

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON ISSUES SURROUNDING ADMINISTRATION OF UPPER WEST REGIONAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE. 2019/2020

The people of Upper West Region woke up and met one of the toughest shocks of their lives at a time the region was seriously fighting two novel diseases that engulfed the Region with Dr. Osei Kuffuor Afreh as the Regional Director of Health Services, COVID-19 and novel Serotype X meningitis. Dr. Afreh who was putting his arsenals together with directives from his superiors to eradicate the two deadly diseases of which one claims over 40 lives in the region, some political elements and individuals were also putting pieces of petitions together against the Regional Director with numerous allegations that have been explicitly investigated one by one by the investigation team.

This became necessary after the team of investigators acting upon this allegation by workers who were interviewed and awaiting their appointment letters disclosed to us that there were attempts to change them. We therefore went in to investigate the allegations. It was however observed that the letters were prepared but yet to be released to the applicants due to an order placed by no less a person than the Regional Minister (Dr. Hafiz Bin Salih) who felt his protocol list was not exhausted entirely in the recruitment process and he calls for a fresh recruitment to be done.

The team of investigators upon unearthing the intended rot, led to the abortion of the plot putting smiles on the faces of applicants who were given their appointment letters right after the investigation results were made public and duty bearers were confronted. However, the team got to realised that there were numerous activities that were hovering around the directorate and among them was the controversial reassignment of the then Regional Director of Health Services. The reassignment brought in a lot of controversies with many of the officers suspecting there was a foul play while others were of the view that the director was actually not administering the affairs of the directorate well.

In bringing us closer to the throwing of allegations haphazardly, the team went into independent probing to dig out the truth as citizens of the region were never ready to have heard that Dr. Afreh was reassigned because of his expertise in handling COVID-19 buttressing that the people of the region were also in need of such expertise Dr. Afreh poses.

Below are the independent observations that were dug out during the investigation based on some of the allegations raised by petitioners and some workers at the health directorate with regards to the reassignment of the hard-working regional Director of Health Services.

To begin with, a petition filed by some youth group who called themselves Concern Citizens of

Upper West Region accused the Director under points(b&c) of subtitle 5 captioned

Recruitment for New Upper West Regional Hospital,

the points (b&c) stated “**It is rather unfortunate that 3 months after the approval was given for Dr. Afreh to conduct the recruitment, he is yet to complete the process. The hospital is therefore compelled to engage casual staff to provide the cleaning and security services. These people will have to be paid from the hospital’s scarce resources. Meanwhile, the hospital was started without any seed money and basic supplies. This means that before the hospital started operation, it had already started accumulating debt. C. It was until headquarters brought pressure to bear on him that he started the recruitment interview in the early part of April 2020 and the people are yet to start work”.**

The team of investigators acting upon this allegation probed into the matter and got to realize that, the early April the group claims Afreh started recruitment after being pressurized, interviews were already conducted on the first batch of the interviewees and their appointment letters that were spotted by the investigators were already prepared dated April 20, 2020. It was however observed that the letters were prepared but yet to be released to the applicants due to an order placed by no less a person than the Regional Minister who felt his protocol list was not exhausted entirely in the recruitment process and he called for a fresh recruitment to be done. Evidence of this has been captured in the subsequent pages.

Notwithstanding, under Financial Mismanagement captured in their petition as subtitle 6 captioned **Financial Mismanagement**, point (f) of the financial mismanagement in their petition states “**We have also gathered some information that, the Regional Director of Health Services and the Accountant, are engaging in questionable financial spending. On the 17th April, 2020- Friday about 20 cheques were signed without following administrative or due processes. We believe it was fishy and in bad faiths- personal gains. We believe its an attempt to delete the coffers of the Regional Health Directors since his sins are catching up with him.**

Our investigation into this serious allegation came out with the revelation backed by evidence that, as of May 5, 2020, in the handing over notes of Dr. Afreh the outgoing Regional Director, the total balance left in the directorates account was GHS 2, 311, 053.37. Meanwhile the petitioners could not tell the total sum of monies taken out of the account by Dr. Afreh that attempts to delete the accounts of the health directorate.

Furthermore, the team again went into probing of one of the strongest allegations that, Dr. Afreh signed 20 cheques captured on point (f) under subtitle 5 thus **Financial Mismanagements** in the petition, an exclusive investigation conducted by the team has unearthed a document from the procurement unit of the Regional Health Directorate, that indicates the procurement manager was requesting for payment of medicines supplied to the regional medical stores of which sixteen suppliers were listed. On the same document, four relevant officers namely Regional Director,

REGIONAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE
PROCUREMENT UNIT, WA

Memo

TO: REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES
THRO: DEPUTY DIRECTOR - ADMINISTRATION
FROM: PROCUREMENT MANAGER *At the Procurement Unit*
DATE: 17TH APRIL, 2020
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF (MEDICINES) SUPPLIED TO REGIONAL MEDICALS STORES, WA

Sir, kindly approve for payment an amount of One Million, Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Two Ghana Cedis Only (GH¢1,230,572.00) to the under listed companies who have supplied various Essential Medicines to the Regional Medical Stores, under the Region's framework contracting arrangement from the open market.

The payment schedules are as follows:

NO.	NAME OF SUPPLIER	PAYMENTS REQUESTED GH¢
1	J.Y. Pharmacy Ltd	6,245.00
2	Renie Chemist Ltd	8,200.00
3	Danadams Pharma & Industries Ltd	4,856.00
4	Gokals Ltd	5,850.00
5	Supra Pharma Ltd	4,800.00
6	Pharmanova Ltd	500,000.00
7	Kojach Ltd	116,693.00
8	Phyto-Riker Pharmaceuticals Ltd	100,000.00
9	Dannex Ltd	100,000.00
10	Tobinco Pharmaceuticals Ltd	140,000.00
11	Intravenous Infusions Ltd	100,000.00
12	Kofikrom Pharmacy Ltd	70,478.00
13	Presoque Ltd	16,000.00
14	Biotic Company Ltd	30,000.00
15	Hills Pharmaceuticals Ltd	21,450.00
16	Ginapharma Ltd	6,000.00
TOTALS IN GH¢		1,230,572.00

Thank you. *AD*

Recommended for your approval

ms

17/4/2020

Reg Act

Approved

Signature

The team met with one of the top officials at the directorate, the Deputy Director of Administration (DDA) Mr. Marcellinus K. Welber to clarify the signing of 20 cheques within the same day as stated by the petitioners, the DDA states **“the 20 cheques were done even before Dr. Afreh got the letter of transfer, it was a normal office process, two weeks before we receive his letter, you can see that on that transaction I recommended on all the proposals for the payment, you understand, I studied and recommended for them to go ahead with the payment, it was long before he was transferred, they are not connected at all, I will say this anywhere it shouldn’t be blamed on him, it is the normal process over the years, whether it was him or another director, those things happen. We owe a lot of people so when insurance release money, it is only normal for you to pay your creditors so that they can supply you again if not they won’t supply you. There is money there he didn’t clear the account. That allegation in fact I think it was malicious, I will say it anywhere, it was not when he got the letter that he made the expenses”**.

The team of investigators went and met convener of the group dubbed Concern Citizens of Upper West Region Mr. Suleman who superseded the filing of the petition, contrary to his previous statement on the above allegation, he admitted that, they would have come to know that Dr. Afreh did nothing wrong if they had investigated what was told them by their informant who is an insider in the directorate. He stressed that, they got to know that the signing of the cheques was legitimate after the petition was sent to the Regional Minister and other high ranking officers.

In addition, on the issue of Dr. Afreh using the directorates' money to repair his private vehicle which has been captured by the petitioners in subtitle 6 captioned **Financial Mismanagement** point (a) states **“Notwithstanding the fleet of official vehicles (five) in his bungalow that he has been using, he still uses the scarce money meant for service delivery to maintain and service his private infinity SUV”**.

Our investigation on the above allegation again revealed otherwise after spotting a document which was a minute of core management meeting held on 28th January 2019 which in point 2.7 states **“RHDS is currently using his personal vehicle for office duties. Members agreed that RHD absorbs the maintenance bill when his vehicle is due for routine servicing. The RHD is still following up on from headquarters for official use”**. To make this clearer the Ghana Health service transport policy article 2.4.6 states that officers shall be re-imbursed for using personal vehicle for official activities. So the question is, what wrong will it have been for the Regional Director to use the directorates money to repair his car after it was agreed at the said meeting dated 28th January, 2019 that the directorate will foot bills of Dr. Afreh's car he is using for official activities. Also the Deputy Director in charge of Administration says **“I won't fault him if I were in his position I probably would have done the same thing ok, when the man came the official vehicle that was available for his use was this saloon car, can he used it to travel to Accra for official duties, can he used it to Lawra, Nandom, look at how bad our roads are, the man came with his own car which was robust and that could do these things so if he is using it for the office do you fault him for repairing his**

own paying for the maintenance of the car. If he was using the office car he would have been paying for the maintenance, once he is using his own car for me, whether there is a policy or not, whether there is a law or not he was doing the right thing” he indicated.

On this again, in a conversation with the convener too he admitted that, they did not probe into and after filing the petition they got to know of the transport policy that backs the Director’s action indicating that if they had probed further such allegation and others, would not have been forwarded too. He says they were only making their point based on what their informant told them which clarifies that, there was a failure on their part to seek for clarification from the other side.

Dr. Afreh was again accused of running down the affairs of the health service in the region especially at the new regional hospital, our investigations into this accusation too proved otherwise, it is discovered that, as we speak now, the new regional hospital is currently registered under the NHIS with the license of Dr. Afreh which clearly shows that if not for the love he has for the region, he would not have done that. Meanwhile, the Deputy Director of Administration at the directorate revealed that, it was normal for the director to have used his license to get the facility registered as the law stipulates that a senior doctor would have to use his license for the registration adding that, Dr.Afreh was the right person to do so.

Also, it was alleged that the health sector in the region was ailing under the watch of Dr. Afreh, as investigative journalists, we conducted our probe on the allegation and was marvelled to have gotten a revelation that the 2019 Health Performance Review that was sponsored by UNICEF placed the Upper West Health Performance at highly Performing in all sectors(4.2/5 from 3.6/5), so if such claims of ailing health has been used against such a person who was at the helm of affairs when this success was chalked, we as team of investigators wonder the motive of the petitioners.

Moreover, the group in point (e) under subtitle 6 thus Financial Mismanagement, alleged that, the director engages the services of a retired pharmacist by name Dr. Daniel Appaigyei believed by them to be his crony to manage the medical stores of which they indicated that, the two (Dr. Afreh and the Pharmacist, Dr. Daniel Appaigyei) can one day burn down the medical stores to conceal their under dealings. However, the team of investigators speaking to the DDA, he rubbished the claim and indicated that, the retired pharmacist handed over his official car and other items to the directorate since February and was only living in the official bungalow which the DDA says it was permissible adding that per their policies, a retiree can still stay in his bungalow for about three months to prepare him/herself.

Our investigation team also intercepted a document that was written and signed by Dr. Afreh on October 21, 2019 copied to the GHS headquarters declaring the position of the Chief

Pharmacists' vacant and thereby called on the GHS to kindly fill the vacant position. It would be mind boggling to get such director now using the man he declared his

position vacant to still manages the affairs of the stores and for who to pay him after as his retirement. Again, what was the action taken by the HR after the office of the HR of GHS headquarters was copied in the said letter.

Below is a copy of the intercepted letter.

In case of reply, the number and the date of this letter should be quoted

OUR CORE VALUES

Professionalism

People-centeredness

Team Work

Integrity

Discipline

Innovation



Regional Health Directorate
Ghana Health Service
P. O. Box 298
Wa
Upper West Region

21st October, 2019.

Tel: +2330392096685

GPS Address: XW -0020-2007

Email: rhds.uwr@ghsmail.org

My Ref :UWR/RHD/ADM/

Your Ref:

THE DIRECTOR

HRD

GHS

PMB

ACCRA

DECLARATION OF VACANCY OF CHIEF PHARMACIST

The current Chief Pharmacist of this region is due for compulsory retirement on 22nd December, 2019.

The position is thus being declared vacant with effect from his retirement date. Kindly take the necessary steps to fill the vacant position.

Thank you.

DR. OSEI KUFFOUR AFREH
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICE
UPPER WEST

Cc:

The Director of Pharmacy, GHS, Accra
The Chief Pharmacist, RHD, UWR
P-File

Regional Ministers' Interference on Dr. Afreh and Activities of the Health Directorate

It was also established by the team of investigators that, the Upper West Regional Minister has been interfering into activities of the Health Directorate using his political supremacy to control and direct how things should be done to satisfy his parochial interest. The team chances on a conversation between the Regional Human Resource Manager Mr. Kelvin and the out gone director Dr. Afreh, in that whatsapp conversation, the RHR told the then Regional Director, Dr. Afreh that, the Director of Human Resource at the head office has called him (Kelvin) to inform him that, the Regional Minister spoke to the Director General of Health Services demanding that, the recruitment of workers for the New Regional hospital should be stopped with immediate effect hence a course for them to comply with immediate effect.

The communication made to Dr. Afreh through the regional HR took away the powers of the Regional Director of health services to supersede the recruitment process as the RHR officer was no more cooperating with him tying the hands of the RDHS to his back which led to the termination of the interview and recruitment process.

Also, the team of investigators unearthed that, the Minister's action led to the holding of all appointment letters that were prepared on April 3, 2020 to be given to the applicants who had already went for an interview and were selected for their respective disciplines. The reason, we discovered was that the Minister wanted his protocol list that was not fully exhausted by the RDHS in the recruitment process to

be given an attention and that had led to a scheduling of another fresh interview immediately Dr. Afreh was transferred out of the Upper West region.

After discovering these allegations and getting hold of the soft copy of all the appointment letters prepared but were not released, the investigators put a call to the office of the Regional Minister to draw his attention and also hear his part, the Minister after he was informed by the investigator on phone what was going on, he remained on the phone call for about 2minutes without saying a word and finally thanked the investigator on the phone and said “ I can’t comment on this matter for now, bro bye bye” since then several attempts by the investigators to get the Minister comment on the matter has proved futile after he turned down all calls.

Moreover, the Regional Human Resource Manager who was also transferred out of the region to the Upper East Region immediately after Dr. Afreh’s transfer, Kelvin the HR was still in the region occupying the office he was transferred out of and further probing into the matter reveals that he was directed by the Regional Minister to stay and conduct the second interview that was scheduled as a result of the Minister’s interference. Now the big question was, someone who has been taken out of the office, was still asked to stay and recruit people for who and in his capacity as what, as of the time he was no longer in charge of the Upper West Regional Health Directorates’ HR office.

In buttressing the point that the Upper West Regional Minister was interfering in activities at the directorate, the investigators again intercepted a conversation between the Minister and that Health Director, in that, the Director was forced to transfer one

Ecstasy Enyonam Mensah an enrolled nurse at the Jirapa St. Joseph Hospital who was on study leave and was yet to complete requested for a relief, Dr. Afreh who saw the release request as exception and considering the caliber of person aiding the request, he asked for written letter from the minister to back the request. The Minister in a conversation told Dr, Afreh that, there is nothing exceptional about his request and he (Dr. Afreh) should do the transfer. After the conversation the Director had to fall for the request of the Minister and issued the release letter of Ecstasy and copied the Regional Minister. Below is a copy of the letter.

In case of reply, the number and the date of this letter should be quoted

OUR CORE VALUES

*Professionalism
People-centeredness
Team Work
Integrity
Discipline
Innovation*



Regional Health Directorate
Ghana Health Service
P. O. Box 298
Wa
Upper West Region

29th October, 2019

Tel: +2330392096685
GPS Address: XW -0020-2007
Email: rhds.gwr@ghsmail.org

My Ref: UWR/RHD/ADM/
Your Ref:

RELEASE OF STAFF FROM THE UPPER WEST REGION
ECSTACY ENYONAM MENSAH: STAFF ID NO. 893648

The above named staff who is an Enrolled Nurse working at St Joseph's Hospital in Jirapa Municipality, who went on study leave to pursue Midwifery, has been released from the Upper West Region with immediate effect.
The District Director of Health Services and the Regional Human Resource Manager should kindly take notice and update the human resource databases of the Municipality and the Regional Health Administration accordingly.

DR. OSEI KUFFOUR AFREH
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES
UPPER WEST REGION.

Cc
The Hon. Regional Minister, UWR
The District Director of Health Services, Jirapa Municipality
Human Resource Manager, UWR
Ecstasy Enyonam Mensah

The above letter per our investigation was written by Dr. Afreh to release the lady against his will as the supremacy of the Regional Minister subdued Dr. Afreh. This clearly indicates that the Regional Minister was dipping his hand into the affairs of Dr. Afreh in his bid to make him as his remote control.

Recommendations:

- After gathering a lot of evidences and probing into the matter, we recommend that Dr. Afreh should be given fair treatment.
- We also recommend to the GHS service to always do internal probing into matters like this before acting upon irrespective of the pressure exerted by petitioners and politicians.
- The team also recommends that GHS/Ministry Health table this report before the EOCO and other authorities who are currently investigating the Regional Director of Health Services.
- Officers of GHS should be allowed to exhibit their technocratic views and intelligence devoid of political interferences.
- The Upper West Regional Health Directorate should be allowed to operate without the hands of political big wings in the region exercising supremacy over its leadership.
- The top hierarchy of the directorate should be put in checked as there is some form of witch hunting among the leaders.
- The petition filed by the “Concern Citizens of Upper West Region” was orchestrated by an insider who has his own selfish agenda to prosecute.
- Our investigation reveals that Officers at the directorate have the habit of Giving out important documents to public; we recommend that the MoH/GHS put measures to curtail it.

Conclusion;

Based on the facts and evidences captured in the report, we can conclude that, the Allegations levelled against Regional Director of Health Services (Dr. Osei Kuffuor Afreh) by the concerned citizens were fabrications and lies and of no locus but aimed at tarnishing his image in the upper west region and Ghana. The investigator's herein demand for the immediate restoration of Dr. Afreh to his former position as the Regional Director since that will complete the administration of the Regional Health Directorate since there is both Deputy Director Clinical and Deputy Director Public Health we will therefore call on the Minister in charge of Health to allow independent state institutions to probe into the matter and this report could be helpful. We wish that, fair treatment is given to affected persons and measures should be put in place to restore the activities of the Upper West Regional Health Directorate to normalcy. We will state that, based on ethics and principles in our line of duty, we have decided not to publish some of our evidence. But if the needs arise, we will make them available.

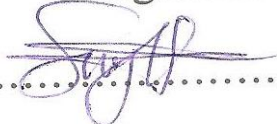
Thank You.

Signature



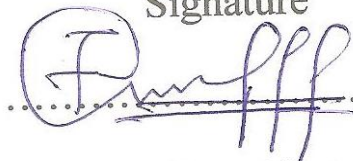
Issaka Abubakar
(0243841842)
Lead Investigator

Signature



Salifu Wononuo
(0553827119)
Investigator

Signature



Saeed Fataw
(0508875698)
Investigator