



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PRESS STATEMENT

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Hon. Jane Ruth Aceng

Minister of Health

On behalf of the Government, I welcome you all to this press briefing on the progress of implementation of Hepatitis B vaccination programme in Uganda.

Viral Hepatitis is a group of infectious diseases known as hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. The condition affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide causing acute and chronic liver disease and killing close to 1.4 million people every year mostly from hepatitis B and C.

The highest rates of Hepatitis B infection is seen in developing in countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where prevalence of more than 8% has been reported and these areas are described as hyper endemic according to World Health Organisation (WHO) criteria.

Uganda, being one of the most affected countries has designed and is implementing a National Hepatitis B programme and apart of this effort, policies and service provider guidelines have been developed and are now being disseminated in districts.

Interventional areas reflected in the policy include; community awareness, mass screening, vaccination of susceptible, ensuring full supply of Hepatitis B related commodities and supplies, equipping health workers with knowledge and skills on the subject, attachment of the affected to treatment care and support programs, integration of services and resource mobilisation.

Under this program, the Government of Uganda has so far committed 23 billion shillings towards addressing the burden of Hepatitis in the country. More funding is expected to be released for the programme in a phased manner to cover the entire country. The estimated total cost to cover the whole country is 220 billion shillings.

In the year 2013/14, the Government of Uganda identified 39 high burden districts based on the hepatitis prevalence as reported in the 2005 sero-survey report. These 39 have been prioritized for the first phase of the hepatitis vaccination. Out of these, 14 districts have received the first and second doses of the vaccine. In this financial year, the Ministry of Health has planned to roll out the hepatitis services in all the 39 districts. The districts are: Adjumani, Arua, Maracha, Moyo, Koboko, Nebbi, Yumbe, Zombo, Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Kitgum, Lamwo, Agago, Pader, Lira, Oyam, Kole, Otuke, Aleptong, Amolatar, Apac, Dokolo, Soroti, Serere, Amuria, Kumi, Bukedea, Ngora, Katakwi, Moroto, Abim, Kaabong, Nakapiripirt, Amudat, Napak and Tororo.

The remaining 25 districts will be receiving the first dose of the hepatitis vaccine at the beginning of November 2016. The population and the leadership of the districts are urged to take note. Social mobilization will begin in these districts immediately prior to the screening and vaccination of the population.

The Ministry of Health has prepared all the Regional Referral Hospitals and general Hospital in region as treatment centres. So far, three treatment centres have been equipped and are providing treatment. These include Mulago National Referral Hospital, Arua Regional Referral Hospital and Adjumani General Hospital, and these. However, arrangements are being to ensure that all hospitals in the country provide hepatitis treatment to the people who test positive for the hepatitis B virus.

This year, the World Hepatitis Day is being commemorated under the theme; “Know Hepatitis, Act now”. This involves knowing ones status by getting tested,

and seeking for vaccination as prevention, and treatment for those positives who fit the eligibility criteria.

As part of the activities to raise awareness on Hepatitis B, the Ministry of Health appeal to the population to do the following;

- Prevent yourself from the hepatitis infection. Avoid unsafe injections, avoid coming in contact with blood or fluid from a person infected with hepatitis B and avoid risky sexual behaviour
- When you have yellow eyes, report immediately to a health facility for screening and further medical advice.
- The districts which have received the hepatitis B vaccines should do social mobilization, screen and vaccinate the population as per the schedule of the three doses.

The Ministry of Health would like to allay the anxiety of the population in those districts where vaccination has not yet started. This will be done in a phased manner.

The National Celebrations for World Hepatitis Day will take place in Dokolo district on Friday, 4th November, 2016.

Thank You

Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng

Minister of Health

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY