

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF NAKURU

THE HANSARD

Tuesday 17th November, 2015

Assembly Building

The House met at 2.45pm

[The Speaker (Hon. Susan Kihika) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

PAPER

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT FOR 16 MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2014

The Leader of Minority (Hon. Daniel Ambale): Thank Madam Speaker, allow me on behalf of the Leader of the Majority to lay this Paper which is actually the Report of the Auditor General on Financial Statements of the Nakuru County Government for the 16 months period ended 30th June, 2014. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Susan Kihika): Thank you honourable Ambale, it stands committed to the PAC Committee. Thank you.

REPORT

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH SERVICES REPORT ON HEALTH WORKERS STRIKE

Hon. Joseph Lang'at: Thank you Madam Speaker, the Committee on Health Services carried out a study on why there was a strike and interviewed the Members of the Kenya Medical Union and the Nurses. The Report I am going to table is going to be the discussion and the recommendations.

Madam Speaker, the Sectoral Committee on Health Services is established in the Second Schedule of the Nakuru County Assembly Standing Orders and is mandated to deal with:

All matters relating to County Health Services including County health facilities and pharmacies, ambulance services, promotion of primary health care, licensing and control of undertakings that sell food to the public, cemeteries, funeral parlors and crematoria. Licensing of dogs and facilities for the accommodation, care and burial of animals, water and sanitation services, refuse, dump and solid waste removal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to sincerely thank the Members of this Committee for their commitment during this period.

I also wish to thank all the union members and CO who appeared before the Committee.

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Lastly, I thank the office of the Speaker and office of the Clerk for their unwavering support to this Committee.

The Committee is comprised of the following Members;

1. Hon. Joseph Langat - **Chairperson**
2. Hon. Monica Gitau - **V/Chairperson**
3. Hon. Newton Kabuu
4. Hon. Edward Gitau
5. Hon. Francis Njoroge
6. Hon. Joshua Wilson Muriithi
7. Hon. Bahazaro Khadija Shabaan
8. Hon. Lucy Kihumba
9. Hon. Trebina Gakii
10. Hon. Catherine Waweru
11. Hon. Margaret Kiiru
12. Hon. James Humphrey Mwaniki
13. Hon. David Malel
14. Hon. Penina C. Sortum
15. Hon. Michael Macharia
16. Hon. Leonard Kipng'eno Korir
17. Hon. Moses Ndung'u

Madam Speaker, as required by the County Assembly of Nakuru Standing Orders, it is worth noting that the Report was unanimously adopted by all Members of the Committee.

BACKGROUND

The Committee as mandated by County Assembly of Nakuru Standing Orders in its own Motion resolved to invite the Chief Officer - Health Department and the union officials of the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board, Kenya National Union of Nurses (KNUN), Kenya Health Professionals Union (KHPU) South Rift region to have a dialogue on the way forward for effective service delivery in our County.

This investigation was aimed at establishing the grievances that prompted the various unions to go on strike and on the return to work agreement arrived at between the Unions and the Health department.

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The Committee invited the union officials of Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Union (KMPDU), Kenya National Union of Nurses (KNUN) Kenya Health Professionals Union (KHPU) South Rift region.

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Madam Speaker, the Chief Officer acknowledged that Health was the biggest devolved function and was bound to undergo various challenges especially during the transitional period.

He stated that the Health Department still requires financial support to implement most of its planned activities in the County. The fund allocated is not enough to give comprehensive health services in almost all the health facilities. The department needs adequate funds for employment of more staff, promotions and equipping of its health facilities.

The number of health facilities currently in the County is not adequate enough to serve the County's high population. The total number of health facilities in the County is 385 including clinics. At the current population the County should be having a total of 195 dispensaries, 65 fully equipped health centers, 20 Sub County hospitals 10 County hospitals and 4 County referral hospitals which are equivalent to PGH Nakuru. Worse still the County had not yet met the WHO recommendation.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of delayed promotions the Chief officer (CO) explained that there was delay in reconciliation and submission of the employees' automated files from Afya House to the county, but confirmed that they had now received the files and had commenced the process of promotions.

Further, he informed the Committee that they were facing financial constraints but assured Members that they had secured Kshs 75 Million for promotions in 2014/2015 financial year and had commenced the harmonization process.

On the issue of delayed salaries the CO admitted that indeed there were constraints of resources especially after the Controller of Budgets issued guidelines on Budget ceilings in the last financial year. He also stated that they had a comprehensive budget for the health sector having taken into consideration the Budget ceilings issued by the controller of Budget.

On the issue of shortage of drugs the Chief Officer explained that there was an outstanding debt of Kshs 94 Million to KEMSA which is the major supplier of drugs but assured the Committee that the said amount had been fully paid and distribution of drugs would commence the following week.

Further he stated that most health facilities in the county have inadequate space and facilities to store drugs and other medical supplies. This poses a great challenge in ensuring proper quantification forecasting and use of these pharmaceutical commodities. Also the quality of the commodities in terms of potency and efficacy is compromised due to improper storage conditions such as high temperatures.

The Committee noted with concern that despite having an oversight role over the Executive it was never notified or involved in the talks between the Union and the Executive and only learnt about the strike from the media.

CHALLENGES

During the interaction, the union officials cited the following challenges:

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- I. Inadequate Human Resource across all cadres- the County faces acute shortages of technical staff across all cadres in the Health department. Referral hospitals lack enough consultants to deal with referrals while other levels are overstretched by heavy workload which might compromise quality service provision.
- II. Delay in implementing promotions thus halting Career progression of the health workers. The Committee was informed that although policy guidelines were generated at the National level the implementation was at the County level which had not been done since the health sector was devolved to the Counties.
- III. Payment of arrears;- delay in payment of salaries was a major concern. The Union officials explained that their salaries are never paid on time thus causing them great inconveniences and lack of morale.
- IV. Missing allowances for the health workers in accordance with the schemes of service;- the Committee was informed that although the Salaries and Remuneration Commission had given guidelines on the house allowance for medical practitioners the same was not adhered to and upon raising this issue with the Executive the same was rejected on the basis that it was not binding.
- V. Harmonization of salaries of all health workers; – the Committee was informed that although the health workers who were previously working with the defunct Local Authorities had been absorbed by the County Health Department they continued earning more compared to their counterparts who were previously under the ministry of health .
- VI. Poor referral systems; - patients face a lot of difficulties when they are referred to high levels for further management in the county. Ambulatory services are not adequate and where available they are not strategically or poor equipped. This has become a major challenge because patients get more complications by the time they reach referral hospitals the conditions have worsened and at times loss of lives.
- VII. Shortage of both pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical supplies especially drugs. Some of the health facilities are not adequately equipped to handle complicated cases. They refer patients to other institutions and this complicates the conditions of the patients and at times end losing the patient.

Madam Speaker, the Committee after scrutinizing all the submissions from all the stakeholders the Committee has made recommendations which we believe will go a long way in improving service delivery in this great County of Nakuru.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Increase the annual allocation of the health department. This will help to procure essential drugs and timely request of drugs from KEMSA and partner.
- ii. Recruit more health workers even on contract basis.
- iii. Ambulatory services put in strategic points in the county and also strengthen other referral systems in the county.
- iv. Establishment of a County health sector main store. Currently the county depends on KEMSA which might not be reliable because it serves other counties in the south rift region.
- v. Regular capacity building of the county health workforce. This is vital for improving staff skills and knowledge in order to improve the quality of service provision at all service delivery points.
- vi. Adequate equipping of the health facilities including provision of theatres and ambulatory services.
- vii. Regular review meetings to discuss achievements and performances. The pay should be commensurate to the work done.
- viii. Clear policies on staff promotions

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, our people are thirsty for provision of quality health care services at affordable prices. I urge this House to support this Committee in executing its mandate to enhance better service delivery to the residents of Nakuru County. Thank you very much Madam Speaker, I beg to table the Report.

The Speaker (Hon. Susan Kihika) Thank you Hon Langat.

There being no other business, we stand adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

The House rose at 3.00pm