

COMMUNITY HEALTH WATCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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The Women of Yar Gaya Community Deserve to Give Birth in Dignity

6th April, 2022

Yar Gaya Primary Health Centre (PHC) is a health facility in Yar Gaya community in Dawakin Kudu Local Government Area (LGA) of Kano State. Established 42 years ago, the PHC is plagued by so many challenges that it now only provides



skeletal services, leaving community members with no option but to travel long distances in search of suitable alternatives.

The antenatal care (ANC) provider at the facility, Fauziya Umar Farouq said the PHC has no labour room, complicating challenges pregnant women in the community face when giving birth. "We provide antenatal care here, but we don't have a labour room to enable us deliver women of their babies when they are due", she said, adding that even their ANC guidance and counselling lecture is held in the facility's small reception room due to the unavailability of space.

Ado Jibril, also a staff of the facility, is unhappy about their inability to meet the health needs of the community members. "The issue we have is we don't have enough amenities to offer the services we should, so for now, we only check patients and carry out Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDT). For other tests, because we don't have a laboratory, we have to refer patients to other hospitals, and this has caused many patients to avoid coming to the facility."

Huzaifa Tahir, one of the few community members who still uses the PHC, said he is almost 30 years old and as far as he



knows, the health facility has never been refurbished or upgraded, which explains its poor state and inability to meet the health needs of the growing community.

Things are however not all bad at the PHC as Jibril pointed out that the facility has continued to be a beneficiary of the Drug Revolving Fund in Kano state. As a result, they never lack some essential drugs which enables them provide medications at subsidised prices for the community members.

While we commend the efforts of the officials of Dawakin Kudu LGA and the Kano State government for the ensuring that the Drug Revolving Fund is active, it is not enough. The people of Yar Gaya community deserve a health facility that is equipped enough to meet all their healthcare needs. Women deserve to give birth safely and in dignity and health workers deserve to have all the necessary equipment at their disposal.



What the community wants

1. **Rehabilitate and refurbish Yar Gaya PHC to ensure that it is up to standard as required by government.**
2. **Build a well-equipped labour room in Yar Gaya PHC to enable women deliver safely at the health facility.**
3. **Build a well-equipped laboratory at the PHC.**
4. **Expand the PHC to have more room for conducting ANC talks and other relevant activities.**

UTACCHU Primary Health Centre: How Did it Get this Bad?

15th April, 2022

Utacchu Primary Health Centre (PHC) was built years ago to meet the healthcare needs of the members of Utacchu Community in Kontagora Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State. As a result of years of neglect, everything in the PHC is either broken or rundown and currently, both health workers and community members have abandoned the facility.

Sitting outside a small, tight room from where he and his colleagues provide services, Muhammad Mamman, the officer in charge of the PHC said that they “are using a room that was provided to us by one of the community members. We are providing services from this room. There is no functional structure in that health facility. No client goes there, no woman goes for delivery there and no child is taken there for immunisation”. Because of the size of the room, they are limited by the services they can provide, as they cannot conduct delivery or hold antenatal and immunisation days in the room. As a result, they must follow pregnant women and children in the community to their houses for immunisation, while most women in labor must be transported to other communities with health facilities to deliver.

The situation is taking a toll on the community said Daudu Garba Ahmed, the community leader. According to him, due to the condition of the PHC, healthcare services are no longer readily available to the community members. He added that, it's bad enough that they must transport a woman in labour to another community, but the cost of transport makes it worse as it is obviously more expensive and a lot riskier than giving birth at a nearby facility.

Neglected and poorly maintained PHCs appear to be a common occurrence in most rural communities, and this is unacceptable as nobody should be forced to either access healthcare or provide healthcare services in unpleasant conditions. There is no dignity there. Utacchu Community members are asking the Kontagora LGA and the Niger State government to, as a matter of urgency, do the following:



What the community wants

- 1. Completely rehabilitate and reconstruct Utacchu PHC**
- 2. Provide the facility with basic and essential medication**
- 3. Provide a new delivery couch, beds, and chairs in addition to basic diagnostic equipment**

Inadequate Antenatal and Family Planning Commodities at Maternal and Child Health Clinic, Gwada

21st April, 2022

Maternal and Child Health Clinic (MCH) Gwada is the only government owned primary health centre (PHC) in Gwada community of Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State. MCH Gwada was designed to provide maternal and child health services to this and other neighbouring communities.



But, owing to the consistent lack of antenatal medications and family planning commodities, the health facility is not able to perform its primary function effectively.

According to Helen Augustine, the officer-in-charge of the facility, as a result of the shortage in medicine and commodities, most women who attend MCH Gwada do not receive the care they need. "Previously, we used to carry out house to house sensitisation before women would visit the facility for family planning services. Now women come for the services without any mobilisation, but the commodities are not available". She noted that the inadequacy might discourage women from coming for the commodities which will contribute to them having unplanned pregnancies.

Fatima Abdullahi is a community member who visited the PHC for to access family planning services. She however had to return home without accessing them as the commodities were not available. Abdullahi said that this was a frequent occurrence, and many other women in the community faced the same challenge.

Sa'adatu Yerima was also on a routine antenatal visit to the health facility and like Abdullahi, she had to return home without



the necessary medication as the health facility was out of stock. "Most times they prescribe the drugs for us, and we must buy them outside. If we don't have money, we must go on like that without taking our antenatal drugs", she said. In addition to these frequent stock outs, MCH Gwada is also grappling with the challenge of broken-down infrastructure: the floor of the facility is worn and full of cracks, and the beds and other equipment are also in bad shape.

Nigeria's maternal mortality indices are very poor and access to routine antenatal medications is one of the effective ways to improve the wellbeing of both the mother and her baby. Additionally, access to family planning commodities gives women the opportunity to prevent unplanned pregnancies, giving them more time for themselves and their families.



What the community wants

1. **Officials of Shiroro Local Government Area and the government of Niger State should ensure regular stock up of antenatal medications and family planning commodities in MCH Gwada.**
2. **Urgent rehabilitation of MCH Gwada, including provision of new equipment like beds and mattresses, among others.**

Improved Uptake of Antenatal Services at Jido Primary Healthcare Centre

28th April, 2022



Jido Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) stands in the middle of Jido community of Dawakin Kudu Local Government Area (LGA) of Kano State. This is quite significant as the PHC, which was refurbished in 2017 by the European Union Support to Immunisation Governance in Nigeria (EU-SIGN) project, provides maternal services, immunisation, and family planning services to Jido and other neighbouring communities.

Gambo Abdullahi is one of the eight traditional birth attendants (TBAs) trained by the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and assigned to the PHC to improve antenatal services uptake and delivery in the community. They do this by building awareness among pregnant women on safe practices during pregnancy and providing hands-on support for healthcare workers at the PHC. Every Thursday,

Abdullahi and other TBAs go house-to-house to check on pregnant women who missed their antenatal visits the previous day. "We come here every Wednesday when the women are supposed to come for their antenatal. If any woman is missing from those booked for the week, we go to her house, to find out why she didn't come and ensure she doesn't miss next time," she said.

The TBAs were engaged in 2020 and according to Aisha Shehu, the officer in-charge of the facility, since then, there has been a steady increase in the number of women - from Jido and other neighbouring communities - accessing antenatal services at the PHC. "Unlike before, our health facility now attends to at least 20 women a week," she said. Shehu attributed the increase in the uptake of antenatal services to the community outreach by the TBAs, adding that the women are becoming more aware of pregnancy care and how to take care of themselves at home.

However, the facility doesn't have a laboratory. For Shehu this hinders their ability to provide quality services as, the women on antenatal visits who often need to carry out urine, HIV and other required tests are referred to other health facilities far from the Jido community. Also, PHC lacks a labour room, therefore, women are referred to other health facilities for deliveries.

The increase in the uptake of antenatal services in Jido PHC is commendable and could contribute to preventing pregnancy complications. Thanks to the work of the TBAs and health workers at the facility. However maternal care services cannot be fully effective without a laboratory to carry out routine testes, and a labour room for delivery. To ensure that women have access to the best quality of health care available



What the community wants

1. Establishing a fully equipped laboratory for Jido PHC
2. Building a fully equipped labour room in Jido PHC



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.

