SHU Publication

Issue 10, August 2016

Improving access to quality health care through community health financing

SHU Orients District Leaders to CHI

The local government general elections held early this year ushered new leaders into different offices in the districts where Save for Health Uganda (SHU) works. At SHU, we thought it prudent to orient members of district councils, heads of departments, resident district commissioners (RDCs) and sub-county chairpersons to the work we do and the concept of community health insurance (CHI).

We held district level meetings in Luwero, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Mitooma, Sheema and Bushenyi, attracting a total of 268 members of the political and technical leadership. Discussions focused on how SHU organizes community members into CHI schemes and the achievements registered.

We also asked participants to support the process of enacting a fair health insurance law which can protect the poor from impoverishment due to health care expenditures. Participants promised to support SHU to expand CHI to more areas.



Bushenyi Council members, LCIII Chairpersons and Heads of Departments at the meeting held in the Council Hall on 2nd September 2016.



Mitooma Deputy Resident District Commissioner, Mr. Ngabirano Emmy, gives closing remarks at the end of the orientation. On his right are the District Chairman, Mr Karyeija Benon, and the District Speaker, Ms. Kyarisiima Enos.



Members of Nakaseke District council and Heads of Departments during the meeting held on 24th August 2016.



Members of Nakasongola District Council and Heads of Departments during the meeting held in Nakasongola town council hall.



Sheema District Health Officer, Dr. Johnson Kabwishwa, addresses participants about his experience while working with community health insurance scheme members at Kitagata hospital during the meeting held at Sheema district headquarters.



SHU's Senior Field Officer, Dorothy Nansubuga, responds to questions of participants in Luwero Council Hall.

Mushanga HCIII invests in patient-centered care

Improving access to quality health care services is one of SHU's core objectives in promoting community Health Insurance (CHI). To achieve this, SHU works closely with health care providers to put in place facilities that improve patient-centred care. Such facilities include displaying price lists, establishing customer relations desks, labeling different areas with signposts to guide clients around the premises, and ensuring privacy of patients, among others.

Mushanga Health Center III is one of the facilities contracted by CHI schemes in Sheema district, in western Uganda to provide services to their members. The facility, which started providing services to scheme members in November 2015, has taken quick steps to improve client satisfaction with their services.

A customer relations desk was recently established to serve as the one-stop information center for clients about services at the facility. The desk is run by a customer relations assistant who is responsible for receiving patients, guiding them through procedures of coverage and responding to all inquiries.



The Customer Relations Officer at the Health *Centre.*



One of the wards at Mushanga HCIII fitted with curtains to improve privacy of patients.

Every month, the customer relations assistant compiles reports about the complaints and feedback from patients to guide quarterly engagements between managers of the health facility and CHI scheme leaders.

The desk at Mushanga brings to six the number of such facilities at providers of health care services to CHI scheme members. Other providers with such desks include Kitagata Hospital and Hope Medical Centre in Sheema, Ishaka Adventist Hospital in Bushenyi, Bishop Ceasar Asili Hospital in Luwero, and Franciscan HCIV in Nakasongola.

SHU supports the establishment of customer relations desks by regressively subsidizing initial costs including salaries of customer relations assistants until a health care provider is prepared to institutionalize the role. So far, Kitagata hospital, Ishaka Adventist Hospital and Hope Medical Centre have incorporated customer relations assistants into their human resource structures.

In a related development, Mushanga HCIII also provided curtains in the wards to improve privacy of patients and their caretakers. These efforts, coupled with professional medical care, are expected to improve client satisfaction and utilization of services.

Scheme members' corner

How CHI saved 7-year old Joan from taking unnecessary HIV drugs



Joan Nalukwago



Ms Irene Babirye, Joan's Aunt

My name is Babirye Irene. I am a resident of Ziwomeredde village in Binikira parish, Kassanda sub-county in Mubende District. I am a member of Binikira Tukolererewamu Community Health Insurance Scheme.

I joined the scheme in 2014 because I was worried about paying medical bills for my niece, Nalukwago Joan, who had tested HIV positive at one of the health facilities in my area, and was put on antiretroviral therapy. Her parents had already spent a lot of money on her medical care because she used to fall sick frequently.

When we started receiving treatment under the scheme, I took her to St. Gabriel Mirembe Maria Health Centre for further diagnosis. I picked the courage to do so because I did not need cash to go to the facility but rather presented my family's health care access card issued by the scheme.

The health workers decided to check Joan's CD4 count. Surprisingly, results indicated that Joan did not have HIV. She had wrongfully been subjected to antiretroviral therapy basing on false results.

Joan has undergone several medical reviews and her health condition has greatly improved. I have since enrolled all the 12 members of my family into the scheme. I thank SHU and my scheme for enabling me to get to the truth about Joan's health.

Compiled by: Mujuni Wilfred, Mubende

Produced by Save for Health Uganda, Plot 580, Ssekabaka Kintu Road Mengo, Rubaga P.O.Box 8228, Kampala; Tel: 0414 271841, Email: shu@shu.org.ug