Hotel, Kumasi

26th – 29th October, 2021

Communiqué

PREAMBLE

We, the Association of Health Service Administrators, Ghana (AHSAG) met in Kumasi, Ashanti Region from 26th – 29th October, 2021 for our 44th Annual General Meeting and Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Programme. We met at a time when the global economy is recovering from the social, economic and supply chain disruptions occasioned by the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Against this background, we deliberated extensively on the Conference theme “**Effective Management of Support Services during Pandemics: The Role of the Health Service Administrator**” and related matters of health service delivery in Ghana as follows:

Sustaining the Recovery from COVID-19

We acknowledge the significant role of Government, particularly the Ministry of Health and its agencies as well as all other stakeholders including corporate organizations in containing the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ghana. Our collective efforts underpinned by the rollout of vaccines have culminated in a sustained recovery from the raging pandemic. However, the slow pace of vaccination due to inadequate access to vaccines under the COVAX Facility is deeply worrying.

We remain committed to Ghana COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (EPRP) being implemented by the Ministry of Health and its agencies as well as other Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). We urge the implementing partners to seize the opportunity to strengthen national systems for addressing public health emergencies in Ghana. We further urge the general public to adhere to the basic protocols of prevention of the pandemic to forestall its resurgence and also take up the vaccines being administered to achieve the required herd immunity against the pandemic.

We commit to promote good sanitation and coordinate efforts to ensure the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) in health facilities. We therefore encourage health workers to strictly comply with the laid down protocols for infection prevention and control in health facilities. It is in this spirit that AHSAG constructed and handed over a mechanized borehole with ancillary facilities to the Atwima-Akropong Polyclinic in the Ashanti Region to address the perennial water shortage at the facility as part of activities of the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Association. We call on other Professional Associations to emulate this kind gesture to bring relief to health facilities especially in deprived communities.

Effective Deployment of Human Resource for Health

The effective mobilization and deployment of health personnel across the various disciplines is key to a well-functioning emergency response system. We note, however, the significant gaps in the numbers, knowledge and skill of certain categories of health workers revealed by the outbreak of COVID-19. We commit to help bridge the knowledge and skills gaps, as a matter of priority, by exploring innovative solutions for capacity building in health facilities.

Recognizing the aggravation of the stressful conditions under which health workers carry out their duties in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge Government to institute a sustainable incentive and rewards scheme to boost the morale and also ensure equitable distribution of health workers to deliver quality healthcare across the country.

Effective Transport Management

Transport is crucial to effective health service delivery as it enables the movement of essential medical supplies, referral of patients between facilities, provision of outreach specialist services, and supervision of health personnel. We recognize the challenges in transport and fleet management in the health sector particularly inadequate and aged fleet, rising number of temporary (or non-mechanized) drivers, and poorly trained drivers without basic knowledge in health services. While we welcome the on-going efforts by the Ministry of Health to provide vehicles to health facilities and agencies through a hire purchase scheme, we call for a more strategic approach for resilient transport operations across the sector including the strengthening of vehicle maintenance programmes and improving the competencies of transport managers and drivers.

We reiterate our continued commitment to the prudent management of transport in health facilities and agencies within the context of approved transport policies and guidelines for control and use of transport resources.

Logistics Management

The availability of the right quantity and quality of medical and non-medical supplies and consumables is a key driver of quality healthcare. We note in particular the introduction and roll out of the Ghana Integrated Logistics Management Information System (GhiLMIS) in addressing inefficiencies in the supply chain system of health commodities. We further note with commendation the sterling leadership of government in mobilizing the required logistics in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This did not only help in preventing the rapid spread of infections but also facilitated the treatment of severely ill COVID-19 patients in designated Treatment Centres. However, some key structural and implementation challenges emerged in the acquisition, storage, and distribution of the COVID-19 commodities. These led to the overstocking of certain supplies and consumables at some medical stores while others had shortages of the items.

We will continue to support efforts aimed at improving the supply chain of health commodities to enhance quality health service delivery at all levels of the health system in Ghana. We urge the Ministry of Health and its agencies to ensure that all cadres of health personnel with supervisory roles over logistics management are appropriately trained in the operations of the GhiLIMS for effective supervision and accountability.

Establishment of Institute of Health Administration and Management (IHAM – Ghana)

Recognizing the need for an accredited continuing professional education for Health Service Administrators in line with global standards, AHSAG unveiled the establishment of the Institute of Health Administration and Management (IHAM) during the 44th Annual General Meeting and Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Programme. IHAM will promote knowledge sharing by providing practical oriented training in health management and policy for health service managers and leaders. We commit to provide the needed support for the smooth take off of the Institute and look forward to progress in its operations in the ensuing years.

Conditions of Service for Health Workers

Recent development on the labour front in the health sector regarding the prolonged delay in revision and implementation of the Conditions of Service (CoS) for the Health Services Workers Union (HSWU) was quite worrying given the fact that other Unions in the sector had had their CoS reviewed and implemented by government. This, in the view of the Association, is discriminatory and constitutes unfair labour practice with negative consequences on the morale and performance of the affected staff.

We urge government to provide equal treatment to all health workers in relation to issues of their conditions of service. We further call on government to commit to early commencement of negotiations with labour unions in the health sector when a review of their conditions of service become due in order to forestall industrial disharmony in the sector.

Independent Arbitration of NHIS Claims

AHSAG reiterates the strategic importance of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in facilitating access to healthcare for better health outcomes and improved productivity. We remain concerned about the apparent conflict of interest and lack of transparency in the handling of claim disputes arising between health service providers and the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) by the latter. The absence of a neutral arbiter, the NHIA acts as a referee and a player in such matters. We call on the Ministry of Health to establish a statutory body to adjudicate NHIS claim disputes as a matter of priority for fairness to prevail.

Funding of Budget Management Centres

Recognizing that Internally Generated Funds (IGF) have become critical to the financing of operations of Budget Management Centres (BMCs) in the health sector, we welcome the new general IGF guidelines developed by the Ghana Health Service. We commit to support the effective implementation of the guidelines and other sound financial measures in health facilities to sustain and improve quality of care. We are, however, mindful of the fact that Regional and District Health Directorates do not generate funds internally in the discharge of their administrative and supervisory functions. We strongly urge Government to consider the allocation of sufficient funding to the health directorates to address their perennial funding challenges.

The LGBTQ+ Debate

We take note of the high interest shown by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), political actors and the general public in the LGBTQ+ debate following the introduction of the Promotion of Proper Human and Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill in Parliament. We note in particular the free, open and civil manner in which proponents and opponents of the Bill express their views publicly. We urge Parliament to pass a legislation that will not only reflect who we are as Ghanaians but one that will also mark the strongest indication that as a sovereign nation we are committed to protecting and advancing our socio-cultural values within the context of contemporary norms and practices without endangering the health of Ghanaians.

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