

HEALTH

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Sustainable health: Stakeholder call for Strengthening of health financing



Stakeholders in health have called for the strengthening of health financing for Nigeria to be able to achieve sustainable health and also cover the 83 million vulnerable in the country.

The expert who spoke at a conference held by a not-for-profit organization, Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria, PSHAN, with the theme: ‘Building Sustainable Health Systems in Nigeria’ noted that only 10 per cent of Nigerians are covered in the health insurance scheme.

Delivering a keynote address on the topic: ‘Building Resilient and Sustainable Health Systems for Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria’ former Chief Medical Director of Lagos University Teaching Hospital, LUTH, Prof. Christopher Bode said that Nigeria needs to explore innovative financing mechanisms such as health insurance schemes and public-private partnerships to mobilize additional resources, improve efficiency and transparency, and ensure equitable allocation and effective use of funds.

He regretted that so many Nigerians have car insurance but not many have health insurance.

According to him. “It is only 10 per cent that has health insurance. Yet. in four years. “We must find a very good way of covering the vulnerable including women, children, elderly, homeless, prisoners, disabled and others with the available money from what we gain from those who are paying premiums, especially those working.

Also in his submission, Senior KPMB Nigeria, Dr Tola Adeyemi, said Nigeria needs a multi-stakeholder journey to achieve sustainable health.

He said: “I will start with legislation and the government plays a role in this area. I’m glad that we have the national health act, I’m glad that there’s health insurance that has been introduced which has been made mandatory in various states.

“There’s of course, the role the private sector has got to play as well because, no matter how you dimension this, the issues are just too large for the government to do. In fact, we shouldn’t even expect the government to fund healthcare on its own.

“There’s a big role for the private sector to play but we have to create the enabling environment to encourage that. It will come in terms of direct private investments as well as public-private investment in the various areas of the health sector,” Adeyemi submitted.

On his own, Health Commissioner, Ekiti State and Chairperson of Health Commissioners Forum, Nigeria, Dr. Oyebanji Filani, explained that sustainable health means that in line with universal health coverage, everybody is able to get the health care that they need that is of good quality and at the time that they need it in a manner that ensures that they do not fall into poverty line.

Meanwhile, in her presentation, MD/CEO, PSHAN, Dr. Tinuola Akinbolagbe, said Nigeria has faced numerous challenges in its health sector, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to healthcare services, a high disease burden, and a lack of financial resources.

She said: “These challenges have highlighted the need for the country to develop in, and help out with the most vulnerable populations within the country.

“Building resilient and sustainable health systems is crucial for Nigeria to address the health needs of its growing population, improve health outcomes, and achieve universal health coverage. “It requires a multi-faceted approach that encompasses various strategies and interventions,” Akinbolagbe