

Private Health Sector Convention 2024: Strengthening Collaboration and Innovation



The Private Health Sector Convention 2024, held on April 11, 2024, gathered 164 participants under the theme “Navigating the Health Challenges: Trends, Challenges, and Innovations.” The convention aimed to strengthen partnerships among the private health sector, development partners, and the Ministry of Health. Ms. Grace Ssali Kiwanuka, Executive Director of the Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF), opened the event, thanking participants and key sponsors USAID/Uganda Health Systems Strengthening (UHSS) for their support alongside several UHF members who came on board to ensure the success of the event. She highlighted the crucial role of the private sector in Uganda's healthcare system, owning over 50% of health infrastructure and providing 45% of healthcare services.

Dr. Tom Aliti, Commissioner of Health Sector Coordination, representing the Ministry of Health, underscored the importance of public-private sector collaboration and its positive impacts on Uganda's healthcare outcomes. He acknowledged existing challenges such as salary disparities and the need for increased financial support for private healthcare providers.



Dr. Timothy Musila moderated subsequent sessions highlighting innovative approaches to healthcare from the Ministry of Health, who delved into disruptive investments in non-communicable diseases (NCDs). This was followed by insights from Mr. Julius Mugisha and Mr. Terence Kalule from Nakasero Hospital. They explained the importance of technology-driven solutions in transforming healthcare, which was followed by a session that explored digital health, moderated by Mr. Robert Okumu, of UHSS.

Ms. Judy Mugoya of Smart Applications International and Mr. Paul Mbaka from the Ministry of Health, led the conversation on digital health, emphasizing the benefits and challenges of digital transformation in healthcare. The final session, led by Dr. Adrian Jjuuko from One World Health, focused on optimizing neonatal care in resource-limited settings, underscoring the need for data-driven strategies to improve care.



The convention concluded with Dr. Aliti's remarks, highlighting the need for ongoing collaboration between the public and private sectors to build a robust healthcare system in Uganda. He encouraged all participants to continue engaging with one another, leveraging the insights and connections made during the convention, and to actively participate in initiatives that strengthen public-private partnerships, like the monthly Technical Working Group meetings. He urged attendees to apply the knowledge gained to improve health outcomes and invited all stakeholders to stay connected through regular follow-up meetings and networking events.

Monthly Continuous Medical Education (CME) by Kiruddu National Referral Hospital with support from Uganda Healthcare Federation

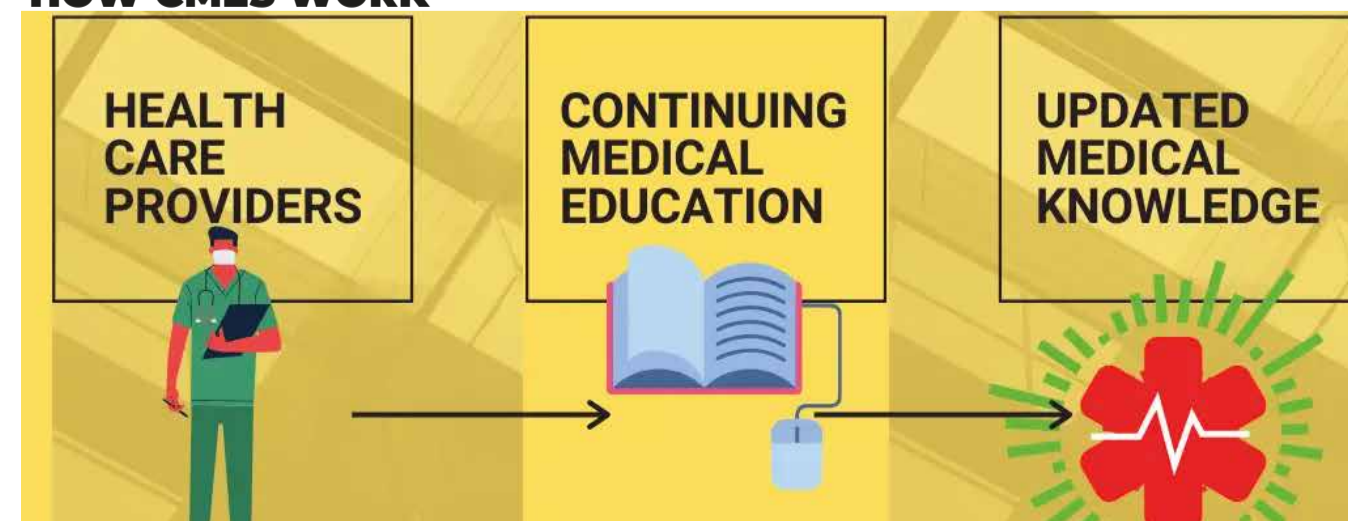
The Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF), in partnership with Kiruddu National Referral Hospital, organized four online Continuous Medical Education (CME) sessions in March and April. These sessions enhance healthcare providers' knowledge and skills in critical areas of service provision. So far sessions have shared critical information on infection prevention and control (IPC), antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance and stewardship, diabetes management, and the management of red-eye. The CMEs were attended by a total of 1335 healthcare workers from both the public and private sector as well as some development partners and civil society organizations.

These sessions are designed to provide healthcare providers with the necessary knowledge and skills for clinical management and patient care, as well as to improve their understanding of infection prevention and control practices. The goal is to reduce the spread of infections acquired in hospitals, increase awareness of the role of microbiology in antimicrobial resistance surveillance and management, and improve strategies for managing diabetes and red eye conditions.

In addition to empowering healthcare professionals with updated knowledge and best practices, the CMEs also facilitated the accumulation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points for the participants.

These sessions are an opportunity for healthcare providers across the country, to enhance individual competencies and strengthen the overall healthcare system in the country. Such initiatives underscore the commitment of UHF and its partners to advancing healthcare education and quality, ultimately benefiting the health and well-being of communities nationwide.

HOW CMES WORK



Partnership for Enhanced Laboratory Services

On April 24, 2024, key stakeholders with an interest in laboratory services, gathered at the Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL) in Butabika, Kampala, to discuss a new partnership aimed at strengthening laboratory services across Uganda. The meeting brought together representatives from the Uganda National Health Laboratories (UNHLS), the Uganda Network of AIDS Services Organizations (UNASO), Uganda Baati, and the Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF). The objective was to enhance healthcare quality, expand laboratory services, and promote information sharing among private and public sector entities.



Kennedy Otundo, Executive Director of UNASO, opened the meeting, emphasizing the need for resource mobilization and quality improvement to support lobbying and advocacy for better laboratory services. Dr. Akilewo Ssebuliba from Uganda Baati shared their initiatives in providing comprehensive medical services through their clinics, including plans to open a new clinic in Arua. Mr. Michael Misanvu from UHF highlighted the potential for collaboration to improve laboratory services through the Medical Records and Data Reporting Systems (MRDRS) and the self-regulatory Quality Improvement System (SQIS+).

“Commissioner Dr. Susan Nabadda from CPHL acknowledged the critical role of the private sector in healthcare delivery and encouraged collaboration to address gaps in quality and safety in private-sector laboratories.”

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to enhance healthcare quality and expand laboratory services, representing a significant step toward strengthening Uganda's healthcare system. As the partnership moves forward, stakeholders are encouraged to stay engaged, share insights, and work collaboratively to drive meaningful change. If you'd like to be involved or support this initiative, please reach out to UHF on info@uhfug.com for more information on upcoming activities and how you can contribute.



Mr. Peter Sands the C.E.O Global Fund, Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Minister of health, the P.S, Ministry of Dr. Diana Kanzira Atwine and Dr. Susan Nabadda Commissioner Health Services in charge of National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic services /Chief Government Pathologist and ED Central Public Health Laboratories meeting private healthcare providers and CSOs visiting CPHL in Butabika Luzira

Harmonization of Standards on Healthcare Services through The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) Technical Committee (ARSO/TC 74) on Health Services

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical need to fortify Africa's health sector with robust regulatory frameworks. In response, the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO), in collaboration with Germany's National Metrology Institute (PTB), has been spearheading the harmonization of healthcare standards since 2022. This initiative, driven by experts from African member states, is under the auspices of ARSO's Technical Committee 74 (ARSO/TC 74) on Health Services.

Uganda, represented by the Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF) and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards, actively participated in the 74th Technical Committee meeting of ARSO. Established in 1977 by the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Accra, Ghana, ARSO's mission is to develop and harmonize standards across the continent. This mission aims to boost Africa's internal trade capacity, enhance the global competitiveness of African products and services, and improve the welfare of African consumers. ARSO also serves as a platform for addressing prospects in international trade standardization.



The recent meeting, held from April 8th to 11th, 2024, saw the participation of 14 member states from across Africa. The committee reviewed and harmonized over a dozen standards, which were then distributed to member states for final scrutiny. Drawing from its experience with the Self-regulatory Quality Improvement System (SQIS+) and the Medical Records and Data Reporting System (MRDRS) in the private sector, UHF provided valuable insights into effective regulation and support mechanisms for the private health sector. These contributions highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making facilitated by automated medical records and information management systems like the MRDRS.



Moving forward, UHF remains committed to contributing its expertise to ARSO through ongoing participation in various Technical Committees. This continued involvement ensures that Uganda's private health sector perspectives are well-represented and that the nation remains at the forefront of healthcare standards development and harmonization in Africa.



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