

## **Ghana gets WHO Commendation for Strong Primary Healthcare**

Dr Owen Laws Kaluwa, the Country Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), has commended Ghana for strengthening Primary Health Care (PHC) through the Community Health Planning and Services (CHPS) concept.

“I will like to call on government, partners and all stakeholders to continue to support CHPS and make them functional so that their full potential of improving health and wellbeing is realized,” he said.

Dr Kaluwa gave the commendation in his address at the commemoration of the 2019 World Health Day in Accra on Monday on the theme: “Universal Health Coverage: Everyone Everywhere”, with a focus on the critical role of PHC.

He said the theme aligned to the number one goal of the WHO, which is to ensure that everyone has timely access to quality health service, right in the heart of the community where they live without suffering financial hardship in doing so.

### **Challenges**

He acknowledged that globally, though countries are making good progress towards the attainment of UHC, millions of people still have no access to health care, and about half of the figure does not receive the health services they need.

He noted that “about 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty each year because of out of pocket spending on health,” while millions more are forced to choose between health care and other essentials such as food, housing and clothing”.

Dr Kaluwa said moving towards the attainment of UHC required strengthening of the Health System for the change offered by the 2030 Agenda which, entailed integration of good stewardship, adequate financing, qualified and motivated health workforce, access to quality medicines and health products, functional health information systems and people-centred service delivery.

He stressed that quality, accessible PHC is the foundation of UHC as it is a whole of society approach to health and wellbeing centred on the needs and preferences of individuals and societies.

He said PHC addressed the broader determinants of health and focused on the comprehensive and inter-related aspects of physical, mental and social health and wellbeing, while ensuring that peoples’ health needs are met through comprehensive promotive, protective, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative care through the life course.

The Country Representative said it is the key reason why WHO was focusing on UHC as the theme for the 2019 celebrations, to remind world leaders of the urgency of the

health needs of the population, and to prompt them of their roles towards the achievement of UHC.

### **Advice**

He urged Ghanaians to take the necessary actions and steps as individuals to adopt lifestyles and behaviours that would ensure that they led healthy lives.

Dr Kaluwa urged government to make health for all a reality by investing more in quality, accessible PHC and to advocate patients, and educate them to stay healthy.

Mr Gabriel Bernaku, the National Chairman, Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations in Health called for better recognition of the role of Civil Society.

He urged the government to move beyond community collaborations to partnership movement with Civil Society to be able to contribute effectively towards UHC.

Credit: GNA