FACTS ABOUT MALARIA
• Malaria costs Africa $12 billion annually in loss revenue
• 40% of health resources are used to treat malaria
• 9% of malaria deaths still occur in Africa.

According to the World Health Organization there were 214 million new cases of malaria worldwide in 2015, with 438,000 deaths.

Most malaria deaths occur among young children.
Malaria claims a child's life every minute.

IN GHANA, MALARIA HAS BEEN A MAJOR CAUSE OF POVERTY.

Statistics from the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) and Ghana Health Service indicate that:

2013 = 9 million
• Malaria deaths = 2,985
• 44% of reported outpatient hospital visits are malaria related
• 33% of all pediatric deaths are caused by malaria

2014 = 7 million
• Malaria deaths = 2,200
• 27.3% of all admissions
• 7.2% of all deaths on admission were also from malaria.

2015 = below 6 million
• Malaria deaths = 2,137
• OPD Attendance = 38.1%
• Pregnant women on admission = 13.7%

INTERVENTIONS
• The distribution of Insecticide Treatment Nets (ITN)
• Embarking on indoor residual spraying exercises,
• Ensuring intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancies
• Raising more public awareness of the illness.
Ghana’s health system is not delivering the quality of care enshrined in its Patient Charter. The Patient Charter emphasizes privacy, confidentiality and respect for all health seekers. However, the experiences of Key Populations (men sleeping with men, People Living with HIV and AIDS, female sex workers, pregnant women, breastfeeding women and children under five) at public health facilities across Ghana challenge these expected standards of care. For example, men who sleep with men are stigmatized and discriminated against by many health workers -- in the words of a friend who recently completed his studies at Kumasi University of Science and Technology, “We are not secure, and our people are afraid to go to the hospitals.” Another friend, who has lived with HIV/AIDS for more than 20 years and is married with children, also recently mentioned that, “many of our people just stop going to the hospitals and prefer to die quietly unnoticed.” They are tired of complaining.

A recent study conducted by SEND Ghana confirms that the attitudes of health workers towards patients, and particularly disadvantaged groups, sharply contrasts the spirit of the Patient Charter. Unfortunately, Ghana Health Services and other health related professional bodies rarely sanction any of their members who violate the Patient Charter.

Supported by USAID, SEND Ghana and its partners respond to the violation of the health rights through its project People For Health (P4H). The project uses SEND’s Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) approach to build the leadership and organizational capabilities of Key Populations to use the Patients Charter to protect their rights. They are able to claim their rights under the Charter through a wide range of mechanisms:

- an ICT platform for reporting violations
- policy dialogues for quality health care
- alliances for the P4H advocacy agenda
- media partnerships with underserved and diverse communities to demand accountability and transparency in the delivery of health services.

Not only will these tools enable Key Populations to expose, challenge and overcome inequities, they will also educate and mobilize public support.

P4H strengthens the cause of Key Populations at district, regional and national levels for an equitable and inclusive health delivery system in Ghana.
Empowering Citizens to Know Their Health Rights Workshop Held

From Norman Cooper, Aburi

A two-day capacity building workshop for journalists on the People for Health Project (P4H) has been held at Koforidua in the Eastern Region with the theme “Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms for People for Health Project”.

It was organised by the Ghana News Agency in partnership with Media Communication Advocacy Network (MCAN), SEND-Ghana and Pensplusbytes all non-governmental organisations.

The P4H is a Five-year United States for International Development (USAID) funded project with the aim to build the capacity of journalists, District Citizens Monitoring Committees (DCMCs) and Project Management and Evaluation (PM&E) Network with the objective to advocate on major issues of health affecting the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the country. The Supervising Chief Editor of the Ghana News Agency, Mrs. Yaa Oforiwah Asare-Peasah said that it was necessary that stakeholders in the health sector, civil society and non-government organisations to come up with a more comprehensive and innovative approach to ensure that citizens were empowered to exercise their health rights and holds governments accountable.

According to her, most patients were not aware of the patient’s charter and health code of ethics in the country which specifies the rights and responsibilities of both patients and health officials, hence they are not able to demand for their rights when maltreated at the various health facilities in the country.

“There is also weak compliance with policies, programmes guidelines and standards while some health professionals are not client-centred resulting in maltreatment and disregard of their rights,” she stated, adding that it was important for citizens to know their health rights and demand for it when trampled upon.

The Supervising Chief Editor of GNA, Mrs Asare-Peasah stated that it was unfortunate that some Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations were themselves not aware of the key policies and programmes on the patients’ rights and clients’ feedback on health services.

This, according to her is leading them to low participation in development and implementation of health policies hence the need to also empower them.

“It is against this background that the USAID/Ghana People for Health project led by SEND Ghana with the GNA and Pensplusbytes as partners have come to offer a comprehensive and innovative approach through the P4H project to ensure citizens are empowered to exercise their health rights and hold governments accountable.”

She explained that the project would highlight on the need for people to understand issues affecting their rights and responsibilities on health matters including government engagement on the provision of specific services including those on Malaria, HIV and AIDS, Maternal and Reproductive Health among others.

Mrs. Asare-Peasah added that the project which would be implemented in 15 districts in four regions including Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern and Volta regions. It would include strengthening the technical and leadership capacity of the CSOs to advocate and organise communities as well empower them to engage citizens to demand and participate in the health service delivery and advocate for their interest.

According to her the project will help reduce inequalities in the delivery of health services through the promotion of good governance practices, accountability, equity and participation in health planning, monitoring and evaluation at the district and national levels.”

Mrs Asare-Peasah stated that though some gains have been made in the provision of health to its population, health outcomes in some areas have not been attained as high maternal deaths, HIV infections, malaria, poor governance in the health sector and inequality in service delivery to key population among others still remains a challenge.

She indicated that the challenge has led to poor health care service delivery, leading to regional disparities and

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discrepancies in service provision related to sex, gender, among others hence the need to ensure stakeholders in the health sector perform their responsibilities to achieve positive results and also ensure patients' rights were respected, adding that the project would address that.

The Civil Society Organisation Advisor for SEND Ghana, Mr Mukaila Adamu, stated that there was need for patients to be aware of the contents in the patients' charter and health code of ethics to enable them become aware of their rights and responsibilities.

That, he noted would enable patients’ to have knowledge of their rights and demand for it when maltreated at the health facilities.

The Project Coordinator for Penplusbytes, Mr. Kwabena Tabiri disclosed that a P4H online platform has been created to enable patients to send in complaints or videos about unfair treatment they experience at health facilities in their areas.

“We have realised that a lot of patients who access the health facilities are at times maltreated by the health officials and some are not able to demand for their rights because they have no knowledge of it," he said, stressing that this platform would give them the opportunity to send in their complaints to enable us follow up, investigate and address their grievances.”

Mr. Tabiri indicated that the project which was at its pilot stage would be launched by the end of July adding that patients in the Greater Accra, Eastern, and Northern regions would have access to the platform.

He stated that the project would be rolled out in the entire country when successful adding that the invention would complement efforts in empowering citizens' rights to health issue.
Mr. Adamu Mukaila, Civil Society Advisor of SEND Ghana, has said that poor attitude of health professionals contributes to some patients being maltreated and disregarded of their rights in the country.

He explained that discrimination and stigmatization against vulnerable groups including (Key Populations) KPs, women, and youth, weak capacity of CSOs and CBOs to demand accountability for quality service delivery, lack of awareness on Patients’ Rights contributed to the abuse of rights of some patients.

“If civil society is strengthened in a way that increases citizen input into Ghana’s health and HIV development process, then Ghana’s health system will be more participatory and responsive to the needs of the beneficiary population and our interventions will work towards achieving USAID goal of Equitable Improvements in Health Status”.

Mr Mukaila said this at a two-day workshop on the USAID funded People for Health (P4H) Project organised by the Ghana News Agency (GNA).

The five-year P4H Project-March 2016- March 2021 would ensure improved access to quality health service delivery for citizens in 20 districts selected from four regions- Greater Accra, Eastern, Northern and Volta Regions. It also seeks to strengthen organisational and institutional capacities of government and civil society organisations (CSOs) for mutual accountability in health, HIV, water, sanitation and hygiene, family planning and nutrition policy formulation and implementation.

The project- being implemented by a consortium of three organisations led by SEND-Ghana, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), with Penplusbytes another NGO and the Ghana News Agency as partners, thrives for leverage opportunities for change, building on consortium members’ existing good relations with local governments, District Health Management Teams and the USAID ongoing initiatives in the health sector.

Mr. Mukaila mentioned service standards and key policy and programs, social cultural practices that create conditions for stigmatization and discrimination against vulnerable groups especially KPs as some of the factors that make it difficult for vulnerable groups to access key health services, especially in the rural areas. He explained that there were numerous challenges affecting healthcare delivery in Ghana, which needed timely interventions to revert the situation, adding that Ghana was yet to comply with the Abuja Declaration.

He said there was the need for West African governments to comply with the Abuja Declaration and spend a minimum of 15 per cent of their annual budgetary resources on the health sector. Mr. Mukaila envisaged that by the end of the project a critical mass of CSOs and communities in the targeted districts would have advocated for inclusive and improved access to health care.

Mr George Osei-Bimpeh, Country Director of SEND-Ghana, expressed satisfaction with the partnership so far, and pledged further support to facilitate the successful implementation of the project.

He urged the media to intensify and sustain their advocacy and sensitisation role for the protection of human rights in all spheres of life and called for coordinated effort to ensure a successful health care delivery system. Mr. Kwabena Tarbiri of Penplusbytes who took participants through the Dashboard developed for the project, said his outfit was training health service providers, citizens and key populations including people living with HIV and AIDS to use a technology platform to engage and send feedback to each other about access to and quality of health services.
The platform developed for the project would provide and share information on maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, malaria, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and HIV/AIDS health service delivery at the district, regional and national levels. It is also to provide a non-human interface means of reporting cases of stigmatization and discrimination in receiving proper health care especially among key populations and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Tabiri noted that the platform secured the anonymity of users whilst reporting cases; how it engages users and provided time-tested means of getting useful feedback and action for improved health services from the appropriate sources. “The technology is user friendly and it is basic enough for every citizen to use with ease,” he said.

Penplusbytes in partnership with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) will appraise an existing online platform for reporting stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and Key Populations (KPs) who include guys, lesbians and female sex workers.

Mrs Linda Asante-Agyei, P4H Project Manager for the Ghana News Agency who took participants through the role of the Agency and Media and Communication Advocacy Network (MCAN) on the project said journalists would effectively and consistently investigate and disseminate stories that would help KPs, and Persons Living with HIV & AIDS advocate and demand for effective health service delivery.

She explained that GNA reporters and MCAN members in the implementing districts would work closely with District Citizens Monitoring Committees to identify issues, monitor commitments and compliance with service, standards by the necessary health authorities and report on them.

She urged participants to be well equipped enough to identify the issues in the communities, report on them and ensure that “our stories hold government accountable and at the same time citizens become conversant with the Patients Charter and the Code of Ethics to enable people demand what is rightfully due them.”

Late referrals, poorly equipped infrastructure, and pregnancy disorders, among others, have been identified as contributory factors to the high mortality rate in Ghana, Ms Aisha Mohammed, the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation officer of SEND-Ghana, has said.

She said there were numerous challenges affecting healthcare delivery in the country which needed timely interventions to revert. She noted that poor attitude of health professionals also contributed to some patients being maltreated and their rights being abused.

Ms. Mohammed said this in Tamale at a two-day workshop for GNA regional correspondents and members of the Media, Communication and Advocacy Network (MCAN) on the People for Health Project (P4H). The P4H is a five-year project - March 2016 to March 2021 - funded by the USAID to ensure improved access to quality health service delivery for citizens in 20 districts selected from four regions. It is currently being implemented in 15 districts in the Greater Accra, Eastern, Northern and Volta regions. It seeks to strengthen organisational and institutional capacities of government and civil society organisations (CSOs) for mutual accountability in health, HIV, water, sanitation and hygiene, family planning and nutrition policy formulation and implementation. A consortium of three organisations is implementing the project led by SEND-Ghana, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), with Penplusbytes an NGO, and the Ghana News Agency as partners.

Ms. Mohammed said the project seeks to leverage opportunities for change, build on consortium members’ existing good relations with local governments, District Health Management teams and the USAID ongoing initiatives in the health sector. She said: “The consortium’s emphasis on social accountability will increase CSO leadership, mobilise communities and key populations (KPs) to demand quality delivery of health programmes, promote accountability in the use of health resources and simultaneously maximise the responsiveness of health service providers.”

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Ms. Justina Anglaaere, a Board Member of SEND and Yaa Oforiwaas Asare-Peasah Director of Editorial, GNA with Participants at Tamale

Ms. Mohammed said vulnerable groups such as KPs found it difficult accessing key healthcare services due to weak standards and key policy programmes. She said socio-cultural practices that created conditions for stigmatisation and discrimination against vulnerable groups were challenges KPs face in accessing healthcare.

She called on CSOs and CBOs to demand accountability for quality service delivery, create awareness on Patients' Rights and Code of Ethics to ensure that patients' rights were not abused.

Mr. Kwabena Tabiri of Penplusbytes, an Information Technology Company, said his organisation, in partnership with the P4H Project, had created an online mechanism where patients could report concerns regarding healthcare service delivery in various facilities. “The online platform is a shift from the suggesting box system, which is not functioning in most healthcare institutions,” he said, adding that reports made would be followed up, investigated and rectified. Mr. Tarbiri said his outfit was training health service providers, citizens and KPs to use a technology platform to engage and send feedback to each other on access to quality health services.

The platform would provide and share information on maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, malaria, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and HIV/AIDS and protect the anonymity of users. Penplusbytes, in partnership with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), will appraise an existing online platform for reporting stigma and discrimination against People Living with HIV/AIDS and KPs.

Ghana urged to prioritise budgetary allocation to health sector

Ghana is yet to comply with the Abuja Declaration that mandates West African governments to spend a minimum of 15 per cent of their annual budgetary resources on the health sector.

Mr. Adamu Mukaila, Civil Society Advisor to SEND-Ghana, who made this known said there were numerous challenges facing healthcare delivery in the country and urged the Government to make budgetary allocation to the health sector a priority to help resolve these problems.

Speaking at a two-day workshop on the USAID funded People for Health (P4H) project, organised by the Ghana
News Agency (GNA), at Aburi in the Eastern Region, Mr Mukaila said challenges confronting healthcare delivery could be addressed if all hands were on deck. The five-year P4H project, which spans March 2016 to March 2021, would ensure improved access to quality health service delivery for citizens in 20 districts selected from; Greater Accra, Eastern, Northern and the Volta Regions.

The project also seeks to strengthen organisational and institutional capacities of governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) for mutual accountability in health under six broad areas namely; Malaria, HIV and AIDS, Maternal Mortality, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Family Planning and Nutrition.

Being implemented by a consortium of three organisations led by SEND-Ghana, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), with Penplusbytes another NGO and the Ghana News Agency as partners, the project thrives to leverage opportunities for change and build on consortium members’ existing good relations with local governments, district health management teams and the USAID ongoing initiatives in the health sector.

Mr. Mukaila noted that poor attitude of health professionals had led to some patients being maltreated with a disregard to their human rights. Enumerating some of the challenges facing the health sector, he observed that 41 per cent of Ghanaians were active National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) card holders whilst 66 per cent were exempted from paying annual fees, which “threatens the sustainability of the scheme”.

He mentioned the constant delays in the release of NHIS funds by the Ministry of Finance as the main cause for the delays in payment of claims as well as wastage and inefficient use of resources as a result of weak accountability mechanisms among other things. Mr. Mukaila said there were discrimination and stigmatisation against vulnerable groups such as the Key Populations (KPs) which include guys and lesbians, prostitutes and people living with HIV and AIDS.

He said stigmatisation, if not checked, could lead to an increase in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. He said some socio-cultural practices created conditions for stigmatisation and discrimination against KPs making it difficult for them to access health services, especially in the rural areas.

He said women and the youth, weak capacity of civil society and community-based organisations to demand accountability for quality service delivery, lack of awareness on the Patients’ Charter, service standards and key policy and programmes were challenges that hindered effective healthcare delivery.

“If civil society is strengthened in a way that increases citizen input into Ghana’s health and HIV development processes, then Ghana’s health system will be more participatory and responsive to the needs of the beneficiary population and our interventions will work towards achieving USAID goal of Equitable Improvements in Health Status," he added. Mr Mukaila envisaged that by the end of the project a critical mass of CSOs and communities in the targeted districts would have advocated inclusive and improved access to health services.

Dr. Doris Aglobitse, the Programme Analyst for Communication and Resource Mobilisation, UNFPA, who facilitated the programme, said current statistics, especially on Maternal Health, Infant and Child Mortality, Malaria, and Malnutrition were not encouraging particularly those in areas with very low health care coverage. She, therefore, called for action to demand from government a commitment to stick to and fulfill its obligation of devoting 15 per cent of the national budget to health issues in line with the Abuja Declaration.

Mrs. Yaa Oforiwa Asare-Peasah, the Head of Editorial of GNA, said the workshop, which would be repeated in the Eastern and Northern regions for Agency and Media, Communication and Advocacy Network (MCAN) members and health journalists, would promote community empowerment and improve reporting and tracking of diseases as far as the health and well-being of Ghanaians were concerned.
She said the country would not be able to sustain its achievements in the other sectors of the economy if the deficiencies in the health sector were not addressed. She, therefore, encouraged the media to strengthen their advocacy role to educate the public and policy makers for a positive attitudinal change to ensure sustainable development.

Mr. George Osei-Bimpeh, the Country Director of SEND-Ghana, expressed satisfaction with the partnership so far and pledged further support to facilitate the successful implementation of the project.

He urged the media to up their advocating and sensitisation role for the upholding of human rights in all spheres of life and to work had to ensure a successful health care delivery system.

Ms. Juliet Amoah, the Project Manager for Penplusbytes, said her outfit was training a network of health service providers, citizens and KPs to use a technology platform to engage and send feedback to each other about access to and quality of health services. The platform would provide information on the six key areas of intervention and secure the anonymity of users whilst reporting cases.

Ms. Amoah said Penplusbytes, in partnership with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, would appraise an online platform for reporting stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS and KPs.

Mrs. Linda Asante-Agyei, the P4H Project Manager of GNA, who took the participants through the MCAN project and said it would help journalists to effectively investigate and disseminate information to help KPs access good health services. She explained that GNA’s reporters and MCAN members in the implementing districts would monitor commitments and compliance to standards by the health authorities.

“Our stories hold government accountable and at the same time make citizens to become conversant with the Patients Charter and the Code of Ethics to enable them demand what is rightfully due them,” she explained.

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**Public urged to always sleep under ITNs**

*By Bertha Badu-Agyei*

Mr. Prosper Agbaagbiah, an officer with the Malaria Control Programme of the Eastern Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) encouraged the public to cultivate the habit of always sleeping under the Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs).

He said most people do not sleep under the ITNs with the excuse of experiencing discomfort and the heat associated with it, “But that is the only effective and sustainable way we can prevent mosquitoes from biting us and we getting malaria”, he added. Speaking in interview with the Ghana News Agency, Mr Agbaagbiah said Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) continued to provide effective protection against disease vectors including mosquitoes that transmit malaria. The interview formed part of the media campaign to highlight malaria as part of the USAID People for Health project.

The project is being implemented by a consortium of three organisations led by SEND-Ghana, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), with Penplusbytes another NGO and the Ghana News Agency as partners. It seeks to leverage opportunities for change, building on consortium members’ existing good relations with local governments, District Health Management Teams and the USAID ongoing initiatives in the health sector.

In many countries, promotion of LLIN usage and ownership had focused on the attainment of universal coverage. However, modalities for achieving these objectives remained a challenge in many countries including. He noted that the Ministry of Health (MOH) and GHS have promoted the use of LLINs and Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) as proven malaria vector control interventions since 1998.

LLINs ownership and their usage have been low over the years. The overall objective among others was to attain 100 % households’ ownership of at least one ITN; 80 % of general population sleep under ITNs; 85 % children under-five and pregnant women sleep under ITN by the year 2015, “but people still do not sleep under it even though they have bought them”.

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The country had used different channels for the distribution of ITNs and mainly given to children under five years and pregnant women from 1998 to date. These channels included distribution through Maternal and Child Health Promotion campaigns, voucher schemes and highly subsidized sale of the nets at the health facilities among others. The use of the nets among children under five years of age and pregnant women was 28% and 20% respectively.

Mr. Agbaagbah noted that malaria burden in Ghana was a challenge to human development and was both a cause and consequence of under-development and continued to be a leading cause of morbidity. It has accounted for about 38% of all outpatient department (OPD) attendance and 30% of all hospital admissions.

A cross-section of the public the GNA spoke to from New Juaben, Akuapem North and the Upper-Manya Krobo districts on the utilization of the bed nets confirmed that though they have bought the nets, they do not sleep under them.

Whilst some mentioned heat as the main reason for not using the ITNs, others cited the inconveniences in hanging the nets on the bed as their main hindrance. Madam Dede Koryo, a mother of three, at Asesewa told GNA, that she had four of the ITNs and got them through the antenatal and child welfare clinics over the years, yet, “I am not using any of them because my husband says it generates a lot of heat and makes sleeping uncomfortable”. Instead, they have a fixed a trap door to prevent mosquitoes from entering their rooms, but admitted that they always get mosquitoes bites and malaria.

A civil servant, Mr Kwasi Koh, in Koforidua and a father of four said all his children in school have been given the ITNs because it was a school requirement, adding that “The first time I tried it myself I and the children tried it at home, we couldn’t sleep due to the intense heat, we had to stop using

Ensure environmental cleanliness to help prevent malaria – NAP+

By Linda Asante-Agyei, GNA

Emmanuel Beluzebr Suurkure President of the Network of Associations of Persons Living with HIV (NAP+), has called on Persons Living with HIV and AIDS to ensure a clean environment and help prevent the spread of malaria.

He said negative attitudes towards the environment contributed to the breeding of mosquitoes leading to malaria. “Having malaria as an HIV person is like a nightmare. Bodily pains, loss of appetite, weak immune system and sometimes you just feel like dying”. Mr. Suurkure made the call in an interview with the Ghana News Agency as part of the media campaign to highlight malaria as part of the USAID People for Health project.

Mr Suurkure said persons living with HIV are very susceptible to malaria and little exposure to mosquitoes worsens their plight. He said if an HIV person gets malaria, it weakens his or her immune systems and decreases the CD4, thereby increasing the viral load of the HIV person.

“It is therefore very essential for them to take good care of themselves and ensure that their environments are always cleaned of filth”, he said.

Mr. Suurkure expressed concern about the complaints being received by sections of the public of the discomfort felt whenever they sleep under the insecticide treated bed nets, and entreated persons living with HIV, especially pregnant women and children, to always sleep under the bed nets. He commended the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) for the free distribution of the bed nets, adding, “though they are not enough, we hope they will continue with their distribution”.

The NAP+ President appealed to government to ensure that the needed logistics are made available for the CSOs to also perform their advocacy role. He also expressed concern about the dwindling flow of global funds, which are meant for support groups and called on government to

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assist these groups with income generating activities to help sustain and improve their livelihoods.

Malaria has been a major cause of poverty in Ghana and accounts for about 32.5 percent of all Out Patient Department (OPD) attendances and 48.8 percent of under-five years admissions. Statistics from NMCP indicates that in 2014, about 8.4 million cases of OPD malaria were recorded, 27.3 per cent of all admissions were attributed to malaria with 7.2 per cent of all deaths on admission were also from malaria.

Nine million confirmed malaria cases were recorded in 2013, with 2,985 deaths. And 7 million cases were also recorded in 2014, with 2,200 deaths. In 2015, six million malaria cases were recorded with 2,137 deaths.

According to the World Health Organization there were 214 million new cases of malaria worldwide in 2015, with 438,000 deaths and most of the malaria deaths occurred among young children claiming a child's life every minute.

Kwahu Afram Plains North districts records high cases of Malaria

By Adams Okae, GNA

The Kwahu Afram Plains North District recorded 50,364 malaria cases out of 119,013 patients who attended the Presbyterian Hospital at Donkorkrom in the four health centres and the 39 CHPS Compound last year. This represented about 48% of the Out Patients Department (OPD) attendance in the district.

Out of this number, 999 were pregnant women while those under five years were 8,627, children under-five years were admitted due to malaria cases and the hospital and the health centres in that year while 1,199 pregnant women were also admitted during that period.

The District Director of Health (DDH), Mr Robert Kwaku Bio disclosed this to the Ghana News Agency in an interview at Donkorkrom as part of the media campaign to highlight malaria as part of the USAID People for Health project. It seeks to leverage opportunities for change, building on consortium members' existing good relations with local governments, District Health Management Teams and the USAID ongoing initiatives in the health sector. He said the District population of 116,196 last year had 39 CHPS Compound instead of 50 with inadequate staff such as midwives nurses, medical assistance, doctors and other para-medical staff affected effective health delivery in the district.

Mr. Bio noted that the delayed by the National Health Insurance Scheme to pay service providers for the supply of drugs and other medical supplies to the hospital; health delivery especially malaria cases, which was one of the major diseases affecting the people including the vulnerable in the rural areas, which affect production in the community. He said the district hospital, the health centres and the CHPS Compound to get the needed medical stores huge sum of money for medical supplies.

The district director of Health Services attributed the high rate of malaria cases in the district to insanitary conditions at the communities and bushes surrounding which breaded mosquitoes and urged the people to keep their environment clean and also use the insecticide treated nets to reduce malaria cases in the districts.

Mr. Bio said the Dorkorkrom hospital was the only hospital serving the Kwahu Afram Plains South and North district, which received referrals cases from the various centres of the south district.

Journalists urged to be innovative in writing

By Bertha Badu-Agyei, GNA

The Country Director for Send-Ghana, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Mr George Osei-Bimpeh has called on journalists to be more innovative and creative by going beyond reporting on speeches and do in-depth stories based on well researched and authentic sources. He said journalists must write more in-depth stories based on research that educated and informed the public on developmental issues.

Speaking at a two-day training programme for journalists from Ghana News Agency (GNA) and Media and Communication Advocacy Network (MCAN) on the United
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States Agency for International Development (USAID), People for Health (P4H) Project in Koforidua, Mr Osei-Bimpeh said the media played a critical role in shaping the nation and there was the need for them to use the power they wielded to bring out developmental issues for redress.

He noted that Ghana had come a long way in implementing policies relating to health and other developmental issues, however the media reportage, “has not been structured well enough to capture issues to its logical conclusion for the understanding and participation of the citizenry”. The P4H project seeks to strengthen organisational and institutional capacities of government and civil society organisations (CSOs) for mutual accountability in health, HIV, water and sanitation, and nutrition policy formulation and implementation.

The training programme took participants through the project concept, the role of the media in reaching the set goals and targets of the project using the Ghana Health Service Patients Charter and the Code of Ethics. As part of the project, digital dashboard involving the use of mobile phones and social media would be provided in the implementing districts to enable the citizenry to give feedbacks and inputs into health policies and programmes would be collated as evidence by the consortium to demand answers and policy changes in the health sector to ensure equity and accessibility.

The Director of Editorial at the GNA, Mrs. Yaa Oforiwah Asare-Peasah, said the country had made gains in the provision of healthcare services, however, but maternal deaths, HIV infections and malaria and inequality in service delivery to the key population remained a challenge.

These she said had contributed to poor healthcare delivery leading to regional disparities and discrepancies in service provision related to sex, gender, age, occupation and socio-economic status.

“GNA is coming on board as an implementing partner of the project with many years of communication experience and expertise to help empower the citizenry to know their rights and to advocate changes in the health sector for their benefit,” she said.

She said GNA, established as the communication arm of the government and the only wire service in the country would in no doubt deliver on their mandate in the P4H project. Mrs Asare-Peasah and urged the participating journalists to show passion, commitment and diligence to realise the objective of the project.

Dr. Doris Aglobitse, Patron of MCAN said the organisation had been very instrumental in achieving most of the targeted goals under the Millennium Development Goals and the media being critical in setting the agenda for policy interventions, she was hopeful that with the expertise of the GNA, the media target of the project would be realised.

The Ghana Health Service is for all people living in Ghana irrespective of age, sex, ethnic background and religion.

The service requires collaboration between health workers, patients/clients and society. Thus, the attainment of optimal health care is dependent on Team Work.

Health facilities must therefore provide for and respect the rights and responsibilities of patients/clients, families, health workers and other health care providers. They must be sensitive to patient’s socio-cultural and religious backgrounds, age, gender and other differences as well as the needs of patients with disabilities.

The Ghana Health Service expects health care institutions to adopt the patient’s charter to ensure that service personnel as well as patients/clients and their families understand their rights and responsibilities.

This Charter is made to protect the Rights of the patient in the Ghana Health Service.

Watch out for the next edition as we take you through the rights of the patients.