

ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS, GHANA (AHSAG)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9TH FEBRUARY, 2020

PRESS RELEASE AT THE END OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS, GHANA (AHSAG) HELD AT DODOWA, GREATER ACCRA REGION ON 7TH FEBRUARY, 2020

PREAMBLE

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Association of Health Service Administrators, Ghana (AHSAG), met at the AHSAG Secretariat, Dodowa, Greater Accra Region on 7th February, 2020. And having deliberated extensively on national health issues and other related matters, we present below our comments and decisions for the consideration of Government and Stakeholders.

1. Provision of One Ambulance Per Constituency

The National Executive Committee (NEC) commends government for the injection of 307 ambulances into the health system to strengthen the existing emergency response service in the health sector.

NEC however notes that this is not the first time our health service has had ambulances provided by government. From previous experiences, the initiative was not sustained because of the manner we managed the ambulances. To ensure continuous sustainability of ambulance services across the country, NEC proposes the following to government for consideration and implementation:

- a) The various Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) should ensure the availability of functional Ambulance Stations in their respective MMDAs. The Ambulance Stations should be well resourced and equipped to be able to respond to emergencies immediately calls are received. The MMDAs should also take good care of the operators of the Ambulance Stations to boost their morale in managing those Ambulance Stations.
- b) Emergency Medicine Technicians (EMTs) who are also drivers of these ambulances should drive these vehicles cautiously. We acknowledge the fact that these EMTs have received the requisite trainings in emergency response and are not ordinary drivers. We expect that they will at all times bring to bear the requisite training they have received in the provision of these emergency services.
- c) The National Ambulance Service (NAS) should also ensure that the ambulances are regularly maintained in order to prevent them from breaking down. In times past, the challenges with these ambulances had been the fact that we neglect their routine Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) schedules. We therefore find the ambulances breaking down in no time. Managers of these ambulances should note that Ghanaians will not tolerate any neglect of maintenance which will result in breakdown of these ambulances within a short period.
- d) The National Ambulance Service should also sensitize the people in the community concerning the specific use of ambulances. Some community members should not misconstrue the ambulances for Hearse and begin making requests for the ambulances to be used in conveying their dead bodies in caskets. We take this opportunity to state that an ambulance is a medically equipped vehicle purposely for transporting patients to treatment centers or responding to emergencies by emergency medical services. The ambulances should therefore be used for their intended purposes. These two different purposes should not be confused by community members. Community members should also not place prank calls to the National Ambulance Service Call Centre ostensibly to mislead the managers of the Call Center. They should rather use the call centre to make requests for their relatives who are in emergency situations to be transported to health facilities for medical care. The government should therefore institute measures to check prank calls to these Call Centers in order to ensure their efficient functionality.
- e) Again, charges for fuel by the Emergency Medicine Technicians (EMTs) at the community

level should be clearly outlined by the National Ambulance Service. If government provides the Ambulance Service with fuel, then this should be made known to Ghanaians immediately. However, if the Ambulance Service is not being provided with fuel, then the National Ambulance Service should immediately come out with standard charges to cater for fuel for implementation across the country. This will prevent the EMTs using their discretions to determine fuel charges to be paid by already distressed relatives of our cherished clients. As managers of Hospitals, we are very much aware that in most emergency cases, client relatives are not able to provide money for fuel to the Ambulance Service. These cases delay before being transported to the next level, leading mostly in complications and sometimes deaths. We therefore call on the Ministry of Health to immediately clarify the issue of ambulance fees to the Ghanaian public to avoid further challenges at our various hospitals on this matter.

- f) Finally, NEC calls on government to put in place a plan for the provision of ambulances on yearly basis without waiting for the country to get into a crisis situation before ambulances are provided. We recommend that every year government should at least inject 50 ambulances in the health system until we get to an appreciable level of availability of ambulances.

2. Coronavirus

NEC wishes to commend Government for the efforts so far in preventing any incidence of the Coronavirus in Ghana.

However, NEC wishes to proffer the following recommendations to strengthen the Emergency Preparedness of the Country to deal effectively with this epidemic:

- a. Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other logistics: Government must ensure that all frontline staff and Emergency Departments/Units at all levels of health care are provided with adequate PPEs and other logistics to enable them deal with the threat.
- b. Ghana Immigration Service, Port Health Authorities and other relevant Institutions should intensify surveillance at all approved entry points as well as all other possible entry points into the Country. All District Hospitals and District Health Directorates must also heighten surveillance and Emergency Preparedness.
- c. Health Sector actors should intensify public education about the virus to create awareness

so that any suspected case can be reported early for prompt intervention.

- d. Infectious Disease Treatment Centre: As a matter of urgency, NEC advises that the existing Infectious Disease Centers such as those in Tamale and Tema should be put in a state of readiness to handle such cases. As a medium to long term measure, NEC suggests to Government to consider the establishment of specialized Centers for the treatment of highly infectious diseases such as the Coronavirus and Ebola.

Thank you.

SIGNED:
FRED EFFAH-YEBOAH
PRESIDENT, AHSAG
0244924696 / 0206748566

SIGNED:
ABULAIS YARO HARUNA
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER, AHSAG
0209110514 / 0243464660