

COMMUNITY HEALTH WATCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



**NIGERIA
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WATCH**

Informed commentary, intelligence and insights on the Nigerian health sector



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September Edition

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Deserted Kanwuri Primary Health Care needs Government Intervention

6th September, 2021

Kanwuri community is one of the most populated areas in Wushishi Local Government Area (LGA), Niger State. Its Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) was established about four years ago and serves the community members with maternal



Kanwuri PHC was established four years ago to provide basic healthcare services to the people of Kanwuri community

and child health services, as well as contraceptive services. The community members have however not been able to access these services from the PHC for the past two months, as it has been under lock and key. According to community member Hussaina Aliyu, this has been a burden for them, especially women who now must walk for long distances to attend antenatal in other facilities. "Even though it had shortages of drugs at times, at least it was easy for women to attend antenatal there because it is close" said Aliyu.

Another community member Abubakar Mahmud says pregnant women especially, are facing difficulty during labour, because they must travel for long distances to other health facilities to deliver. He added that when the PHC was open, it had two health workers who attended to patients. One of the health workers who didn't want to be named, said both she and her colleagues have been working as casual staff at the PHC since it was opened. She claimed they abandoned the PHC due to non-payment of their stipend



Kanwuri PHC has been under lock and key for the past two months, and has not been providing healthcare services to the people.

by the Wushishi LGA for several months, in addition to non-availability of drugs and equipment.

The provision of primary healthcare services is one of the functions of LGAs in Nigeria. Wushishi local government council and Niger State government should work towards paying the entitlements of the health workers of Kanwuri PHC, and make their employment full time. In addition to drugs and equipment, the PHC needs rehabilitation and upgrading. Only through this would residents in the community have access to the necessary healthcare services they deserve.



According to community member Hussaina Aliyu, Kanwuri PHC consistently had shortage of drugs when it was open



Even when it was open, Kanwuri PHC had only two health workers providing services to the people

What the community wants

1. **Employment of health workers on a full time basis in Kanwuri PHC to ensure that residents health care needs are met promptly.**
2. **Using the National Primary Health Care Development Agency' (NPHCDA) Minimum Standards for Primary Health Care (PHCs) in Nigeria, provide staff accommodation within the facility to enable health workers to deliver optimal services.**
3. **Ensure constant availability of essential and basic medications in the facility in line with the recommendation of the World Health Organisation essential drug list for PHCs .**

Well-equipped but not fully functional: Barwa Primary Healthcare Centre

13th September, 2021



Barwa PHC has standard wards and labor room

Barwa Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) in Barwa community of Wushishi Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State could be described as a model health facility. Aside from having a standard building, it is equipped with solar powered boreholes, a well-furnished laboratory, the facility also has a furnished labor room and a dispensary. However, Barwa PHC is lacking in one critical area: inadequate healthcare workers. Barwa

Wushishi has an estimated population of 114,600, and despite Barwa PHC serving a large population with PHC services, Barwa PHC only has two health workers, which limits the routine services it is able to provide to patients such as antenatal, postnatal and routine immunisation. According to Aisha Salihu, one of the two health workers in the facility, she and her colleague are often overwhelmed, especially on antenatal and immunisation days. She adds that because some women must stay for long hours on those days before being attended to, some of them have stopped attending antenatal and bringing their children for immunisation.

The lack of adequate manpower has also limited their ability to carry out regular community outreach according to her. "Ideally, we should carry out one outreach a week, but we only manage two in a month" she said.

A community member Zainab Nuhu also lamented about the long waiting times due to inadequate health workers, and so discouraging people from accessing care at the facility. According to her, as they have children at home to take care of, women especially are caught between going to the health facility to get healthcare or staying at home to take care of their children.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), "the ability of a country to meet its health goals depends largely on the knowledge, skills, motivation and deployment of the people responsible for organising and delivering health services". Human resource for health is one of the most important requirements for healthcare delivery, as health facilities cannot function without a trained and motivated workforce. For Barwa PHC to function optimally and provide timely healthcare services to the people, Wushishi LGA and Niger State government should recruit and deploy more full time health to the PHC. Only then will community members like Nuhu receive the needed timely and quality healthcare services at their point of need for themselves and their families.



Barwa PHC has a solar powered borehole that provides water to the facility



Barwa PHC has a standard building structure, a rare find in many PHCs in Nigeria



Despite having good infrastructure, Barwa PHC struggle with inadequate number of health workers. The facility has only two health workers, which limits the services it provides including antenatal and immunisation services.

What the community wants

Recruit and deploy more full time health workers to ensure prompt and adequate service delivery in Barwa PHC.

Wushishi local government should provide staff accommodation within the facility as recommended by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency' (NPHCDA) Minimum Standards for PHCs in Nigeria, to ensure health workers are present during medical emergencies.

Ensure that health workers are motivated to do their job by making sure that their emoluments are promptly paid.

Kadna PHC in Dire Need of Attention: Health And Hygiene At Risk Due To No Functional Sewage System

Kadna is a rural community in Bosso Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State. The community is fortunate to have good access roads which directly link the community's health facility. However, despite community members not having challenges accessing their health facility, they and health workers face



Kadna PHC is surrounded by grasses, where reptiles like snakes hibernate and and crawl into the health facility

several challenges while at the facility. One of them is lack of proper hygiene in and around the facility.

According to Fati Halilu, the facility's assistant in charge, the lack of sanitation staff is making it hard for the facility to be kept clean. In addition, the facility's suck away pit, which collects waste from the toilets, is completely broken, oozing foul smells, and posing a threat that could cause an infectious disease outbreak. She adds that the huge bushes and grasses around the facility are a further risk for health workers and patients, as reptiles such as snakes hibernate there and frequently crawl into the health facility.

Sabastina Muhammad, a community member who uses the health facility says in addition to the numerous challenges, that the lack of a fence at the health facility makes community members scared of being admitted at night. She adds that community members don't feel safe overnight at the facility, as they fear the facility may be broken into by criminals.

Health facilities, more so primary healthcare facilities are places that should be hygienic, safe, and accommodating for both health workers and patients. Open suck aways are breeding



The lack of a fence at Kadna PHC makes community members scared of being admitted at night due to risk of being attacked.

grounds for infections and may lead to the spread of diseases, aside from the unpleasant smell that comes out of them. Also, the danger posed by the lack of fencing is an additional risk which could serve as a deterrent for health workers and community members visiting health facilities.

Bosso LGA and the Niger State government should as a matter of urgency ensure that there is a functional sewage system in place at Kadna PHC, the health facility should be walled in order to ensure that the facility is not overrun by bushes and grass. In addition, a sanitation officer should be engaged to ensure that an effective infection, prevention and control system is put in place in the health facility. Through these interventions, health workers and community members respectively should have more confidence and feel safe working in and visiting Kadna PHC. It is also important that they are not at risk of contracting infectious diseases while seeking or providing healthcare.



Kadna PHC does not have a proper waste disposal site, and waste are disposed off in the facility premises



Kadna PHC's suck away pit, which collects waste from the toilets, is completely broken, oozing foul smells, and posing a threat that could cause an infectious disease outbreak

What the community wants

1. Provide a functional and gender equitable WASH facilities for the PHC as recommended by National Technical Guideline for WASH in PHCs
2. Urgently fix the broken sewage in the PHC to end a potential threat of an infectious disease outbreak.
3. Secure the health facility by fencing it to ensure that both the patients and health workers are safe.
4. Engage a sanitation officer who would ensure that an effective infection, prevention and control system is in place in the health facility.

PYATA PHC: A Health Facility Without The Most Basic Requirements

27th September, 2021



Pyata PHC has a broken roof, exposing the patients and health workers to the sun and rain

Pyata is a small agrarian community in Bosso Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State. Residents access their healthcare needs from the Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) located at the heart of the community. However, Pyata PHC is overburdened with numerous challenges. According to Rifkatu Mallam, the in-charge of the PHC, there is only one bed available at the PHC. As a result, whenever there is more than one patient that needs admission at the PHC, they must make use of benches, as evidenced by Deborah Thomas who must sit beside her son who is lying on a bench after receiving an injection for malaria. Additionally, the PHC has a broken roof, exposing the patients and health workers to the sun and rain. Perhaps even more concerning, is the fact that the PHC has never had any regular source of water since it was built. Mallam said she and her colleague must get water from nearby houses whenever women come to give birth. "We are only two health workers, imagine if one is not around, who



Pyata PHC has never had any regular source of water since it was built, and health workers must get water from nearby houses whenever women come to give birth

will conduct the delivery and who will go fetch the water?", Mallam Asked. To compound the situation, the PHC does not have a toilet, and health workers and patients must make use of the surrounding bush. However, during the dry season when grass dries up, they must walk long distances to get enough when they need to ease themselves.

Pyata PHC could be said to be a health facility, without the requirements of a health facility and not fully functional. The fact that patients and health workers must go into the bush to ease themselves is a public health risk. Open defecation also increases the risk of infectious diseases, like cholera spreading. The use of benches as makeshift beds is also not conducive to the patient healing process, and the roof of the primary healthcare facility being in disrepair is dangerous for both patients and health workers. Bosso LGA and Niger State government must do the needful by fully rehabilitating Pyata PHC with all the basic requirements of a health facility and making it a health facility where quality healthcare can be provided to residents by health workers in a comfortable and dignified manner, free of any danger.



Pyata PHC has only one bed and as a result, whenever there is more than one patient that needs admission at the PHC, they must make use of benches



Pyata PHC does not have a toilet, and health workers and patients must make use of the surrounding bush. Pyata PHC could be said to be a health facility, without the requirements of a health facility and not fully functional

What the community wants

1. Bosso local government should embark on the immediate rehabilitation of Pyata PHC and end patients' and health workers' exposure to adverse weather conditions when in the PHC.
2. Provide adequate, functional and gender equitable WASH facilities in the PHC in line with the recommendation of the Technical Guideline for WASH in PHCs in Nigeria.
3. Supply suitable beds and end the use of wooden benches for the sick to promote treatment of patients in a comfortable and dignified manner, free of any danger.



Nigeria Health Watch is a not-for-profit health communication and advocacy organisation that seeks to advocate for better health for Nigerians. We have worked to actively engage and support the government in raising awareness and increasing knowledge on a wide range of health issues in Nigeria. We aim to hold duty bearers accountable for delivering affordable and quality healthcare to Nigerians. The unique capacity of Nigeria Health Watch lies in the combination of its communication and health expertise, which enables the organisation to provide solutions for evidence-based communications and advocacy in the health sector.

