

REPORT ON NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE (NCHS) 10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DATE: 16TH – 19TH OCTOBER, 2012

VENUE: ANITA HOTEL, EJISU

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REPORT ON NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE (NCHS) 10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Theme: Deepening the Performance Improvement and Sustainability Agenda within the NCHS

17th – 18th OCTOBER 2012, ANITA HOTEL, KUMASI

1. INTRODUCTION

The conference of the NCHS is an annual gathering of all Catholic health institutions in the country. The purpose of the conference is to bring together all health workers and stakeholders to share in the progress, assess performance and challenges whilst building on the gains made to affect policy in providing quality health care. This year's conference brought together about two hundred participants from all the catholic health institutions.

1.1 Organization

The 10th Annual Conference was hosted in the Kumasi Province under the auspices of the Executive Director of Health for the Kumasi Province, Mr. Chris Sappor and supported by the Executive Secretaries for the Goaso, Konongo-Mapmpong, Obuasi, Sunyani and Techiman Dioceses.

This year's conference unlike the previous years was outsourced to Oasis Generation Limited, working in active collaboration with Abigail Yayah and Mr. George Adjei from the DoH. The new idea that was tested last year, where participants made advanced payment of the conference fee into the DoH bank account was once again repeated. A few of the participants however made their payments on the conference day.

1.2 Accommodation

Anita Hotel where the conference was hosted accommodated 44% of the 175 registered participants. Other nearby hotels used and the corresponding percentage of participants hosted is as follows: Treasure Land (13%), Mckeown Hotel (10.9%), Tusand (6%), Palfina (5%), Royal Basin (5%), Fausamed (5%), Viki Party(4%), Camp Martins (3.4%), Asantewaa Hotels (2%) and Maple Wool (1%).

Some of the participants who were hosted in the other hotels were not pleased with the hotel reservation and shuttling arrangement made for them. Some of their concerns for example were that they were sent to hotels where there were no rooms available for them, only for them to be stranded late into the night still searching for rooms and resorting to put up with acquaintances on the first night.

2.0 DESIGN OF PROGRAMME

2.1 Eucharistic Celebration

The Conference begun with the Holy Mass celebrated and con-celebrated by Most Rev Gabriel Anokye, Archbishop of Kumasi Archdiocese and Most Rev. Joseph Afrifah Agyekum respectively. In the Homily, the celebrant related the ills we see in society today to the attitude of some Christians in the era of Paul, stressing that the attitude against which Paul in the Second Reading was admonishing the believers is what we see in our day. Christians have not done good to the country he said, we intellectuals have not helped our country, we misanalyze the truth to the detriment of the ordinary person. 'We should stand for the truth', the Archbishop said, ' and 'as health workers, we need to show the fruits of the Spirit in our work- Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness and Self control.'

The Opening Ceremony was graced with the presence of dignitaries from the religious bodies- Archbishop of Kumasi Archdiocese, Episcopal Chairman of Health, Chancellor for Konongo-Mampong Diocese and other religious congregations; government institutions- the Ashanti Regional Minister's representative; NCHS Partners- Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Christian Health Association of Ghana, Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health, National Health Insurance Authority; and members of the traditional houses- the Queenmother of Ejisu and other Chiefs and elders.

2.2 Welcome Address & Official Opening

The Archdiocesan Health Service Director for Kumasi Diocese welcomed all present and stated that the annual conference has improved its significance over the period noting the theme for the conference speaks it all. The conference was opened and chaired by the Episcopal Chairman and Bishop of Koforidua Diocese, Most Rev Joseph Agyekum Afrifah.

2.3 Fraternal Messages

There were a couple of fraternal messages from CHAG, GHS, traditional chief of Ejisu, National Health Insurance Authority, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, and the Ashanti Regional Minister.

Speaker after speaker commended the NCHS for organizing the conference to assess performance and also for playing a leading role in providing health care to the peripheries of the country. **Saint Martin's Hospital, Agroyesum, was cited as an exemplor for its free surgery services to patients in that community** The partners bemoaned the delay in NHIS claims and the negative impact of capitation on some health institutions. The stakeholders pledged their support to continue to partner with the NCHS and the need for continuous

dialogue to smoothen the rough edges of capitation to improve health care delivery in the country. They pronounced their blessings adding that the activities of NCHS will never be in vain.

2.3.1 Highlights of Speech by Guest speaker

In his remarks the guest speaker for the conference stated that the NCHS is a big partner to the GHS in health care delivery, noting that the theme of the conference is an indication of no room for complacency. He noted the following:

- Capitation grant favors big hospital and not clinics; He charged the NCHS to work in this area
- More people are attracted to work in faith based institutions than Government institutions as such packages should be more attractive
- NCHS performs better than GHS institutions
- NCHS have strengths and as such should be utilized.
- Invest more in critical staff especially nurses and doctors

His speech highlighted the following Challenges with NCHS facilities

- Emergency preparedness is very weak in NCHS facilities
- The above facilities are being manned by low skill staff
- thus conference of this nature should push NCHS forward to strengthen and deepen its performance in health care delivery

2.3.2 Director health Directorate's speech

His speech centered on the NCHS maintaining its unique identity and the active support of donors, increase number in service data, QI work recognized locally and internationally in reducing U5 death. Moving forward, the Lean approach will be used to provide health care.

2.3.3 Speech by Episcopal Chairman of Health

He commended the NCHS for a good job done over the period and urged all to keep it up. He indicated that the Bishop's conference charged the NCHS to revamp the PPP to eliminate waste in the system and within the first year of its operations, it had achieved 25% profit. He commended the task force and all for supporting the PPP. He however charged all the clinics heads to support the program

He suggested that:

- All NCHS staff should be well catered for
- Urged health workers to bring their skills to bear and be willing to help each other

- The role of the chaplain should be an integral part in health care delivery
- The entire hospital system should provide holistic care to the patient
- NCHS should extend its services to other areas and take advantage of ICT in providing quality health care
- Need to maintain catholic identity and teach the next generation the ethics of the church
- Quality improvement introduced into the hospitals have saved lives especially U5 and this should extend to cover other areas

He noted the following unintended consequences/challenges

- Relationship with GHS at some hierarchy is impeding progress of work at some health institutions
- Mistrust among health workers. Role of health workers should not be seen as competitors but to compliment
- conflict and rivalry between NCHS facilities and GHS in upper west and Volta region

He made a passionate appeal to government to rehabilitate and complete the theaters in Jirapa and Damango hospitals

He expressed his dissatisfaction about capitation grant and wondered if any evaluation was done before its nationwide scale up. Asked the directors to look into the claims system so it does not collapse the NCHS clinics

2.4 Awards

Awards were given to deserving staff-both junior and senior categories and honorary awards-for their hard work and dedication to the Service.

Honorary Awardees include:

- St Laetitia Agatha Ofoma from St Edward Clinic, Dwinyama
- Sr. Maria Erwina, S.Sp.S, Chief Accountant at St. Joseph's Clinic and Maternity Home, Kwaho Tafo
- Dr. Martin Kwadwo Attu, Medical Director at Holy Family Hospital, Berekum
- Sr. Juana Leonarda Garrido Marquez of Our Lady of Rocio Clinic and Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre, Walewale.

Best worker from the Senior and Junior Staff Categories went to Mrs. Alice Odoom-Poku, a nurse manager at St. Francis Xavier Hospital, Assin Fosu and Mr. Peter Takyi Acheampong, a Principal Executive Officer, Holy Family Hospital, Techiman respectively.

This year, the NCHS for the first time awarded dioceses which have hosted the annual conference in the past. The list is as follows:

1st Annual NCHS CONFERENCE, Year 2003: Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese

2nd Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2004: Koforidua Diocese

3rd Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2005: Wa Diocese

4th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2006: Kumasi Archdiocese

5th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2007: Cape Coast Archdiocese

6th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2008: Tamale Archdiocese

7th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2009: Ho Diocese

8th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2010: Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese

9th Annual NCHS Conference, Year 2011: Sunyani Diocese

2.5 Exhibitions

A host of pharmaceutical companies were invited to exhibit their products at the annual conference as has been the practice for some years now. The exhibition affords the participants, especially the hospital and clinic managers to meet with the suppliers of both medical and non-medical consumables. Out of the 15 invited exhibitors, only six companies actually registered and exhibited their products. The exhibitors include *Health Access Network, Unicom Limited, Aryton Drugs, Tobinco Pharmacy, Vicdoris, Pharmaceuticals and Phinat Pharmacy.*

2.6 Technical Sessions

Presentations were made in three sessions on the topics: The Lean Approach, Patient Safety & Financial Sustainability. Participants were grouped into three with each group rotating through each of the sessions.

2.6.1 Session One: Lean Approach

This session was led by Dr. Patrick Yamoah, a Quality Improvement Advisor and the Medical Director at Mercy Women's Centre, Mankessim. He started by saying,

".....Hospitals, especially Mission Hospital, are very wasteful, too wasteful...."

He explained that the NCHS is focusing on a paradigm shift and a systematic way of eliminating waste so as to improve quality care in all the health institutions. The lean approach goes beyond the traditional way of problem solving- naming, shaming and blaming. It rather opens up to the fact that *'anyone can make a mistake'* and encourages and supports *open reporting of mistakes* and goes through the process of *root cause problem analysis*.

The take home message on the lean approach is that, it

- Eliminates waste
- Improves quality
- Reduces costs
- Delights customers
- Improves employee satisfaction
- Increases safety

His presentation sparked the following discussions

- Wastage in the ward: since management doesn't really track who is using for example the gloves, how much of it is being used and how it is stored, etc, management tends to lose a lot of money due to mismanagement of medical consumables. With the lean approach, the way forward is to *'get the right person to do the right job to avoid waste'*, participants concluded.
- It came up strongly that the focus should not only be the *lean approach* but *functional lean approach*. And cutting down of waste should be the duty of management.
- A question was asked if management ensures daily scheduling of task to cut down waste in the system. Responses from participants indicated that daily scheduling is not applicable to all the facilities due to shortage of staff noting also that, training institutions send student nurses but their services are not fully utilized.
- The issue also came up that some facilities have the *'privilege'* of getting student nurses all the time, sometimes in *excess*, and again sometimes even to the neglect of other institutions and Participants would want the NCHS to look into it.

2.6.2 Session Two: Promoting Patient Safety

This session was delivered by Dr. Ernest Asiedu, a Quality Improvement Advisor and the Coordinator for Community and Institutional Care Unit at the Health Directorate. He explained that, the NCHS' interest in strengthening Patient safety in our facilities is to prevent inadvertent harm to patients by understanding the causative factors, identifying risks and vulnerabilities and controlling them to provide the safest medical practice environment within all our institutions.

The emphasis here is to fix the system error whenever harm is done to a patient, rather than to apportion blame on an individual. Participants had the opportunity to discuss some of the hazards at their workplaces that can pose harm to the patients and staff, brainstorming some solutions to those underlying problems.

2.6.3 Session Three: Financial Sustainability

Mr. Patrick Nomo, a finance manager at the Ministry of Health facilitated the session. He gave a general overview of what financial sustainability is, the determinants and steps to ensure financial sustainability.

- *Financial sustainability is achieved when a business is able to deliver services to its clients at a price that covers their expenses and generates a profit.*

Relating the above definition and discussion to the Catholic ethics and values of *pro poor*, Mr. Nomo explained that profit in this case would be referred to as *surplus* when the NCHS institutions cover their expenses and have that 'extra' money left.

Take home message on financial sustainability is

- *Financial Sustainability requires accountability, planning and foresight.*
- *Sustainability is a process; not a destination*
- *In financially sustainable businesses, long term profitability takes priority over any short term gains.*

2.7 Abstract Presentation: Poster and Oral

This year's annual conference afforded the NCHS as a whole and specifically the facilities that have shown significant improvement in their work, the opportunity to showcase their work and buttress the strategic focus the NCHS has employed-using Continuous Quality Improvement to enhance service delivery. Six abstracts were selected for poster presentation and two for oral presentations. St Martin de Porres, Agomanya made the presentation on the success they have

achieved using QI methods to reduce their institutional Under 5 mortality. Mole Health Centre although not an NCHS facility, is one of the sites where the Project Fives Alive! Work is ongoing. The facility was therefore selected to make a presentation on how they have improved referral compliance for sick children from Mole Clinic to West Gonja Hospital.

The key message from both presentations was:

St Martin de Porres, Agomanya:

Improvement can occur when front line staff who provide care pay attention to their local data, analyze it and make informed decisions with the data. Leadership support and interest in QI activities tremendously motivates the QI team to commit to rapid cycle test which leads to improvement. The MDG 4 is attainable with the active involvement of the people who matter- the community, and the health providers.

Mole Health Centre:

More attention to family counselling and partnership with communities by health staff yields positive behaviours that can reduce child morbidity and mortality.

2.8 Dinner

The whole conference ended on a lighter note with a dinner dance where the Episcopal Chairman of Health, the Director of the Health Directorate and all dignitaries present treated themselves to cheerful night, dancing, feasting and making merry.

2.9 Conclusion

All activities carried out during the NCHS 10th Annual Conference expounded on the theme 'Deepening the Performance Improvement and Sustainability Agenda within the NCHS'. In all, the annual conference was a big success, with the active involvement of facility managers, health directorate staff and the top notch leadership of the NCHS. Delegates left with the message of working harder to build on the successes of the past, to improve on the health system now and ensure a sustained National Catholic Health Service.

Report by

Josephine Agyeman-Duah and Salomey Dery

ANNEX 1

MESSAGE DELIVERED BY PROF.OHENE ADJEI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE KOMFO ANOKYE TEACHING AT THE OPENING OF THE 10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE HELD ON 17TH OCTOBER 2012

The Episcopal bishop in charge of health of the catholic bishop conference of Ghana

The archbishop of the of the Kumasi Catholic Diocese

Chancellor, Konongo-Mampong Diocese

Director of the National Catholic Health Service

Executive Director of CHAG

Institutional managers of Catholic health facilities

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with the deepest sense of honour that I stand before such an august and distinguished gathering of healthcare providers and promoters in the country.

I am grateful to the organizers of the 10th Annual Conference of the National Catholic Health Service (NCHS) of Ghana for the kind invitation to me to be part of this all important conference.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me first of all to commend the NCHS for instituting this annual conference to periodically assess your performance so as to devise more effective strategies to optimize your drive for quality health care delivery in the country.

As the saying goes, an unexamined life is not worth living and it is appropriate that as health care providers, we commit ourselves to a culture of regular self appraisal and continuous improvement in the quality of services we provide.

Your theme for the , **‘Deepening the Performance Improvement and Sustainability Agenda within the NCHS’** therefore, most appropriate.

I have no doubt that a conference of this nature will provide the appropriate platform for the dispassionate treatment of the theme in order to engender continuous improvement in the commendable standard of care set by Catholic hospitals in the country.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the contributions of the Catholic Church to the steady but gradual improvement in the health status of Ghanaians over the years can never be discounted.

The Catholic Church, through the National Catholic Health Service, has to its credit decades of investments in the development of health facilities in the most deprived areas of Ghana.

As the leading health service provider in the peripheral areas of the country, the NCHS has played a leading role in making access to health care equitable and affordable to Ghanaians and must be commended for that.

As the leading advance health care provider and trainer in this part of the country, the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) wishes to indicate its readiness to compliment the good work being done by the NCHS through a special partnership. Our two institutions need to leverage our relative strength in order to provide a continuum of healthcare services that the people of this country so much deserve.

Through a mutually arranged framework of collaboration, the NCHS and KATH can ensure a seamless provision of primary, secondary and tertiary health care services through exchange of best practices and capacity building initiatives.

The Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital has extensive range of expertise and capabilities clinical care that can easily be transferred to the medical staff of NCHS institutions through this collaborative framework.

Notwithstanding the enviable gains made in the health sector of the country over the decades, a lot more needs to be done if we are to meet the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals on health. We definitely need to combine our resources if we are to improve and sustain the standards of health care delivery in Ghana.

It is my hope that in the months and year ahead, our two institutions will find a common ground for co-operation in order to further enhance the quality of services we render to the people of this country.

Your Grace The Archbishop in-charge of Health of the Catholic Bishop Conference of Ghana, the archbishop of the of the Kumasi Catholic Diocese, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, before I bring my address to a close, permit to wish you the best of deliberations.

It is my prayer and hope that by the end of this three-day conference, you will have found the key to deepening the Performance Improvement and Sustainability Agenda of the National Catholic Health Service. I wish you a productive conference and may the Good Lord richly bless you for your attention. Thank you.

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