



Laikipia on the Verge of Medical Revolution



Laikipia County is set to experience a medical revolution after Governor Ndiritu Muriithi revealed the plan to realizing it. It involves having one health service, focusing on preventative healthcare, educating citizens on healthy lifestyle and nutrition, among others. **PG 2**

Governor Ndiritu Muriithi Overhauls Health Sector

Laikipia's health sector is undergoing a kind of revolution never witnessed anywhere in the country before.

The county started with the creation of a unified healthcare service in which anybody seeking service is viewed and treated not as a patient but as a customer. Dispensaries, health centres and other health care level facilities are no longer there in Laikipia.

Instead there is one health service- Laikipia Health Service- with many branches scattered across the county.

"We want a uniform service for our customers seeking any service from any of our branches. What it means is that if you enter our system at Nakwang you'll get the same standard of treatment and customer experience as our customer who is in LHS Nyahururu or LHS Nanyuki," Chief Officer Donald Mogoi says.

After rebranding all the 90 health facilities, the county government has started sample referrals. In case a customer is in need of a laboratory test at a facility which does not have a lab, the patient is not referred to another facility. Instead, he or she gives out a sample which is sent to the nearest facility with a laboratory and the results are transmitted back.

Also on rollout is a one-hospital technology platform which will network all the LHS facilities to realize e-medicine and 100 per cent prescription fill-up rate. The prescription fill rate has improved from 50% in 2017 to 80% this year.

This means medical specialists will soon start consulting across the platform with ease.

This will also end issues of lack of drugs as the system supports networked pharmacy. Never again



will patients be told there is no medicine if it is in one of LHS facilities.

"We are also in the process of installing MRI, CT scan and additional renal capacity at LHS Nanyuki and LHS Nyahururu. In addition, we will also be able to provide enhanced laboratories diagnostic equipment in all LHS hubs," Dr Mogoi said.

More importantly, treating diseases is a very expansive affair. So Governor Ndiritu Muriithi says his government will invest more on primary healthcare and diagnostic equipment as part of the efforts to achieve universal healthcare.

The strategy includes ensuring high quality health and sanitation of all eateries and food handling facilities educating citizens on healthy lifestyle and nutrition, expansion of waste collection and

installation of sewer systems in all smart towns, promoting and enforcing separation of waste at source and encouraging investment in waste recycling.

Governor Muriithi said he will incentivize households and businesses to enroll and sustain payment of NHIF contributions, expand the number of private medical insurance providers for Laikipia Health Service and also develop blended innovative medical insurance products, as a way of financing UHC.

Over 60 percent of Laikipia households have subscribed to NHIF medical cover. The county will continue supporting extremely poor and vulnerable households to pay for the NHIF. So far 28,000 households are enjoying the subsidy.

Employing Soft Security Measures



The National Government is working on a Sh6.5 billion soft security programme aimed at ending perennial conflicts in Laikipia, Baringo, Samburu and Isiolo counties.

According to Laikipia Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, the programme targets to raise literacy levels, provide water for domestic and livestock, and create alternative sources of livelihoods for the youth.

“This 6.5 billion shilling Amaya Triangle Initiative soft security programme is a very important agenda because that is what will ensure a lasting peace and pros-

perity in Laikipia and the neighbouring counties,” he said.

Over the last five years, the County Government of Laikipia has managed to open up, grade and gravel 300 kilometers in the newly created Kirima sub-county in the troubled Laikipia-Baringo border to ease movement of people and goods.

Modernization of small urban centres through provision of such enablers as water, electricity paved roads will attract more investments which will in turn create more jobs for youths who are ordinarily involved in deadly conflicts.

In the next five years, Governor Muriithi says his administration will increase its investment in the County Policing Authority and collaborate with the national government to equip the security teams for crime prevention and fast response to crime incidents.

The County Government of Laikipia will continue supporting the training of National Police Reservists at the county inspectorate training centre in Rumuruti, construct additional security roads and promote peace and co-existence among communities to further enhance security of the county.

Increasing Earning for Herders in Laikipia



Earnings for herders in Laikipia County will improve through the incorporation of a company to coordinate production, processing, marketing and distribution of county meat brands. This is a promise given by Governor Ndiritu Muriithi.

Livestock producers will get supply quotas to the Laikipia Meat Plc with which they will have off take arrangement.

Already, the World Bank is in the process of establishing a credit line through Kenya Development Corporation to support the project.

The WB support will focus on op-

erationization of the firm, livestock genetics and feeding.

“The firm is modelled along the lines of Githunguri Dairies, but this one is focusing on meat, whereby our livestock keepers will have supply quotas,” the governor said during a public meeting in Umande ward, Laikipia East constituency.

Under the arrangement, large-scale ranches are expected to become finishing centres for livestock. In 2020, cattle worth Sh746.8 million were slaughtered in Laikipia while 21,000 others worth Sh842 million were moved out of the county.

Governor Muriithi said proper

feeding and adequate water were critical for optimal livestock production across the county and that was the reason his administration was targeting co-invest with the private sector to establish between 40,000 to 60,000 acres of feed crops annually. He said his administration will support establishment of medium and large scale feedlots, unlock the true value of the county livestock industry and invest in livestock breeds improvement to raise meat and dairy yields.

The county has employed more than 100 extension officers to advise farmers on selection and production of high value crops and livestock.

The county will support financing for farm mechanization, drying, refrigeration and value addition.

In addition, the governor said he will implement warehouse receipt financing and contracts for high value crops as well as seasonal finance schemes to support farmers’ organizations to source certified seeds and inputs.

Leased Medical Equipment a Game-Changer in Laikipia

The County Government of Laikipia through Governor Ndiritu Muriithi has entered into an agreement of leasing of medical equipment that will see further transformation of this critical sector.

In the coming years Laikipia will have 10 fully equipped ambulances in addition to the already existing ones. This will see referrals done with ease and in the quickest manner possible.

Also, there will be ambulances on standby in case of any emergencies in any part of the county.

In the leasing program that is underway, Laikipia will

have;

- 1 MRI
- 2 CT scans (Nanyuki & Nyahururu)
- 2 X-Ray machines (Kimanjo + Rumuruti)
- 15 No. lab equipment for cluster lead facilities
- 15 Renal dialysis units; 10 for Nyahururu, 5 for Nanyuki (Currently, LHS Nanyuki has 7 renal dialysis units.)
- 2No. Biochem and Haematology machines (Nanyuki and Nyahururu)
- 15No. ultrasound equipment for all cluster lead facilities.

Delivery and installation of some of the machines are ongoing, while others are facilitating health sector provide quality of medical services to patients.

The need for leasing such machinery is because they are way expensive to buy and install. However, leasing ensures that upon the county making a down payment, the machines are delivered, installed and serve as though fully bought while the rest is paid in installments.

The County Government is focusing on preventative healthcare as opposed to waiting until a condition deteriorates for treatment. Through this, the administration will educate citizens on healthy lifestyle and nutrition.



Providing Long Term Solution to Water Problems



The County Government of Laikipia has addressed the long-term solution of water. As such, the government has both short-term and long-term ways of resolve the menace that has been a leading source of conflict especially among the pastoralist communities at the boarder points of counties.

Implementation of this Laikipia County master plan will connect additional 40,000 households to running water and at the same time irrigate 50,000 hectares.

In the short term plan, the government will work on a five-year strategic plan that includes construction of five mega dams, 15 privately owned dams, 130 boreholes, 231 dams, and increase bulk water supply by urban and rural water supply schemes.

Since 2017, the county government of Laikipia has made tremendous steps in addressing water problems. The Solio Water Project in Laikipia East is complete and operational.

The project has seen improved access to water and improved water quality for over 1,978 households, nine schools, and two health centers. Milk production has also increased from 15,000 liters to over 60,000 liters per month and farmers are now receiving monthly income.

Makurian Water Project is another project that has addressed water scarcity in Laikipia North. The construction of 42 kilometers of water pipeline constructed from an intake at Mount Kenya to Doldol has helped serve about 15,000 residents. Drilling and equipping of Lusukut borehole in Doldol provided 700 residents with water.

Kinamba Water Project, in Laikipia West Sub County has already started benefiting the locals. The project is expected to serve about 2,000 households with clean water for domestic and commercial use. The project comprises four boreholes and a 29km reticulation network to serve the citizens of Kinamba town and its environs.

Agony Turns Relief for Ngobit Family As It Stumbles On Years of Government Sponsored Medical Cover

Family stumbles on the news in the midst of a medical emergency that would have taken them back in the upward of 200,000 shillings, with the cover paying full cost of the surgery, hospital stay

Picture this, you find yourself in the midst of a medical emergency involving your loved one following an accident. You rush them to hospital, and as the medics assess the patient, they need to know whether you have health insurance cover. You are not, so you part with 500 shillings in cash for consultation fee. Moments later, results from the imaging confirms your worries—your patient has suffered a serious fracture—and you need over 200,000 shillings for a restorative surgery to put an implant. Time is running out, and the affected part is now swelling fast. All this while, the medical staff is regretting your lack of health insurance which would have sorted the issue straight away.

At this point, your mind is at a



Ms. Peris Muthoni, wife to the beneficiary

loss- raising 200,000 shillings means two things—sell out part of your small piece of land or organize a fundraiser, or even both—impractical solutions to such an emergency. All these happening in the midst of a devastating drought that has wiped out your lean herd of cattle, with the damage not sparing their last resort that was a small plantation of maize, tipping the scales against your modest income family.

Desperate moments call for desperate measure, so you even go ahead to suggest to be registered on the national health cover, then pay upfront the three months to qualify for the cover. But this proves futile as the regulations are that the card must be active for at least three months to qualify.

In the midst of the melee, something clicks in your mind. Few

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years back, the county government had invited residents of your village to a function where it promised to foot the insurance premiums for families who were unable to meet the cost. As far as you can recall, you were one of those families. Then you had dismissed the gesture as one of the usual political promises you are used to. But who knows...? This you disclose to the hospital staff, which they check with the national health insurer, NHIF. And alas! The rest, as they say, is history.

The doctors deliver the earth-shattering news to you. You and your hospitalized kin have been covered from the day the government registered.

This is the incredible story of the family of Benjamin and Peris Mathenge from Ngobit Ward, Laikipia East who, like many Kenyans, find themselves in a sudden medical need.

Like a fictional scenario unfolding, the events turned from rock-bottom desperation to a spirited relief in a moment's span, with emotional Mrs. Mathenge ex-



A community leader from Ngobit ward

plaining the moment as almost surreal.

At Matopeni Village, word of the event spread like wild fire, with residents celebrating the turn of events. The relief of the burden of another fundraiser was enough of a celebration, and several of them turned up to show their appreciation during this interview.

Peris Muthoni, wife to the patient was all emotional, heaping praises to the county government for coming to her aid at her weakest point when she least expected.

Their high school son, was also grateful for the turn of events, seeing as such a financial setback would have dealt a heavy

blow to his progress at school.

The Ngobit family is one on of the many families the County Government had singled out to have qualified to be eligible to have their insurance cover paid for by government. This program, which was as a result of rigorous background checks, has lived up to the objective of shielding families from out-of-pocket medical spending, a reality that has sunk families into deep financial crisis.

Through sustained engagements over the past few years, Laikipia County has risen to top the country on NHIF enrollment, at over 63 percent over the national average of less than 40 per cent.

At Mathari Hospital, Mathenge underwent a successful restorative surgery that saved his hip, and consequently his ability to move. At the time of the interview last week, Mr. Mathenge, who was lost for words in being grateful for the government support, was on his way to full recovery at home.