

MPs, CSOs shocked over disposal of clinical waste in the compound of Health Centre III



Members of Parliament monitoring Awol health centre in Agago district on 30th April 2017 | @CSBAG2017

“ The visit of Members of Parliament and civil society Organizations to Agago Health facilities has shown that there is need to strengthen monitoring and supervision if service delivery in the health sector is to improve.”

This was during a field monitoring visit organized by Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group in Agago district to monitor service delivery. The MPs were shocked to find an open hole where the placentas are dumped after pregnant women have given deliveries and drugs kept in water sink as well as clinical waste thrown in the compound at Wol Health Centre III.

“This is pathetic. Health workers need to take their work responsibly,” Chua West MP Ojara Okin said. He pointed out that there was negligence on the part of the health workers and lack of supervision by the district leaders.

Nwoya Woman MP Lilly Adong emphasized that as MPs they were playing an oversight function checking whether the funds appropriated to Local Governments are well utilized to improve service delivery but was shocked that even the basic standards were not met. “I have never encountered a situation where clinical waste is just poured in the compound,” Adong stated.

The lawmakers, findings were as a result of impromptu visit to Wol HC III in Wol sub- county after touring Lapirin HC II in Lukole sub- county which serves a population of 9000 patients in eight sub-counties. Out of nine health workers, only two were present at Wol HC III while Lapirin HC II is supposed have seven only five run the facility. The MPs were on monitoring visit to Agago district where they held meetings with district councilors and the top district officials about the state of service delivery in the district and building the capacity of councilors on budget processes and monitoring.

Kole County MP Bonney Okello attributed the poor condition of the health centre to negligence and irresponsibility by all stake holders. Agago Woman MP Franca Akello assured participants that their monitoring visit was not meant to apportion blame to anyone but to share information and ensure service delivery in the health sector improves as well as building the capacity of district councilors to monitor and supervise.

Responding to the MPs findings Agago district Chairperson Benard Opio Ojok admitted there were problems in health centres in the district and blamed the Ministry of Public Service for failure to recruit more health workers. “The Health Centre III is being headed by a nurse. How many times have we written to the Ministry of Public Service to recruit more health workers and says there is no money?” Ojok asked.

Ojok informed the MPs that even the primary health care (PHC) funds has not been released for the last two quarters “Without PHC fund how do you expect health workers to deliver effective service delivery? Why set standards when you are not able to meet?” he asked. He also told the lawmakers that the district has no engineer to handle road network and his attempts to recruit one have been frustrated. How can you not have an engineer in the district yet there are many graduates from Makerere University who are looking for jobs?” Ojok wondered.

Earlier a member of Participatory Budget Clubs (PBCs) Jovin Okot enumerated to MPs the concerns affecting service delivery at Lapirin HCII among them are lack of maternity ward as delivery is done on examination room, lack of ambulance for referral cases, inadequate staff, and drugs stockouts. Okot however, told MPs that due to vigilance of PBCs trained by CSBAG they were able to advocate for health workers from three to five, have the health unit fenced to prevent stray animals and have more drugs sent to the unit and encouraged the community to build grass thatched houses for staff.

On the capacity of district councilors to analyze budget documents, the district leadership urged CSOs to come up with a blue print that will cause MPs to review and pass a law regarding the minimum academic qualifications for the councilors.

The district Speaker John Bosco Olwoch called for salary increment for the councilors to attract graduates. Councilors are paid UGX250,000 per month with a tax threshold of 30%.