

TZ to integrate epilepsy care into health system

By DATIVA MINJA

THE Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Italian government and local partners has reaffirmed its commitment to integrating epilepsy and disability care into the national health system.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister for Health, Ms Jestina Mhagama, the Director of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Omari Mbuguni, said epilepsy remains among the top three non-communi-

cable diseases in Tanzania for the 2024/2025 financial year.

Mr Mbuguni disclosed that over 190,000 people sought care for epilepsy at public health facilities last year. However, he said that stigma and widespread misconceptions continue to prevent many more from accessing treatment.

"Stigma remains a major challenge. People are afraid to go to the hospital for fear of being humiliated or excluded," he said.

A key initiative addressing these challenges is the SHINE Project, which is funded by the Italian government through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Italian Ambassador to Tanzania, Mr Giuseppe Sean Coppola, described SHINE as one of Italy's most impactful development initiatives in Tanzania in recent years.

"Its impact has been tangible, and we are proud of the achievements made possible

through true partnership. We were especially honoured to witness this during the visit of high-level Italian representatives," he said.

"At the heart of this project is a strong social dimension, particularly its focus on inclusion and disability. This is a core value not only in our work in Tanzania but across Africa. The SHINE Project exemplifies the spirit of genuine cooperation."

He added that Italy's development approach is guided

by three principles: proximity to the people, support with respect for autonomy, and collaboration for the common good.

SHINE Project Coordinator and Country Representative for Comunità Solidali Nel Mondo, Ms Valentina Decao stressed the need to expand the project's reach.

"Among our recommendations is the mobilisation of financial resources to extend coverage to additional regions. We also suggest cas-

cading the training of health-care workers from referral hospitals down to dispensary level," she said.

She further underscored the importance of economic inclusion for people living with epilepsy.

"People with epilepsy should have access to vocational training to help them achieve economic independence. Many lose their jobs due to lack of awareness and understanding in society. With greater societal aware-

ness, they can live normal, productive lives just like anyone else."

A technical expert with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Ms Sara Pini highlighted the project's significance, calling it a milestone in inclusive development.

"The SHINE Project marks a key moment in our shared journey to enhance inclusion and support for people with disabilities in Tanzania," she said.

She also pointed to one of the project's landmark achievements: the publication of Tanzania's first national book on epilepsy care.

"This book addresses epilepsy a neurological condition classified under NCDs and explores not only the medical aspects but also the socio-cultural barriers faced by people living with the condition. It offers practical recommendations for improving epilepsy care in the Tanzanian context."

Medical camp to offer specialist care to over 500 patients in Kilimanjaro

From HECKTON CHUWA in Kilimanjaro

MORE than 500 patients are expected to receive affordable specialist medical services at an ongoing five-day medical camp being held at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) Regional Referral Hospital.

The initiative was officially launched at KCMC by Dr Hassan Fyumangwa Managing Director of Tanlink Medical Tourism Agency a health facilitation company that helps patients access quality medical treatment.

Dr Fyumangwa said the camp brings together specialist doctors from India who are working in collaboration with local experts at KCMC to provide both medical consultations and surgical interventions where needed.

"The specialist services include treatment and consultation for brain and neurological disorders such as brain tumours, spinal and nerve conditions, orthopedic issues including bone and joint diseases, as well as general advisory services," he said.

He said that the goal of the camp is to make expert medical care more accessible to Tanzanians who might otherwise be forced to travel abroad for treatment they cannot afford.

"This camp provides a cost-effective alternative for patients who would otherwise incur high expenses seeking treatment overseas. By bringing the specialists here, we're reducing the financial burden on patients," he noted.

Dr Honest Massawe, from the Department of Orthopedics at KCMC, described the camp as a unique opportunity for patients to consult top-level specialists without leaving the country.

"Medical experts from India are working closely with KCMC doctors throughout the five-day camp, aiming to address a wide range of health concerns with professional care and guidance," Dr Massawe said.

He added that, in addition to consultations, surgical procedures will also be performed at KCMC for patients in need.

"As of today (yesterday), more than 300 patients had already registered for the camp," he said. "The majority are from Kilimanjaro Region, but others have traveled from as far as Dar es Salaam, Manyara, Coast Region, and even the Lake Zone."

Speaking on behalf of the patients, Mr David Brian thanked the organisers for bringing specialised services within reach of ordinary Tanzanians.

"Many people struggle to access even basic medical care, let alone the kind of specialist services being offered at this camp. For many, these are services they never thought they would be able to afford in their lifetime," he said.

He praised the camp for not only offering expert consultations but also providing surgical referrals for patients who require further intervention.

"This initiative is a lifeline. It brings hope and healing to those who otherwise had no options," he added.



More companies meet LATRA's online ticketing requirements

By DAILY NEWS Reporter

THE number of companies meeting the Land Transport Regulatory Authority's (LATRA) criteria for online ticketing has increased from three to five in just two weeks.

The rise follows LATRA's decision to grant a 14-day grace period to companies facing minor technical challenges, allowing them time to make necessary improvements before stricter enforcement begins.

LATRA had earlier announced July 1, 2025, as the deadline for all service providers to integrate their ticketing systems with the LATRA Ticketing System and the Tanzania Revenue Authority's Electronic Fiscal Device Management System (EFDMS).

In a statement released by the

authority and signed by LATRA's Head of Communication Unit, Mr Salum Pazy, it was confirmed that, by July 19, 2025, two additional companies had successfully completed the registration process and met all legal requirements, bringing the total number of approved companies to five.

"As of now, LATRA has authorised five companies to provide online ticketing services in the country," Mr Pazy said.

The five authorised companies are: Busbora Company Limited, Hashtech Tanzania Limited, Iyishe Company Limited, Otapp Agency Company Limited and Web Corporation Limited.

Mr Pazy also noted that four other companies are in the final stages of the registration process, having shown commendable progress. These are: AB Courier Express Limited, Logix Compa-

ny Limited, Mkombozi Infotech Company and Sepatech Company Limited.

"LATRA is satisfied with the progress these companies are making and continues to support them to ensure they finalise registration procedures promptly," he added.

Meanwhile, LATRA continues to strengthen the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance service delivery.

The authority is currently operating several digital systems, including the Railway and Road Information Management System (RRIMS), the Vehicle Tracking System (VTS), the e-Ticketing System, the LATRA Application System (LATRA App), the e-Mrejesho System, and the National e-Procurement System of Tanzania (NeST).

Mr LATRA Director General, Habibu Suluo highlighted recent achievements, particularly those linked to the implementation of the Vehicle Tracking System.

"Since the introduction of the VTS, LATRA has made significant strides, including reducing road accidents caused by speeding and improving the investigation process when accidents occur," said Suluo.

He further explained that the VTS also features a driver identification mechanism, known as the I-Button, which allows the system to recognise who is behind the wheel at any given time.

Additionally, Suluo noted that LATRA recently established a 24-hour customer service centre to handle public inquiries and expedite the resolution of disputes and other service-related challenges.

GEITA Regional Commissioner Martine Shigela addresses the public on government achievements in the region during a press conference in Dodoma yesterday. (Photo by Correspondent)

Morogoro Municipality benefits from 49.2bn/- projects

From JOHN NDITI in Morogoro

MOROGORO Municipal Council has received more than 49.2bn/- over the past four years under the sixth phase government, enabling the implementation of numerous community development projects, including major investments in the health sector.

Municipal Director Mr Emmanuel Mkongo provided the update recently, saying development achievements recorded between the 2021/2022 and 2024/2025 financial years.

According to Mkongo, the funds were allocated to various sectors, including the construction of a district hospital at a cost of 3.3bn/-.

Other notable projects include the construction of six new secondary schools costing 2.2bn/- and four new primary schools built at a cost of 1.3bn/-.

He added that part of the funding was used to construct the Machinga Complex Market, which cost 690m/-.

He also said that 20.5 kilometres of tarmac roads and 4.4 kilometres of stormwater drainage systems were constructed at a cost of 19.6bn/-.

Mkongo further outlined sectoral allocations: 3.3bn/- for primary education, 6.7bn/- for secondary education, 5.3bn/- for the health sector and 2.2bn/- for business development and economic empowerment.

Infrastructure development received the largest share of 21.2bn/-, while the agriculture and livestock sector were allocated 385m/-.

The administration sector received 365m/-.

Residents of Morogoro Municipality have welcomed the developments, praising the sixth phase government for financially empowering their council and improving essential services, especially in health.

A resident of Mkundi Ward Asha Juma, expressed her appreciation for the construction of the district hospital in the area, noting that it has made healthcare more accessible for residents of Mkundi and neighbouring Kihonda Ward.

"Previously, we had to travel long distances to access treatment at health centers like Sabasaba or Nunge in the town centre. Thanks to the new hospital, we can now get quality medical care close to home, especially important during emergencies at night," said Asha.

The newly built hospital now serves seven villages: Bwizanduru, Butailuka, Maruku, Kyanshozi, and three nearby villages of Bulinda (5 km), Buguruka (7 km), and Butahyaibega (4 km), with a combined population of over 250,000 people.

Over 1,500 Kagera residents receive free treatment from US specialists

From MEDDY MULISA in Bukoba

MORE than 1,500 residents of Kagera Region have received free medical care from a US-based team of specialists during a four-day medical camp held at Maruku Health Centre, an initiative that has saved many lives, including children.

One of the beneficiaries, Ms Devotha Kaigwa (45), from Kanyangereko Ward in Bukoba Rural District, expressed her heartfelt gratitude after undergoing a successful surgery performed by the visiting medical team.

Ms Kaigwa had been bedridden since June 29th last

year after suffering a severe femur fracture in a road accident. The condition worsened due to infection and improper healing. The US medical team treated her by inserting an intramedullary nail in her right leg, enabling her to walk again.

"On behalf of other Kagera residents, I thank the US-based specialist team for offering advanced medical services free of charge. This initiative has truly saved lives. Strengthening healthcare services at all levels is crucial," she said.

The outreach was coordinated by AHEAD Inc (USA), founded by Dr Winnie Mpanju, which recently donated

medical equipment worth 86m/- to Maruku Health Centre. The donation included 2,000 protective face shields, 31,200 boxes of gloves, and 2,400 surgical gowns.

Dr Mpanju said the funding came from Friends of AHEAD Inc and individual donors in the US, who quickly responded after learning that Tanzania was battling the Marburg Virus Disease (MVD), which claimed the life of a nurse in the region.

"AHEAD Inc (USA) stands side by side with our partners in Kagera as we continue our commitment to improving healthcare and education in Tanzania," said Dr Mpanju.

The medical camp was supported by 27 volunteers from the US, including nurses from the New York State Nurses' Association (NYSNA), physicians, and dentists who offered medical consultations, surgeries, and dental care.

In collaboration with its Tanzanian chapter, AHEAD Inc Tanzania, the organisation also donated medical equipment worth 214.4m/-. Items included a sonogram machine with printer, a universal anaesthesia machine, an ultrasound device, a blood bank refrigerator, pharmaceutical storage freezers, folding screens with curtains, and blood grouping reagent kits.

Receiving the donation, Bukoba District Commissioner Mr Erasto Sima thanked AHEAD Inc and the Tanzanian diaspora for their continued support of government efforts in health and education.

"We are deeply grateful for this timely intervention. Your support significantly strengthens service delivery and complements our development agenda," he said.

Bukoba District Medical Officer (DMO) Dr Bandidi Gaviole commended AHEAD Inc for funding the construction of a surgical theatre at Maruku Health Centre, calling it a milestone for the district. He urged residents to safeguard the infrastructure

for future generations.

Maruku Ward Councilor Mr George Magezi said the facility has transformed healthcare access for residents, who previously had to walk 25 kilometres to reach Bukoba Regional Referral Hospital (BRRH).

"Many children and pregnant women died on the way to the referral hospital. This centre is a lifeline," he said.

Maruku Ward includes four villages of Bwizanduru, Butailuka, Maruku, and Kyanshozi and also serves neighboring villages such as Bulinda (5 km), Buguruka (7 km), and Butahyaibega (4 km), reaching a combined population of around 250,000.

Improved healthcare is essential to national development, as a healthy population is more productive and contributes significantly to economic growth. Strengthening public health systems at the grassroots is vital for both curative and preventive services.

However, rural women in particular continue to face significant challenges, including poverty fueled by outdated cultural practices and marginalisation. While they play a central role in agriculture and rural enterprise, structural support remains inadequate to break the cycle of poverty, despite their critical contributions to both local and global economies.