

HEALTH INSURANCE IN NRM MANIFESTOS SINCE 2006

Introducing health insurance has featured prominently in the National Resistance Movement (NRM) manifestos since 2006 as one of the interventions for improving delivery of health services. On 20th February, President Yoweri Museveni was declared winner of the presidential elections, hence giving the NRM mandate to run the country for the next five years. In this edition of SHU publication, we bring you extracts on health insurance in the NRM manifestos since 2006.

NRM manifesto 2006 - 2011

"In order to further improve on delivery of better health services, NRM government will introduce Social Health Insurance and Community Health Insurance to protect the formal and informal sectors against expenditure on catastrophic incidences. Through health insurance, government and private sector employers and employees will pay monthly premiums on health insurance so that when the employees or members of their families fall sick they simply go to clinics of their choice as long they are part of the scheme; and the management of the health insurance fund will be responsible for the payment of the medical bills of the patient. The advantages of this scheme are:

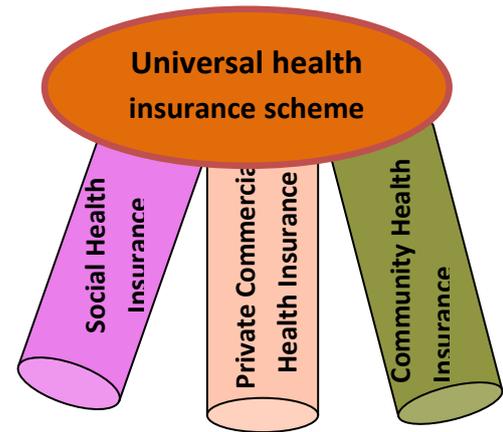
- The contributions will be pooled and, therefore, healthy members will subsidize the less healthy. In a similar vein, the lowly paid will benefit from contributions of those that are highly paid.
- The health insurance scheme will provide security against catastrophic health expenditure in case of severe illness.
- When members pool their contributions, they will have the power to negotiate for the health package and the providers they desire."

NRM manifesto 2011 - 2015

"In 2006, the NRM Government promised to establish a social health insurance scheme. So far, sensitization with stakeholders has been going on well leading to a draft bill governing social health insurance. This will soon be tabled in Cabinet and later in Parliament. The world over, health funding is made easier by pooling resources through health insurance. When we pool resources in form of contributions through health insurance, we will be able to meet the challenges facing the health sector which include better wages for health workers, supply of equipment in health units, etc.

Way Forward

In the next five years, NRM's policy on financing social health insurance will be to use part of the contributions to pension schemes to pay for social health insurance. This way, both the worker and the employer will not pay more. In the case of government workers, under the contributory pension scheme, which NRM is soon introducing, part of that money will go to health insurance of the government workers. Gradually, those in the non formal sector who want to join the scheme will be encouraged to join."



The ideal health insurance model for Uganda

NRM manifesto 2016 - 2021

"In particular, the NRM will:...Introduce the Universal Health Insurance Scheme and an ambulance service.

General achievements:

The development of the Health Insurance Law is near completion after a thorough and wide consultative process.

What NRM will do

In order to improve access to health services in the country, we will start a phased implementation of the Universal Health Insurance Scheme.

To-date, wide consultations have been finalised and the Bill is in place awaiting its enactment."

The extracts above bring out NRM's intention to introduce health insurance as a way to increase risk pooling, reduce catastrophic expenditure and improve service delivery in the health sector. While the 2006-2011 manifesto mentioned community health insurance, the subject did not feature in the 2011-2015 manifesto though there was a promise to encourage the non formal sector to join the social health insurance scheme. Unfortunately, the promise to table the draft bill on social health insurance in cabinet and parliament has not materialized. In the 2016-2021 manifesto, the NRM has promised to start phased implementation of the universal health insurance scheme. The scheme should adequately cover social health insurance, private commercial health insurance and community health insurance. Will this come to pass in the next five years?

Bishop Ssemwogerere lauds CHI program in Luwero

By Fred Mwesigwa - Luwero

The Bishop of Kasana Luwero Diocese under the Catholic Church, Bishop Paul Ssemwogerere, recently lauded Bishop Caesar Asili Hospital, Save for Health Uganda (SHU) and Munno Mu Bulwadde Union of Schemes Organisation (MBUSO) for the community health insurance and livelihood programs being implemented jointly in Luwero district.

The three organizations are implementing a dairy goats project targeting members of community health insurance (CHI) schemes to improve family nutrition and income levels.

Bishop Ssemwogerere was speaking at the handover of 33 hybrid dairy goats to members CHI schemes created by MBUSO in Ngogolo parish in Butuntumula sub-county, and Kasaala and Kabakedi parishes in Luwero sub-county.

The Bishop thanked the three partners for organizing residents into CHI schemes through

which they are able to access quality healthcare services and benefit from income generating projects as well. He urged beneficiaries to look after the goats well since they have a high milk yielding and reproductive potential.

The 33 goats were raised by CHI scheme members who received exotic mother goats from Bishop Asili Hospital with support from Just Like My Child Foundation through Heifer International.

At the same function, the first beneficiaries of the dairy goats project which started in 2012 sold 44 offsprings of the mother goats they received back to Heifer International. The price of goats ranged between shs200,000 and shs 350,000 each depending on the weight of the animal.

A total of 249 farmers have so far benefited from the project. They earn income from selling milk and offsprings.

Sister Ernestine Akulu, the Administrator of Bishop Asili Hospital thanked CHI scheme members for prioritizing access to health care for their families and promised to continue supporting them.

The Project Coordinator of Heifer International, Geoffrey Isingoma, said the target was to give out 630 parent goats to members of CHI schemes.

The occasion was also used to recognize the best farmers among project beneficiaries. The winner among 15 contestants from seven parishes received a new bicycle and knapsack sprayer. Gifts for other contestants included a wheel barrow, a mattress, pangas and hoes.

The ceremony was witnessed by Luwero district officials led by District Veterinary Officer and the District Health Inspector.



Some members of community health insurance schemes who received hybrid dairy goats.



Right-Left: Bishop Paul Ssemwogerere, Mr. Goffrey Isingoma of Heifer International and Sister Ernestine Akulu listen to Mr. Nyanzi Isma, the Coordinator of the livelihood project of Bishop Caesar Asili Hospital.



Nabaasa and her baby outside Ishaka Adventist Hospital after being discharged.

Scheme members' corner

My name is Alice Nabaasa, a member of Rurehe-North community health insurance scheme which started in August 2015 in Kabira sub-county, Mitooma District. My husband gave me shs42,000 to pay premium for our family for one year.

On 28th January 2016, my youngest son got a fever and I rushed him to Ishaka Adventist Hospital where it was confirmed to be malaria. A health worker informed me that my son had to be admitted but I tried to resist because the money I had was just enough for our transport back home. I called one of the SHU field officers who assured me that the hospital bill would be paid by the scheme. My son was discharged three days later after recovering fully. Upon discharge, the hospital cashier gave me an invoice worth shs 98,700 to take to my scheme leader. I didn't pay a single coin to the hospital.

Compiled by Friday Moses - Bushenyi