



Govt committed to providing free PHC nationwide before end of tenure —Health Minister

BY ABIGAIL ANNOH

THE Minister of Health, Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, has reiterated government's resolve to providing free Primary Health Care (PHC) nationwide by the end of its tenure.

He said government was determined to increase coverage under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) from the current 56 per cent to at least 95 per cent in order to remove cost barriers to healthcare access in the country.

"Whether you are a subscriber to the NHIS or not, at least you must get free access to Primary Health Care in this country, and we are working to ensure that in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO)," he stated.

Mr Akandoh made the remarks at the opening of the Senior Managers Meeting (SSM) of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) in Accra on Tuesday.

Held on the theme: 'Resetting Healthcare Delivery for Effec-



• Mr Akandoh (third from left), Dr Samuel Kaba Akoriyea (second from left), Chiana-Pio Pe Ditundini Adiali Ayagitam III (third from right) and other guests applauding after launching the GHS website **Photo: Ebo Gorman**

tive Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Financing to Achieve Universal Health Coverage," the three-day SSM is expected to reflect on current health system challenges and explore strategies to strengthen service delivery going forward.

The Minister again noted that the "Mahama Cares" policy would complement the PHC agenda by providing financial support for Ghanaians battling chronic diseases.

He further elaborated that while

the fund would channel resources into tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which currently account for about 45 per cent of mortalities in the country, it would also support specialist training in selected regional hospitals.

"Presently, we have agreed on the Hohoe, Wa and Bolgatanga regional hospitals, so by January next year, those centres will begin training specialists," he disclosed.

Mr Akandoh underlined that beyond expanding coverage, government was determined to ensure

efficiency and accountability in the health system.

He urged managers of the service to support the new financing measures, emphasising that the success of "Mahama Cares" and the free PHC agenda would depend on strong collaboration, effective supervision and discipline across all levels of the sector.

The Director-General of the GHS, Dr Samuel Kaba Akoriyea, acknowledged progress made on some health indicators, including malaria immunisation, HIV and

TB programmes, which he said had contributed to a 74-per cent reduction in malaria deaths between 2007 and 2023.

"Between 2021 and 2024, we noticed a decline. We have also seen a shift in the notification of TB cases. All that has been good progress for us, but there is still more to do," he remarked.

Dr Akoriyea expressed his resolve to build on those gains, drawing on key pillars such as resource mobilisation, staff welfare, capacity building, discipline, people-centredness and retooling of facilities across all levels of service delivery.

"The era of unhealthy competition and professional conflicts within our ranks must end. We are one service, born by one mission, and we must work to ensure that we save the lives entrusted into our care," he added.

The W.H.O Country Representative, Dr Fiona Braka, lauded Ghana for showing leadership in health service delivery and system strengthening, and pledged the organisation's continued support towards achieving universal health coverage.