

Govt to spend GH¢57m annually on free dialysis beginning Dec. 1

BY ABIGAIL ANNOH

THE government is expected to expend at most GH¢57 million annually on its free dialysis policy to be rolled out from December 1, 2024.

The policy, announced by the Vice President and flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, will offer free dialysis treatment to all end-stage kidney patients under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

It follows a six-month pilot from June this year that provided free dialysis for patients above 60 and under 18 years on the NHIS.

Addressing journalists after a crunch meeting with heads of health facilities in Accra yesterday, Dr Dacosta Aboagye, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), said all was set for the roll out of the policy in 40 selected health facilities.

With a projection of between 400 and 1,200 persons in need of dialysis in Ghana with cost of treatment ranging between GH¢300 and GH¢1,000, per session, the CEO said annually, “the NHIA will spend between GH¢20 to GH¢ 57 million to cover the patients based on the prevalence rate.”

Dr Aboagye explained that the policy was sustainable taking into consideration annual budgetary allocation to the Authority and internal re-arrangements in place to fund and sustain the package.

“Already we have about 2.2 million left over from our pilot. Our budget for 2025 as projected is supposed to be about 8.1 billion and normally, half of that goes into claims. We will do some internal rearrangements and look within to see whether to reduce our administrative costs.

Our current budget is about 6.8 billion. So, to take 57 million out and pay for dialysis and this is something that we can do. Even if we are capped, we expect that we will have about 1.3 billion extra funds coming in because taxes are over performing so we should be able to cover this under our benefit package,”

he said.

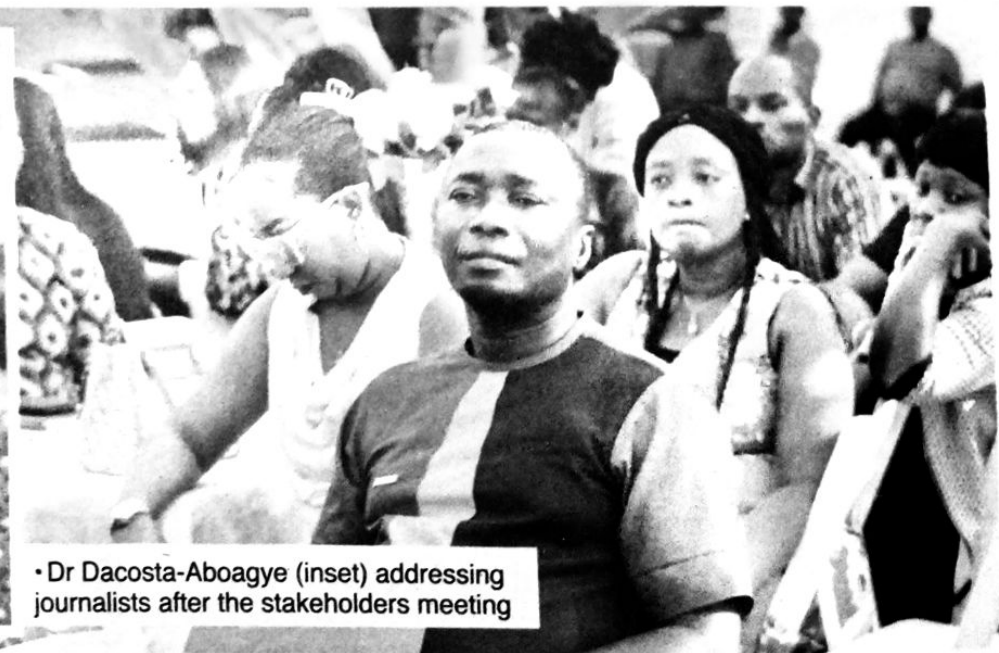
The CEO pointed out additional plans to sustain the policy including the procurement of dialysis machines and consumables to support the health facilities and ensure that patients receive quality services regardless of their financial situation.

“The NHIA, this year, added preventive and promotive services to its benefit package where Ghanaians, on their month of birth, have been given the opportunity to visit any health facility of their choice to check their diabetes, hypertension, blood pressure, BMI, and others so we will be able to reduce the

incidence of kidney diseases, detect early and treat,” he noted.

The Acting CEO of Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Dr Frank Owusu-Sekyere, expressed the hospital’s readiness to accommodate the anticipated surge in numbers of patients following the implementation of the policy.

“We are ready to start coming December 1. Arrangements have been made at the renal units and so all is set. Consumables are also being brought in so there is no cause for alarm,” he assured.



• Dr Dacosta-Aboagye (inset) addressing journalists after the stakeholders meeting