

# Mobile clinic gives hope to TB patients in Teso

BY SUZAN NANJALA

**SOROTI.** Soroti Regional Referral Hospital has received a major boost in the fight against tuberculosis (TB) following the acquisition of a mobile clinic van aimed at improving detection and treatment, especially in hard-to-reach communities.

The mobile clinic, valued at about \$300,000 (approximately Shs1.2 billion), is expected to expand TB outreach services across Teso Sub-region, where health officials say many cases remain undetected due to limited access to health facilities.

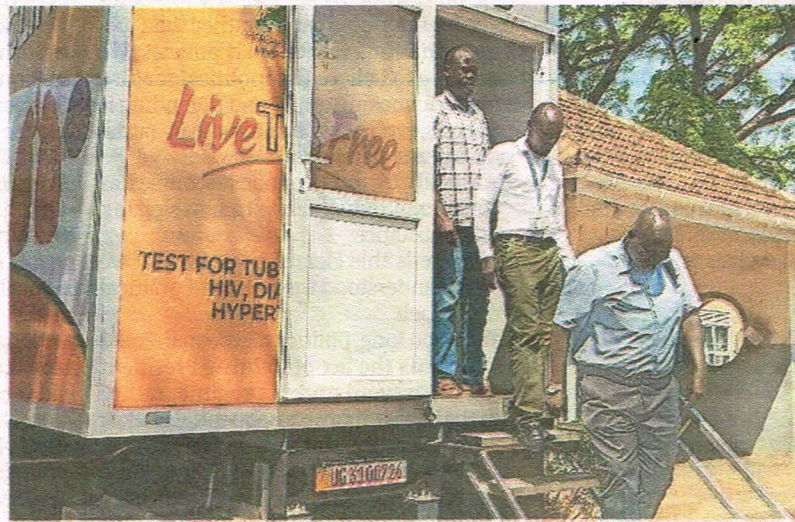
The hospital's principal administrator, Mr Bezy Omoya, said the mobile medical unit was delivered last week and

will be deployed across all districts in the region to take TB services closer to the population.

"We shall be moving into communities to look for TB patients who would not ordinarily come to the hospital. We plan to visit several health centres, markets, churches and other public places across the 10 districts in Teso," Mr Omoya said.

He revealed that the hospital diagnoses more than 400 TB cases every quarter, but noted that the figures likely represent only a fraction of the actual burden in the community.

"These numbers are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many people with TB symptoms who have not yet been tested or diagnosed," he said, calling on communities to welcome the outreach



Officials supervise the mobile clinic at Soroti Regional Referral Hospital. PHOTO/SUZAN WANJALA

initiative.

The National Coordinator for TB Mobile Van Services, Mr Didas Tusumusirize, said the mobile clinics have significantly improved TB detection na-

tionwide. "On average, more than 1,000 TB patients are detected countrywide each year through the mobile van programme," he said.

Mr Tusumusirize added that the mo-

bile clinic is equipped to conduct integrated screening for HIV, diabetes and hypertension, allowing patients to be tested and treated simultaneously.

The Regional TB and Leprosy Coordinator for Teso, Sr Ruth Frances Ajoket, said TB positivity rates remain a concern.

"Out of every 100 people we test, at least two are found to have TB. At the regional hospital, about 20 cases are detected for every 1,000 people tested," she said.

Sr Ajoket urged residents to seek medical attention early once they notice symptoms such as persistent coughing, night sweats or general weakness.

"People should take charge of their health. Once you notice signs and symptoms, do not wait. Visit the nearest health facility for testing and treatment," she said.

The Hospital Director, Dr Benedicto Watmon, said the facility is intensifying TB control efforts in response to the high case burden in the region. He called on district health officers to work closely with the hospital's TB team to fully utilise the mobile clinic.