

# Govt rolls out free primary health care

• 150 Districts targeted for phase 1

By Diana Mensah,  
JUBILEE HOUSE

**T**HE Free Primary Healthcare policy will be implemented in phases, beginning with 150 underserved districts across the country, the Minister of Health, Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, has announced.

He said health equipment would be distributed to all 150 districts participating in the first phase of implementation of the policy initiative.

Over 350 container-based service delivery points in high-traffic areas such as markets and lorry parks would be set up for the purpose, the minister added.

At the Government Accountability Series at the

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• Kwabena  
Mintah Akandoh,  
Minister of Health



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# News

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Presidency yesterday, Mr Akandoh said as part of preparations, the government had procured 24,534 pieces of essential medical equipment ready for deployment across the selected districts.

He said implementation would span 2026 to 2028, starting with the 150 selected underserved areas.

Out of the country's 261 districts, each region will have selected underserved districts included in the first phase.

"What we will do is implement it in phases between 2026 and 2028.

We will begin with 150 selected districts, particularly those that are underserved, and then expand nationwide by 2028," he said.

"So, it is going to be phased. We are going to start with 150 districts out of the 261. We will select underserved districts in every region. Every region will identify its underserved districts, and we will phase it out accordingly," he added.

### Prevailing condition

The minister revealed that only about two-thirds of the population is actively enrolled on the National Health Insurance scheme (NHIS), meaning out-of-pocket payments accounted for about one-third of total health expenditure.

He said the rollout of the free primary healthcare would, therefore, address the gaps in healthcare delivery.

For instance, Mr Akandoh said, a person in a community could access health care at their nearest (Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound, health centre or polyclinic, walk in or be reached through community outreach, or even have a health worker visit them at home.

He explained that "the ultimate aim is to get the whole country covered", adding that it will be rolled out in phases so that the

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government can learn from any shortcomings and smooth out the edges.

Mr Akandoh said the phased approach would allow the government to refine the programme as it progressed.

He said the phased approach would also allow for lessons and adjustments to be carried out to ensure that quality and sustainability were maintained.

"This policy has not been rushed. It has been carefully

designed over the past year and further improved based on inputs from cross-sectional stakeholders," he said.

He gave an assurance that "the policy is for the nation", adding that institutions such as the Ghana Medical Association, Members of Parliament, development partners, and the

media were all actively engaged in shaping the framework.

### Launch

Mr Akandoh said ahead of the official launch tomorrow, which is expected to be led by President John Dramani Mahama, significant preparation had already taken place.

The minister revealed that significant groundwork had been completed ahead of the policy's rollout.

That included mapping service delivery points, defining referral systems and strengthening institutional coordination to ensure smooth execution.

"The government has taken concrete, practical steps to ensure that free primary healthcare is not only announced, but will be

delivered efficiently and effectively," Mr Akandoh said.

"We cannot simply announce policies without preparing our facilities. Retooling our health system is critical to delivering on this promise. We need to retool our health facilities to properly equip them to face what is ahead of us," the Minister of Health stressed.

The retooling would include the deployment of incubators to support neonatal care, glucometers for diabetes screening and management, hospital beds to expand patient capacity, and ultrasound machines to improve diagnostic services, particularly in maternal health.

Over the next two months, Mr Akandoh indicated that Ghanaians would begin to see the transformation in action.

"We'll distribute equipment to all 150 districts that will be part of the first phase of implementation," he said, adding, "We'll intensify community sensitisation through town halls and engagement and deploy trained volunteers to support our community health workforce."

### Doctors postings

The minister also revealed an improvement in the national distribution of doctors.

He said as of the end of 2024, eight regions had a total of only 12 doctors.

This figure, he said, had since been increased to 100, with more expected to be added.

"In 2024, we had a situation where about eight underserved regions had only 12 medical doctors in total — not even one per region. These included areas like the Western North and North East regions," he said.

"By 2025, through our postings — though the process is not yet complete — we are approaching 100 doctors across those eight regions, and we are still not done.

"Immediately after the launch of the free primary health care initiative, those who refuse postings will forfeit their placement, and those positions will be reopened. This means that even newly qualified medical doctors can be posted to these areas," Mr Akandoh added.