



UNMC NEWSLETTER ISSUE II

January – March 2024



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UNMC CONDUCT VALIDATION OF NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN THE COUNTRY

Over 1,000 nurses and midwives validated in
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Reader,

It is exciting to present to you the second issue of UNMC Quarterly Newsletter (January – March 2024). In this issue, we highlight stories recorded from key activities and events that have successfully been carried out by Management and staff of Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) towards achieving its mandate as a regulator of the nursing and midwifery profession in Uganda.

As UNMC, the work we do in regulating and supervising the nursing and midwifery profession in Uganda is enormous to comprehend in a single

issue. However, in the this 2nd issue, we have selected key stories and article that are informative and will benefit both our clients and clients of our clients.

This issue has three sections. The first section highlights major stories of key activities carried out throughout the quarter. I understand most of the stories have already been shared on our social media platforms, in this newsletter we expound on the posts with more detail and quotes. The second section is 'opinion articles' authored by our staff and some nurses & midwives. The last section is an exclusive interview with the Registrar on a wide range of issues which include the latest on URA stamp duty tax, online registration and licensure system, and many more.

As the editorial team, this issue is a step forward compared to the 1st issue, this is in terms of content and contributors and as a team we promise more improvement in the next issue. I encourage nurses and midwives to share their experience and wisdom through the UNMC newsletter in our forthcoming issue.

We believe that you will find this newsletter interesting and we hope to receive feedback about this issue through our website and social media platforms.

Ampeire Jacob

Public Relations & Communications Officer.

REGIONAL SATELLITE COORDINATORS TRAINED ON HOW TO USE OF THE UNMC ONLINE REGISTRATION AND LICENSURE SYSTEM



The Chairperson Governing Council (Seated, Second left) with satellite coordinators and staff after the training

On February, 15, 2024, Uganda Nurse Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) conducted a one-day training for all satellite coordinators from 13 regional satellite centers at Silver Springs Hotel, Kampala.

The aim of the training was to equip satellite coordinators with knowledge and skills on how to use the UNMC online Registration and Licensure system (ORLS) and enable them to attend to nurses and midwives in their respective regions on challenges and inquiries about the system.

Besides the training on online registration, satellite coordinators were updated on UNMC programs and current developments like the scope of practice and Continuing Professional Development.

The Registrar UNMC, Ms. Christine Nimwesiga, while giving her remarks, she reminded satellite coordinators that they have a big role to play in regulating the Nursing and Midwifery profession in Uganda.

“I normally tell my colleagues that where ever we are, we are all regulators, and we must appreciate that regulation is at different levels. All professionals are regulators. You are supposed to regulate yourself by following the ethical code of conduct and follow the standards of practice” Ms. Nimwesiga said.

At the end of the training, satellite coordinators were given reading material and documents like the scope of practice, Continuing Professional Development framework, brochures with steps to follow while using the system.

The chairperson Governing Council, Ms. Elizabeth Namukombe acknowledged and appreciated the management of UNMC for organizing such a training that would equip regional centers with basic skills to enable them provide timely assistance to nurses and midwives.

The chairperson in her remarks appreciated satellite coordinators for responding to the invitation and sparing time to attend the training.

“I believe and I know that learning has no end, every time you get to a learning session, there is at least something new that you have to pick. I believe that now, we have able leaders who are going to speak on behalf of the Council.” Ms. Namukombe said.

Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council has 13 satellite centers, with coordinators and most of whom are Senior Principal Nursing officers in Regional Referral Hospitals (SPNOs) and they help in coordinating nurses and midwives at a regional level and with the online registration system, they are key in providing timely assistance and coordinating feedback from UNMC.



Training session of satellite coordinators

UNMC HOST A DELEGATION FROM SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY



SIDA delegation with UNMC Management team after the meeting

On 9th February 2024, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) hosted a delegation from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), a key supporter of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

The purpose of the visit was to strengthen the partnership between UNMC and SIDA through UNFPA towards improving nursing and midwifery services in Uganda.

Ms. Anna Berglund, Senior Program Specialist at SIDA acknowledged the role of midwives in Uganda and promised further support to the activities and programs towards improving the nursing and midwifery profession in Uganda.

“It has been an interesting week in Uganda, we have seen the role of midwives in many ways and this was adding to that picture of Uganda being a leader in this work globally, so I am very pleased to visit and grateful for the meeting we have had today, and we will continuously support UNFPA and its partners” Ms. Berglund said

Ms. Berglund also congratulated UNMC on the work it is doing in regulating and supervising the nursing and midwifery profession.

“We want to congratulate you on the work you have been doing and that you continue to do as the Nurses and Midwives Council. Your role is incredibly important. For Sweden, midwifery is a priority because they save lives of both the mother and the baby.” Ms. Berglund said.

Ms. Christine Nimwesiga, the Registrar, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council in her remarks, she appreciated the support given to the UNMC by SIDA through UNFPA and assured the delegation of UNMC's commitment towards serving the nursing and midwifery profession.

“I want to assure you that the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council is committed to serving nursing and midwifery professionals, ensuring that we have qualified and licensed professionals. We will also support them in their practice by helping them acquire new skills through Continuous Professional Development (CPD).” Nimwesiga said

Over the years, UNFPA has been a key partner of UNMC and has supported the Council in developing the nursing and midwifery scope of practice, decentralization of regulatory services, developing Geographic Information System, equipment like computers and vehicle, among others.

And according to the Registrar, the support which has been both technical and physical has helped the Council implementing activities and fulfilling its mandate.



Ms. Anna Berglund interacting with the Registrar, UNMC during SIDA visit

UNMC REGISTRAR; NOW THE NEW CHAIRPERSON OF REGISTRAR'S FORUM



Registrar, UNMC (center) with Registrars of other Health Profession Councils during the handover ceremony

On 16th February 2023, Ms. Christine Nimwesiga, the Registrar of Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council took over the leadership of the Registrar's forum as Chairperson. This was during a handover and farewell ceremony of Dr. Mpiima K. Patrick, who retired from services after serving as the Registrar of Allied Health Professional Council.

The event which took place at Akamwesi Gardens, Kampala was attended by Registrars of all Health Profession Regulatory Bodies; Allied Health Professional Council, Pharmacy Board, Medical and Dental Practitioners Council, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council and other invited guests.

Dr. Mpiima K. Patrick, the former Chairperson of the Registrar's forum in his remarks he provided a historical context of the forum and wished success to the new leadership.

“Our history began when we initiated the Registrar's Forum to bring together all regulators of healthcare professionals, as we function as entities established by acts of Parliament. When we established the Registrar's Forum with my colleagues, our focus was on facilitating easy communication among us and fostering joint participation in meetings with a common goal, as we all represent healthcare professionals.” Dr. Mpiima said.

Ms. Christine Niwesiga, the Registrar Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council, and the new Chairperson of the Registrar's forum, in her inauguration speech, she congratulated and appreciated the contribution made by Dr. Mpiima to the health profession regulation and promised to carry on the task.

“We promise that what you started shall continue and shall grow even bigger. We will remain as one family and move forward together to achieve the goals of the Registrar's Forum.” Niwesiga said.

The Registrar's forum started in 2014 when the four Registrars and their Deputies from the three Health Profession Councils and the Pharmacy Board agreed to come together and establish a forum in which to share knowledge, experience and information relating to regulating of health professions in Uganda. In terms of membership, it is constituted of 4 Registrars, their Deputies and Administrators of the respective council who were co-opted for purposes of coordinating logistics and arranging meetings.



Members of the Registrar's forum cut cake as they bid farewell to Dr. Mpiima

UNMC STAFF CELEBRATE THEIR BELATED END OF YEAR PARTY AT FOREST RESORT - LWEZA



Staff participating in team building games during UNMC staff end of year party on 10th February 2024

On 10th February 2024, management and staff of Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council celebrated the belated staff end of year party at Forest Resort Lweza. The staff end of year party which was earlier slated to take place on 18th December 2023 was postponed due to the unfortunate death of a staff member, May His Soul Rest in peace.

The end of year party started with team building activities like games and ended with dinner in the evening that was presided over by the Registrar, who in her remarks she asked staff to keep positive and focused.

“Now that we have entered a new year, we look ahead with optimism. Therefore, I urge us all to stay positive, remain focused, and be willing to make necessary changes to achieve the mandates of the organization we work for. Most importantly, let’s be sensitive to our clients because without them, we wouldn’t be here celebrating.” Ms. Nimwesiga said

According to the Mr. Katungi Deus, the Human Resource offices, the end of year party is one way of reflecting on what has transpired throughout the year and bring togetherness.

“The party was a success; staff turned up in huge numbers, and all planned activities were interesting, engaging, and fostered team building. We look forward to having such activities at least annually.” Mr. Katungi said

Ms. Jannipher Mateega, the Chairperson organizing committee, highlighted the importance of the event and provided a general assesement of the party by re-ecohing the objectives and purpose in a work environment like that of UNMC.

“The activity was necessary and was highly attended by staff, who were in high spirit. The main objective was team building and motivation of staff, and this was achieved with the games that staff participated in.”

Ms. Mateega said

Ms. Mbabazi Janet, the Procurement Officer, who participated in the activities reflected on how staff engagements are a stress reliever.

“It is one happy moment that staff get to share a moment together and particularly for this year’s end of year party, the activities in form of games were stress reliving and helped to wareoff the fatigue.” **Ms. Mbabazi said**

“Also, it was nice to understand our colleague better, because the games helped in seeing the other side of our colleagues, it brought togetherness, we had a meal together. And the games taught us team work.” **Ms.**

Mbabazi added

The end of year party is now a common event that most cooperate companies hold annually to bring staff together and create a robust team work and togetherness. UNMC has strongly subscribed to it and management pledged to continue holding it annually.



Deputy Registrar (left) participating in capacity building games during staff end of year party on 10th February 2024

OVER 500 NURSES AND MIDWIVES RECEIVE ONLINE REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE DURING THE UNMC OUTREACH IN WESTERN UGANDA



Nurses and Midwives turn-up for UNMC outreach at Mayanja Memorial Medical Training Institute on 22nd February 2024

On 20th February 2024, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council carried out a 4-day outreach in western Uganda to assistance nurses and midwives who had issues with the online registration and licensure system. The outreach took place in Kabale for Kigezi sub region on 20th and 21st February 2024 and in Mbarara for Ankore sub region on 22nd and 23rd February 2024.

According Mr. Joram Tukamuhabwa, the team leader of the outreach, the purpose of the outreach was to assess performance of regional centers and improve their functionality, to train Regional satellite Centre Coordinators about Online registration and renewal and to register newly trained Nurses and Midwives within the region.

And in his assessment, Mr. Tukamuhabwa said that the outreach in the two sub regions was a success and he acknowledged the support given by regional satellite coordinators.

“Regional satellite coordinators were so handy, especially in mobilizing nurses and midwives in the region to come to designated health training institutes. In the same spirit, I want to acknowledge the support we received from Kabale School of Comprehensive Nursing and Mayanja Memorial Medical Training institute, the two institutes provided the team with space and IT equipment to help in conducting supervised online assessments” Mr. Tukamuhabwa said.

According to the activity report, a total of 522 Nurses and Midwives were attended to during the outreach. In Kigezi alone, 152 were attended to (83 for registration and 69 for renewal), while 370 nurses and midwives were attended to, (205 for registration and 165 for renewal) in Ankole.

Ms. Nabimanya Hope, a registered midwife in Kabale appreciated the outreach and gave her assessment on the online registration system.

“Today I am extremely happy for this outreach that you have brought to Kabale, because it was helpful to me and it was so quick and I got my license renewed there and then. I am so grateful” Ms. Nabimanya

“The online system is good, compared to previous one because you just register and submit and it is so quick and it gives you your license there and then, unlike the previous one where you would send and wait for feedback, put it in transport and travel to Kampala, and you find that you require to be off station, but for this online system I can renew my license while I am on duty.” Ms. Nabimanya added.

In November 2022, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council introduced an online registration and licensure system where nurses and midwives all over the country can register, enroll, renew their practicing licenses and private practicing license. And so far, about 40,000 nurses and midwives have either registered, enrolled or renewed their licenses using the online system.



Mr. Innocent Busigye, Records Assistant (left) attending to a client during the outreach in Mbarara City

OVER 1,000 NURSES AND MIDWIVES VALIDATED IN WESTERN AND EASTERN UGANDA



UNMC validation exercise in Mbarara District

From 26th to 29th February 2024, a team from Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) conducted a 5-day validation exercise for all nurses and midwives in selected districts in western and Eastern districts of Uganda. The districts included; Ntungamo, Mbarara, and Kiruhuru district in western Uganda and Namayingo, Bugiri, Bugweri, and Mayuge in Eastern Uganda.

The activity aimed to verify academic and professional documents of nurses and midwives for authenticity, match validation record with the UNMC system for consistency and to share relevant updates with nurses and midwives about UNMC.

According to Mr. Joram Tukamuhabwa, the team lead for the Eastern team, 598 nurses and midwives were attended to: 147, 155, 111, and 185 in Namayingo, Bugiri, Bugweri, and Mayuge respectively. He also acknowledged the support from district officials during the exercise.

"District officials, right away from the CAO, DHO to the EDHO were very support supportive. They provided venue, and mobilization. During the activity, we discovered two clients with forged documents and these documents were retained and cases forwarded for disciplinary action"

Mr. Tukamuhabwa said

"Also during the activity, we noted that most nurses and midwives, especially those that are employed don't renew their licenses. In the 4 districts we visited, were found 74 nurses and midwives with expired license and helped them to renew on site and encouraged them to always renew on time." Mr. Tukamuhabwa added

According to Ms. Barbara Okiror the team lead for the Western Uganda team, 492 nurses and midwives were validated, 339, 374, and 116 in Ntungamo, Mbarara and Kiruhuha respectively. She also noted that all objectives of the activity were achieved.

“We were able to meet our target, districts provided us with expected numbers and we validated more than what was expected. One of our key observation is that 17% of the nurses and midwives validated had expired licenses. And this is not a good indicator” Ms. Okiror said

Ms. Okiror noted that all nurses and Midwives who had expired licenses were guided on how to renew their licenses using the UNMC online registration system.

“We gave brochures with steps to follow while using the UNMC online system and asked our decentralized supervisors to follow up and ensure that the particular nurses renew their license.” Ms. Okiror added.

One of the mandate of UNMC is to license all nurses and midwives in the country and according to the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Act, 1996 a practicing a license is valid for a period of three calendar years and may be renewed subject to conditions that the Council may determine.



Mr. Wyclif Ayikiriza validating a Nurse at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital during the validation exercise

UNMC VISIT NURSING COUNCIL OF KENYA



UNMC delegation with staff of the Nurses Council of Kenya during the UNMC visit

On 15th January 2024, a delegation from Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council lead by the Chairperson Governing Council, Ms. Namukombe Elizabeth Ekong conducted a 3-day benchmarking visit at the Nursing Council of Kenya (NCK).

The purpose of the visit was to benchmark on digitalization of registration and licensure systems, which is the line UNMC has embarked on. According to a tweet shared on the twitter accord of Nursing Council of Kenya, it indicated that the purpose of the benchmark exercise was to familiarize UNMC with NCK processes, procedures and its day to day activities in regulating the nursing and midwifery education and practice.

According to Ms. Mubeezi Perptua Mary, the Manager Education Training and Registration who was part of the delegation that visited NCK said that the visit was worth it and will strengthen UNMC registration and licensure systems.

“The visit was worth it, there was a lot of lessons to learn, most of which we can adopt as UNMC and these will help us to strengthen some areas of registration, licensure and online registration systems.” Ms. Mubeezi said

Ms. Nimwesiga Christine, the Registrar UNMC, who was part of the delegation said that the lessons learnt from the tour ranged from staffing, capacity building and IT strengthening.

“what we learnt from NCK is that for the growing number of nurses and midwives, we need to strengthen our IT staff, especially now that we have transited online. We also learnt that we need to work with key stakeholders like Ministry of education and Sports, UNEB, UMNEB, NIRA, for our services to be quicker. We realized that we need to integrate the system with these entities to quicken the verification of our clients”
Ms. Nimwesiga said

“we noted that we need a strong IT system, with strong internet if our services are to be enjoyed by our clients”
Ms. Nimwesiga added

According to the Registrar, all lesson learnt that are not being practiced apparently at UNMC will be implemented for best outcomes and client satisfaction.



UNMC staff (Right) in a meeting with the leadership of Nurses Council of Kenya

UNMC ARTICLES

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



By Tukamuhabwa Joram
Quality Assurance Officer

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a requirement for all practicing nurse and midwives before renewal of practicing licenses and its aim is to equip nurses and midwives in practice with new Knowledge on trends to empower them to provide quality services to patients.

CPD services can be accessed from accredited providers and well established health facilities, both government and private. And every nurse or midwife is expected to attain a minimum of 50 credit units in a period of three years before he or she is allowed to renew his or her practicing license.

At every session, every nurse or midwife is supposed to have a dairy record Continuous Medical Education (CME) booklet that has all the CPD sessions attained and

signed by the supervisor. And currently, CPD sessions can be accessed either online or physically, depending on what is convenient for the nurse or midwife.

CPD guidelines were developed way back in 2017 and they describe the accreditation process, roles of CPD provider, CPD coordinator or contact person, program implementation details and the renewal process.

To date, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) has accredited more than 13 CPD providers and more than 20 CPD programs across the country. However, other well established health facilities such as like Regional Referral Hospitals and district general hospitals are officially recognized as CPD providers and do not require accreditation from UNMC to offer CPD session to their staff, but may require accreditation if they wish to train other nurses and midwives from outside the facility.

Previously nurses and midwives were filling in CME daily books as evidence of attending CME sessions which were presented to UNMC before license renewal. However, with transition to online system, we are now in the final integration of CPD module into the system, which will enable automation of CPD credit units into the system before a new license is issued.

We encourage all nurses and midwives to embrace CPD utilization and also call upon health institutions

to seek for accreditation services since it improves service delivery and improved performance.

HOW TO REGISTER A HEALTH UNIT WITH UNMC



By Jannipher Nambalirwa Mateega
*Education, Training and
Registration Officer*

For years, UNMC has provided a platform for Nurses and Midwives to expand their territory of work through licensure of health units. To date, a total of 971 Nurses and Midwives have benefited from this great opportunity. Owning a private business not only increases the financial muscle of an individual but also improves their managerial skills, innovation abilities and service delivery.

Health units are classified according to the qualification of the Nurse or Midwife. These include; 1) Nursing Clinics, owned by Nurses who have attained a diploma in Nursing plus experience of at least 10 years, 2) Maternity homes, owned by Midwives who have at least 5 years

of experience in a maternity setting and 3) General clinic, owned by those with diploma in both nursing and midwifery, Bachelors in either nursing or midwifery, Masters in nursing and/or PHD. The application process has since been simplified with the online system, enabling Nurses and Midwives to submit their requests at the comfort of their homes or workplaces.

While the global healthcare industry is expected to reach \$10,000 billion in 2026, Nurses and Midwives in private business are only 0.5 – 1% globally. A trend corresponding with the numbers in Uganda thus presenting more opportunities both locally and internationally. The desire to start up a private health unit stems from deep within oneself wishing for better service delivery. This overflows to manifest as a desire for independence.

Nurses and Midwives who have felt the need to expand their scope of service delivery are welcome to UNMC to tap into the opportunity presented. Note that the name of the proposed health unit should first of all be registered with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), a new passport-size photograph, colored with a white background should be taken. It is only the soft copy of the photograph that will be

uploaded, not a scanned hard copy. Only original documents should be uploaded onto the system, not certified copies.

The health Unit Premises are inspected by the District Health Officer (DHO) every year before the

clinic license is renewed. The DHO also signs the letter of competence. Before the clinic license is renewed, it is a requirement that the practicing license MUST be valid. All clinic licenses expire on 31st March of every year and beyond this date is always a surcharge.

TWO NURSES GET THE UNMC RESEARCH SEED GRANTS



By Barbara Okiror
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

After observing a disparity between the research skills taught to Nurses/Midwives throughout their training and their implementation of evidence-based practice after graduation. Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) has since embarked on bridging this existing gap, and in doing so, UNMC has embarked on a journey to spear head the research agenda within the profession.

In that regard UNMC runs a research seed grant award that is meant to; empower nurses and midwives

with skills to carry out research, and provide funds to the Nurses and midwives to generate evidence to inform practice.

This research seed grant award is open to Nurses and Midwives that are in their early stages of the research career. This year the Council is running its third research seed grant, based on the theme; **generating evidence to inform the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory pillar of the Nursing profession.**

Two research seed grant awardees were selected to benefit from this research seed grants following a thorough interview and vetting process by the Grant Vetting and Journal Editorial Committee. These awardees were Nankya Viola and Ajuna Noble.

Nankya Viola is a lecturer at Kampala International University Western Campus and has a Master's degree in Nursing majoring in medical surgical Nursing. She is carrying out a study titled 'Awareness regarding UNMC Mandates and Regulatory Systems among Nurses and Midwives in Uganda: A Mixed Method Study'

Ajuna Noble is a student pursuing his master's in public health and currently working with cure hospital Mbale. He is carrying out a study titled 'Perceptions and experiences of nurses and midwives on UNMC online registration and licensure system: a qualitative exploratory study.'

The seed grant awards are expected to last for one year from the date of signing the contract. And we encourage nurses and midwives to use this opportunity to embrace research for the benefit of the profession.

MIDWIFERY PRACTICE AT QUEEN'S HOSPITAL, ROMFORD, LONDON; WHAT UGANDA NEEDS TO DO



Lilian Nuwabaine Luyima

While attending the UK-Africa Health summit at Royal College of General Practices, Euston from 18th to 19th March 2024, after the summit, I took off time to visit some of the NHS trusts/hospitals in the UK and one of the hospitals I visited was Queen's Hospital.

The reason for the visit was because my desire to attach sight to the sang beauty of midwifery care practiced in developed continents like Europe, I also sought to benchmark and

make facsimile of the best practices in Europe and transfer them to my home country Uganda, for better outcomes for mothers and their babies.

While at Queen's Hospital, I was warmly welcomed by Ms Lola Enifeni-a Global Health Policy Specialist and Matron for the Labour ward. During my visit, I observed key areas that I felt lacked back home and should be considered by government and they included the following; On average, the hospital conducts 20-25 normal deliveries on a daily, a shift runs for 7.5 hours, each shift consists of 13 registered midwives, 03 maternity support workers and 2 obstetricians, each labouring woman is taken care of by one midwife, thus a ratio of 1:1, low risk women i.e without complications deliver from the birth centres within the hospital, and experience a homey kind of environment, with only midwives, the birth centres are spacious, tidy with water pools, birthing balls, delivery beds and

stools, wireless CTG, Doppler and many others, high risk mothers go straight to the Labour ward, data is entered electronically via intranet, about ward dashboard is updated on a daily and has a component of patients' experiences, hospital acquired infection, complaints, ward acquired pressure ulcers and medication on-top of the usual, the hospital has emergency kits for managing emergency conditions like, severe preeclampsia and eclampsia, postpartum haemorrhage etc, for each procedure or condition to be managed, one must follow the guidelines or protocols in place, short of that, one will need to justify why or even face legal implications. All protocols are available on intranet e.g. protocol for spontaneous vaginal delivery, breech delivery, twin delivery, shoulder dystocia, caesarean section, eclampsia, etc, a maternal or neonatal death is barely heard of, common pregnancy complications in this hospital include hypertensive disorders e.g. preeclampsia and eclampsia, postpartum haemorrhage is a rare complication for mothers after deliver, first line for management of 3rd stage of labour (use a mix of oxytocin and ergometrine) for non hypertensive women, 5lus, labouring mothers are monitored using a doppler or wireless CTG to allow movements freely during labour, they have a central monitoring point on top of the individual room monitoring for each mother. This helps the supervisors or experts to identify any unnoticed gaps during the labour monitoring process,



Lilian Nuwabaine-a Nurse-Midwife and Women's Health Specialist meeting Ms Lola Enifeni-a global health policy specialist and matron for the Labour ward at Queen's Hospital

minimum education level for a midwife is 3 years (without research). A bachelors' in midwifery is 3years too but with research, emergency response teams are well set, and everyone undergoes mandatory training in this, patients are number one priority, and any concern from a patient is a big concern and must be highly critiqued, hospital has free WIFI accessible to everyone, mothers whose babies die after delivery are isolated, and put in a separate room and provided care, health workers such as midwives have good customer care, midwives have up to date knowledge, skills and always willing to share with others, maternity care providers receive continuous

professional development (CPDs) sessions every 03 months, guidelines/ protocols in use are updated every 03 years, however, whenever new developments or evidence emerge, the team is informed timely, respectful Maternity care is paramount, teamwork is key

With the above observations, I was so much challenged especially when

I compared with our healthcare setting and care provided to our patients here in Uganda. I vowed to greatly contribute to better maternity care in Uganda.

The author is; BSc Nurse & MSN-Midwife & Women's' Health Specialist & Heroes in Health Award Winning Midwife.

WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE A VALID PRACTICING LICENSE AT ALL TIMES



By Lubega Martin
Education, Training and Registration Officer

Over the past three months, spanning from January through March, our focus has been on processing thousands of license renewals for nurses and midwives. It's noteworthy that a significant portion of these renewals were for licenses that had expired in December 2023. This observation prompts a critical reflection on the significance we attribute to holding a valid practicing

license. Many individuals approach us in a state of panic, realizing they are missing out on job opportunities due to the absence of a valid license. Some even express a desire for expedited service, although this is often unfeasible. In this article I will delve into the compelling reasons why nurses and midwives must maintain valid practicing licenses at all times.

Picture this: you're a nurse, the backbone of healthcare, tirelessly dedicated to the well-being of your patients, their families, and your community. Yet, without that little piece of paper or card in your pocket, your expertise might as well be locked away. Your license is your badge of honor that shouts to the world, "I'm qualified, I'm competent, and I'm ready to serve" and that's where the magic of a valid practicing license comes in.

Primarily, the issuance of practicing licenses stands as a validation of nurses' competence and qualifications. Unlike many other

professions, merely completing training and becoming a nurse doesn't grant the freedom to practice; a practicing license from the professional regulatory body is essential. Aligned with the Uganda Nurses and Midwives (UNMC) Act of 1996, which stipulates license renewal every three years, this regulatory protocol serves as a cornerstone of accountability. It ensures that nurses consistently enhance their knowledge and skills to meet evolving healthcare standards. In the dynamic landscape of healthcare, marked by continual advancements in technology and treatments, the acquisition of new competencies becomes imperative. Valid practicing licenses function as a mechanism to uphold these standards, preserving the proficiency and effectiveness of nursing practice.

Moreover, the possession of a valid practicing license underscores the commitment of nurses to ethical conduct and professional integrity. By adhering to the licensure requirements set forth by regulatory bodies such as the UNMC, nurses pledge to abide by the ethical principles and standards of practice that govern their profession. This commitment not only fosters trust and confidence among patients and colleagues but also reinforces the ethos of accountability and responsibility within the nursing community.

Beyond professionalism, valid practicing licenses enhance patient safety and quality of care. As frontline

healthcare providers, nurses bear the weighty responsibility of safeguarding the health and well-being of those under their care. A valid license signifies that a nurse meets standards of education, training, and competency necessary to fulfill this responsibility competently and safely. It assures patients and healthcare organizations of the nurse's qualifications and skills to deliver quality care effectively.

Furthermore, maintaining valid practicing licenses aligns with global healthcare standards and best practices. Regulatory bodies and professional organizations worldwide recognize licensure's importance in upholding nursing profession integrity and credibility. By adhering to these standards, nurses demonstrate commitment to excellence and contribute to global healthcare practice harmonization.

So, here's the bottom line: your practicing license isn't just a piece of paper—it's your passport to professionalism, safety, and quality care. As a nurse, it's your duty to ensure that you're always armed with this essential credential, ready to uphold the highest standards of practice and make a real difference in the lives of those you serve. So, don't wait until the last minute—start the renewal process today, and keep shining bright as the healthcare

INTERVIEW WITH THE REGISTRAR



1). How does it feel to serve a profession you belong as a Registrar?

Serving as a Registrar has been a motivating experience for me because I am serving a profession to which I belong. Working within an organization where I once felt the need to contribute to the change I wanted to see has been fulfilling. Working with UNMC has enabled me to explore the possibilities of how we can better serve our Nurses and Midwives. I am pleased that some changes have already been noted, particularly in how services at the Council can be accessed without the need for lining up and crowding at Council Offices.

2). What are some of the key milestones that you have registered in your first 2 years as the Registrar of UNMC?

I must say that for the time I have been here, I have accomplished the pending work that my colleagues had started on. To begin with, together with my staff, we have been able to complete the scope of practice, this has been launched and disseminated. We also celebrated 100 years as a regulator, we have developed policy documents that include; vision 2040, mentorship for students, disseminated private practice guidelines and we have also strengthened the decentralization of services by giving on-site support to satellite centers. We have also managed to complete the online registration system which was launched in November 2022 and I want to say that, since November 2022, we have registered a number of nurses and midwives, renewed their licenses online, the private practice registration and its renewal is also online and we are now in the process of integrating the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) module that will allow automation of CPD points to enable us implement our mandate fully.

3). Does UNMC have enough staff and capacity to license and regulate the nursing and midwifery profession in Uganda?

I want to appreciate that staffing at UNMC has improved. When I joined, we had 28 staff but currently, we have 41 staff and this has improved the efficiency and timely delivery of services and this has helped to reduce the waiting time. Also, we now have in-house printing of documents. We are now able to print certificates and we have stabilized the issuing of licenses which is issued online.

4). Does UNMC work closely with partners in fulfilling its mandate?

The collaboration with other entities has been strengthened and this is evident by the support we have received from different organizations. I want to recognize the partnership we have had with UNFPA which supported us to develop the scope of practice. I also recognize the support we have received from Seed Global Health in developing the UNMC strategic plan for the next 5 years. We have also received support from Jhpiego and other partnerships.

5). How far has UNMC reached in the research agenda journey?

We have been able to provide research seed grants over the years. And since I joined UNMC, we have given four (4) seed grants to nurses. As the nurses and midwives Council we have embarked on strengthening the research agenda in nursing and midwifery and currently we are in final stages of registering the Journal of nursing and midwifery research in Uganda and this will help nurses and midwives to disseminate their findings as well as make their results accessible for implementation as we emphasize evidence based nursing and midwifery practice.

6). The number of people joining the nursing and midwifery training institutions seems to be on a rise, is UNMC ready to effectively regulate the training standards?

At UNMC, we primarily engage in regulating the training of nurses and midwives through partnerships. Currently, the mandate for training lies with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Therefore, UNMC works with MOES (Health Education and Training) and National Council for Higher Education to participate in accreditation of Health training institutions and provide professional guidance, which we are actively fulfilling. However, this arrangement restricts our authority to regulate the entry into the nursing and midwifery professions since we do not accredit. Our

current focus is on overseeing those we license and ensure that license applicants possess the necessary competencies and are proficient enough to provide services. At UNMC, we emphasize the quality of care delivered by licensed practitioners to patients.

7). What is the latest on URA stamp duty?

The URA stamp duty of UGX 100,000, that was required from every licensed professional, posed a significant financial threat to nurses, midwives, and UNMC hence compromising the regulation of Nurses and Midwives. However, I'm pleased to report that a ruling was made to cease the stamp duty requirement and since then Stamp Duty Tax is not a requirement before accessing certificate and License at UNMC. Therefore, anyone wishing to collect documents can now come directly to the council, and there will be no request for stamp duty.

8). About the online system, what informed the decision to introduce the online registration and licensure system?

The decision to implement an online system was influenced by several factors. Firstly, the country's initiative to digitize processes prompted us, as the council, to align with government policy on digitalization. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic underscored the need to transition from physical to online registration. During the pandemic, many nurses and midwives were unable to register as well as renew their licenses due to lockdown restrictions on movement. Consequently, the council faced challenges in registering new practitioners as well as renewing licenses for Nurses and Midwives. Furthermore, we considered the distances nurses and midwives had to travel to access services in Kampala, along with the associated costs. It became apparent that transitioning services online was a practical solution. However, certain services, such as certification and verification of professional documents, remained physical but in future we shall digitalize them.

9). How do you evaluate the online system so far?

I must admit that the online system has not been welcomed wholeheartedly by some nurses and midwives. However, there is a section of nurses and midwives who appreciated the online Registration and Licensure system. From the beginning, the resistance was significant, but as we progress, we are observing that clients have started appreciating the system, and complaints have reduced. At UNMC, we pledge continuous sensitization and training of our clients. We are

also bringing stakeholders on board to support nurses and midwives in computer skills, particularly the Education and Training Department under the Ministry of Education and Sports, Health Training Institutions especially the Principals and Proprietors of private institutions.

10). There has been a concern from nurses and midwives on the reason for doing assessment, what informs the decision?

We have different mandates in regulating the nursing and midwifery profession. The Ministry of Education is mandated to train, while UNMC is mandated to regulate those who join the practice. Therefore, our assessment at the Council is a pre-registration/enrollment assessment. We aim at evaluating the competencies of nurses and midwives who are seeking licensure. It's essential for us to ensure that the individuals we license demonstrate the required competence to practice effectively. So, our assessment is not an exam, as people often refer to it. Our role is to assess the competencies necessary for a nurse or midwife to practice proficiently.

11). What messages do you have for Nurse and Midwives across the country?

First of all, I want to thank all those who have chosen to pursue nursing and midwifery and assure them that they made the right choice. Nursing and midwifery are noble professions, and those who join them are called to love and serve. Therefore, wherever you may be, it's important to dedicate your time, love your work, and serve your country with diligence.



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