

The health sector is struggling under a sharp drop in donor support.

BY TONNY ABET

New details indicate that at least Shs397 billion from the Shs8.1 trillion supplementary expenditures approved by Parliament on Tuesday will go to Uganda's health sector.

According to the parliamentary Budget Committee report, the largest portion—Shs269b—will go to the National Medical Stores (NMS). The remainder will be allocated to the Ministry of Health, the Uganda Heart Institute, and Moroto Regional Referral Hospital.

For NMS, the committee observed that the Shs269b will fund medical and health supplies for the newly constructed Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Referral Hospital in Mbuya and address wage shortfalls.

Part of the funds will also address gaps in the storage and distribution of additional GAVI (vaccine) supplies expected this financial year, as well as medical supplies handed over to the government by USAID. The money will also cover procurement affected by previous USAID withdrawals, the report said.

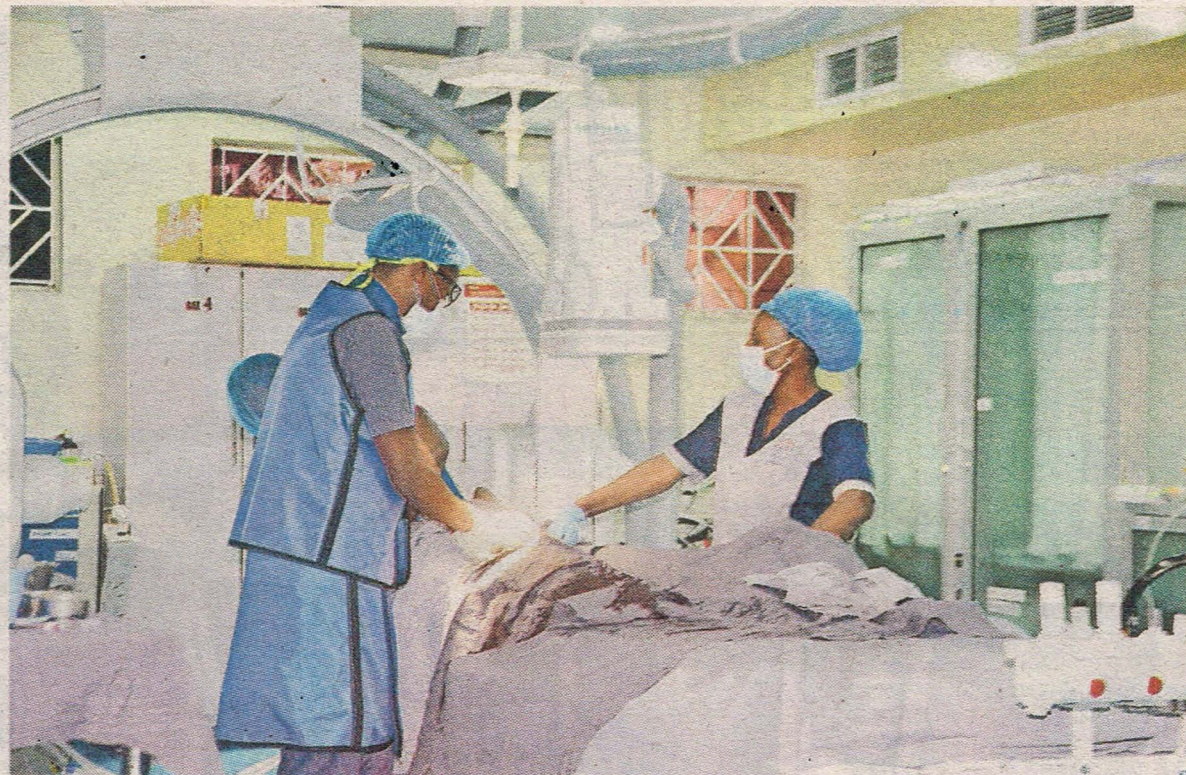
The health sector is struggling under a sharp drop in donor support, with external funding for the national health budget declining from 49 percent in 2022 to just 23 percent in 2025, according to a joint report by the Uganda National NGO Forum and the Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD).

The report notes that this decline, coupled with insufficient domestic funding increases, has eroded service quality, leaving many vulnerable Ugandans struggling to access essential care.

Ms Flavia Kyomukama, the head of the National Forum of People Living with HIV/Aids Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU), said members are reporting stock-outs of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) due to distribution and supply gaps.

Previously, USAID coordinated drug

# How health sector will spend Shs390b extra cash



A patient undergoes catheterisation at Uganda Heart Institute. A total of Shs40 billion has been allocated to the Institute to settle payments on the 250-bed specialist facility in Naguru, Kampala. PHOTO/FILE

distribution, ensuring facilities with excess supplies supported those experiencing shortages. Kyomukama said:

"NMS and Joint Medical Stores (JMS) are trying to catch up, but districts still report stock-outs. Redistribution is ongoing, but challenges persist."

## Ministry of Health Allocations

The Ministry of Health received a combined Shs87.6b under two requests. Shs17.95 billion will address shortfalls created by the withdrawal of US funding for essential health ser-

vices, including laboratory operations, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) programmes, health management information systems, and WASH initiatives.

## Covering gaps

An additional Shs59.693b will cover other gaps caused by the US withdrawal, ensuring there are no drug stock-outs or related health crises. While some of this overlaps with the NMS allocation, the ministry oversees overall supervision, monitoring, and coordi-

nation of health services.

The ministry also received Shs10b for operational costs of the National Ambulance System, addressing fuel shortages and mechanical breakdowns that have left many ambulances non-operational.

Parliament cleared Shs40b for the Uganda Heart Institute to settle outstanding payments on the long-awaited 250-bed specialist facility in Naguru. The funds come from loans and grants provided by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa

## ALLOCATION

-NMS: Shs269b – UPDF Hospital supplies, wages, GAVI & USAID stock

-Ministry of Health: Shs87.6b – Labs, NTDs, WASH, ambulance ops

-Uganda Heart Institute: Shs40b – 250-bed cardiac hospital, 3 ORs, 2 cath labs, 40 ICU beds

-Moroto Hospital: Shs249m – Unicef child nutrition programmes

(BADEA), the OPEC Fund, and the Saudi Fund for Development.

Construction of the \$73 million (Shs268.6 billion) heart hospital began in February to expand cardiac care beyond Mulago hospital. The facility, located six kilometres from Kampala's city centre, will sit on 10 acres and comprise three blocks: clinical, administration, and accommodation. It will feature three operating theatres, two catheterisation labs, and 40 modern cardiac ICU beds. Catheterisation involves inserting a thin tube into a body vessel to diagnose and treat conditions.

A smaller allocation of Shs249 million went to Moroto Regional Referral Hospital in Karamoja to enable the facility to spend Unicef funds already received for child nutrition programmes. The committee noted that these funds were approved after the FY2025/2026 Budget and required supplementary approval before expenditure. However, challenges such as drug distribution and operational inefficiencies remain pressing concerns for Uganda's health sector.