

# Governor Ongwae building super healthcare infrastructure as Kisii County gears up for medical tourism

**Covid-19 global pandemic and the occurrence of positive cases in Kenya have called for extraordinary leadership to prepare and cushion citizens against the deadly virus.**

Kisii County, like the other counties, has continued to put in place mitigation measures to ensure the spread of the novel coronavirus is contained.

Focus has been on ensuring public adherence to all guidelines issued by the National Emergency Response Committee on Covid-19.

One of President Uhuru Kenyatta's key objectives under the Big Four Agenda is to guarantee Kenyans access to high quality and affordable healthcare.

And this rhymes perfectly with Governor James Ongwae's transformational dream, on delivery of an affordable and reliable healthcare for the people of Kisii County and beyond.

The Governor has since 2013, when he was first elected, endeavored to develop a reliable healthcare infrastructure in the county.

**He has deliberately prioritized infrastructural and human resource development in the Kisii County health sector by putting in place a resilient medical infrastructure framework that can withstand any health risks, including pandemics.**

This has positioned the County strategically in a state of preparedness in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak and readiness to face any medical emergency.

The County has developed and continues to innovate as a world class health care system, serving not only the residents of Kisii County, but also neighbouring regions.

## Medical tourism hub

Governor Ongwae's dream of turning Kisii Town into a medical tourism destination in the Lake Victoria region is fast becoming a reality, following the modernization of the county's largest medical facility, the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital (KTRH).

Today, the KTRH is a one stop shop for medical and healthcare needs following its transformation by the County leadership.

Last year, President Kenyatta visited the KTRH and opened several newly constructed facilities worth millions of shillings, including a 250-bed capacity male ward, a 100-body capacity mortuary with histology and anatomy laboratories now being utilised by Kisii University for medical training. Others included a doctors' hostel, medical waste treatment and disposal - microwave shredder, funeral parlour-chapel and a 64 slice CT Scan.

And more recently the development of 300 bed capacity, Mother and Child Hospital, whose construction was commissioned by First Lady H.E Margaret Kenyatta is progressing well. The county is also building a Doctors plaza within the hospital complex.

And as counties were required to establish at-least 300 beds in the wake of the rising cases of Covid-19 infections, the new 250 bed, three storey male ward came in handy.

Already the county government had also earmarked the renovation of an existing amenity ward which was quickly converted to an ICU wing, purposely for Covid-19 cases.

The County has 388 beds in total set aside specifically for the management of the Covid-19 patients spread all over the nine Sub Counties.

## Oxygen Plant

The installation of an oxygen purification and supply system came in handy during this Covid 19 pandemic management. It supports the ICU operations where oxygen is of high priority.

Equally, to cater for the frontline medical personnel who are handling the Covid -19 patients, the 50 unit doctors hostel has been converted into an isolation centre for those who might contract the virus.

It is not only the KTRH that has benefitted from devolution in Kisii, Governor Ongwae's government has launched several healthcare related development initiatives across all the nine Sub-Counties.

Today, development of the new 100 bed Marani Sub-County hospital in Kitutu Chache North Constituency is complete with modern amenities including a casualty wing, laboratories and theatres. The reinvigorated facility, that was previously served by a single doctor, and with only 20 beds, now has five doctors, a mortuary, and an expanded Out Patient Department. The facility is set for grand opening later in the year.

Other major infrastructural development are underway at Nduru Level 4 hospital in South Mugirango in which a three storey 100-bed capacity wing with theatres and other amenities is being built.

The county has also undertaken infrastructural upgrades at Kenyenyia, Ogembo, Keumbu, Iyabe, Iranda and Gesusu Sub-County

hospitals where residents are able to access surgical, X ray and other medical and pharmaceutical services.



**A five storey Mother and Child Hospital (MCH) being built at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital. The 300 bed stand-alone facility commissioned by the First Lady H.E Margaret Kenyatta, fully funded by the Kisii County Government will be a one stop shop for antenatal Care Services, Delivery Wards, Maternity Theaters and Wards, New Born Units, New Born ICU and Post Natal Units among other specializations. [PHOTO: CHRIS KOROKA]**



**The ongoing construction of Nduru Sub - County Hospital in South Mugirango Constituency. Once complete, the 100 bed capacity Hospital will serve the people of South Mugirango, Bomachoge and the neighboring counties of Narok and Migori. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]**



**The upcoming Doctor's Plaza at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital. The facility being constructed by the Kisii County Government will be offered to doctors, for use when on locum. [PHOTO: CHRIS KOROKA]**



**The Doctors' Hostel with 50 bed boarding capacity will accommodate doctors on internship and those on exchange programmes. This will save them, any inconvenience if required to respond to critical cases at any given time. [PHOTO: CHRIS KOROKA]**



**The newly constructed Marani Level 4 hospital in Kitutu Chache North Constituency. The facility is complete and is expected to boost healthcare services in the area. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]**



# County sets robust Covid-19 emergency response team

The Kisii County leadership under the stewardship of Governor Ongwae and the office of the County Commissioner established a County Emergency Response Team which they co-chair to monitor and implement containment and mitigation measures against the virus.

Each Sub-County has an Emergency Response Team co-chaired by the Sub-County Administrators and Deputy County Commissioners. This is the team that previously liaised with the Provincial Administration including the Nyumba Kumi, in identifying persons with travel history from Covid-19 hotspots.

This team that comprise professionals and stakeholders from various sectors are now engaged with surveillance and public outreach in campaigns against Covid-19.

"I appreciate the efforts made by the Sub-County Response Teams, the chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and Nyumba Kumi in the fight against this pandemic. In collaboration with Public Health Officers and Disease Surveillance Officers, they have intensified campaigns against the disease all over the county," said Governor Ongwae.

**Tremendous developments have been achieved; to date, 3,920 samples**

**have been screened of whom 190 turned positive within Kisii county. So far, 155 have since been managed to recovery, while 48 are under observation in Isolation Centers, 1550 contacts traced.**

Unfortunately, 11 Covid-19 related deaths have been recorded with all of them associated to undelaying conditions and old age.

"Since we commissioned inspection of all persons gaining entry into the County at various border points, we have screened, through thermo guns, more than 2.5 million people. Some people with high temperatures were found to be having malaria and other conditions upon further investigation," explained Ongwae.

So far, the County has prepared 388 beds for isolation mainly at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital (KTRH)

The county has also established additional isolation wards at the sub-counties including; Getembe dispensary, Mwamogesa dispensary, Kiogoro health center, Kenyere health center and Misesi health center where additional 100 beds collectively are available.



The 250 bed capacity ward has been redefined as the Covid Isolation Center and fitted with equipment necessary for the treatment of the virus. The facility has been hailed as one of the best in the country and given a clean bill of health by various accessors including Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]

Kisii county has also set up fifteen ventilators at the KTRH isolation and treatment Centre for the critically ill patients, who might need respiratory support. This is in addition to an oxygen purifying plant which can supply packed oxygen to health facilities within the county and neighboring parts of Nyanza and the South Rift.

"Up to 2,281 health care workers including community health care volunteers have been sensitized on the Covid-19 disease and 450 health workers have been further trained on infection, prevention, and control and case management." Said Dr. Richard Onkware, the county Director Public Health.

## Enhanced number of medical staff

Further, Recruitment of 226 healthcare workers of various cadres in collaboration with the National government has been actualized.

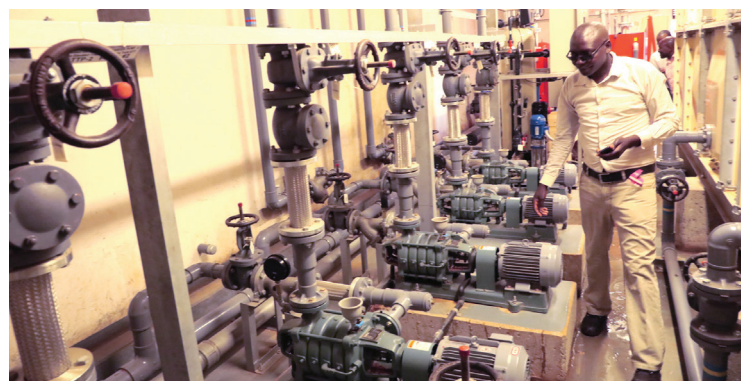
"In 2013 the County had a total of 887 medical personnel including 12 doctors, 696 nurses and 115 clinicians among others. We have so far increased the number to 136 doctors including 36 specialists, 1200 nurses and 235 clinicians." said Governor Ongwae

The enhanced number in medical staff has enabled the county alienate some to serve in the Covid -19 surveillance and disease management at the isolation centres from those serving in the normal wards and casualty wing to forestall possible disease transmissions.

The County had earlier made a request to the National Government to support the County in establishing a testing Centre for Covid-19 at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital (KTRH).

"We are informed that this has been approved and once operational, the center will go a long way in keeping Covid-19 in check since Kisii is a major transit point to neighboring counties," adds Dr. Onkware.

To mitigate the spread of the virus, the County Government through the Directorate of Public Health is routinely fumigating high risk areas within the CBD, estates and Sub Counties.



A 800,000 litre underground water tank and several other water harnessing tanks have been strewn across the facility to help preserve the precious commodity and keep KTRH's water reliability. [PHOTO: CHRIS KOROKA]

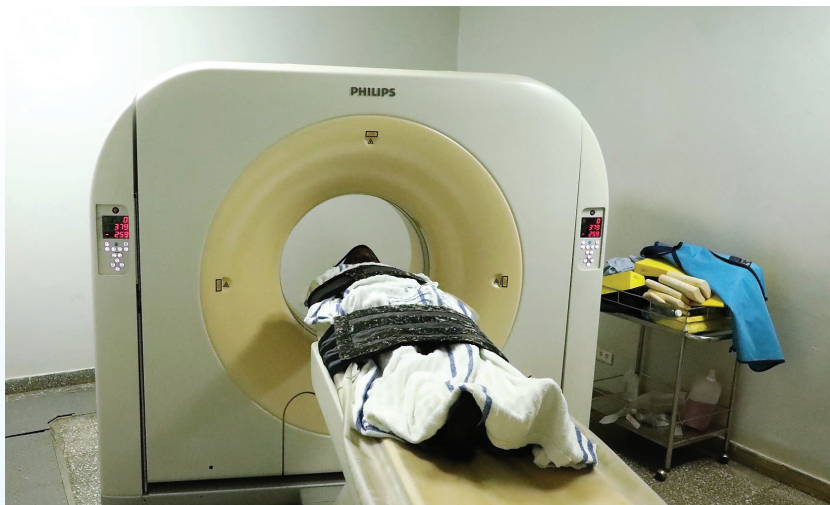


An oxygen plant installed at KTRH. It supplies oxygen within the facility and other neighboring hospitals. This has made Covid 19 management much easier in the county [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]

## County benefits from Public-private partnerships

A number of public and private organisations have come in handy to support the Kisii County Government's fight against Covid-19. Some of those who have supported the Containment Program include:

- **Kibos Sugar Company - 3000 litres of sanitizers**
- **Mozzat Betting Company - assorted items worth Kshs. 1M**
- **Kenya Pipeline Company - 8000 litres of sanitizers**
- **University of Maryland- N95 masks, sanitizers and liquid soap**
- **Living Goods - 20 hand washing tanks**
- **CURAMERICA - 1 sanitizing booth, 20 hand washing tanks and IEC tanks**
- **Kisii Business Community - assorted goods worth KShs. 1M**
- **Gusii Young Leaders - sanitizers and masks**
- **Safaricom - 3 sanitizing booths**
- **Kisii National Polytechnic - 5000 masks**
- **Kisii University - masks**
- **Victoria South Water Works Development Agency - 15No. 500 litre water tanks**
- **Repackaging of sanitizers that were donated by Kibos - Makena Chweya**
- **AIDs Health Foundation - assorted items for the mentor mothers and HIV counsellors**
- **Amref Kenya - assorted items for community health volunteers**
- **Aga Khan Foundation - equipment and PPEs**



A state of the art 64 slide Computed Tomography (CT Scan) Machine has been operationalized to help in specialized scans like for the heart and blood vessels saving locals and patients from the neighboring county the hustle of having to travel to Nairobi and Eldoret to seek such services. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]



A renal unit installed at Nyamache Sub-County hospital in Bobasi constituency. The facility has eased congestion at KTRH. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]



# Kisii prioritizes frontline healthcare workers safety as it vents arsenal against the novel virus

## Kisii County has embarked on the production of masks in specific Vocational Training Centers (VTCs).

The County has so far received PPEs from the National Government and other stakeholders as a positive indicator of the commitment in the fight against the disease.

With the setting, aside of Covid-19 isolation and treatment centres, it calls for sufficient protective gear and preventive items to forestall infections among health workers who are already in the frontline attending to patients.

Kisii County has progressively taken drastic measures to beef up the government preparedness

in containing the spread of the contagious Corona virus by implementing a raft of measures.

Two months ago, the Kisii County Government set aside a 250 bed capacity isolation center in preparedness against Covid-19 pandemic.

The three storey building at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital (KTRH) has a 21-ventilator unit, a 250 bed capacity male ward unit as a stand-alone isolation facility while 60 more beds including 15 ICU beds are at the former amenity wing and other facilities across the county.

To safeguard all from contacting the disease or contaminating the facility, one enters the isolation center from a separate, designated gate



Governor James Ongwae (left) interacts with a health worker in one of the Isolation wards at KTRH. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]



Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe presents PPEs to governor James Ongwae at KTRH. The PPEs will boost the welfare of the health workers. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]



Governor James Ongwae in company of Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe when they visited Marani Hospital recently. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]

along the Kisii-Kisumu road. The compound has a well-maintained lawn where patients are allowed to bask- this is in fulfilment of the Ministry of Health recommendation that patients should get enough rest, at least eight hours of sleep, exercise at least for 30 minutes and bask in the sun for a similar period.

The County government procured 600,000 quality, reusable face masks for free distribution to members of the public across the 45 wards.

### Partnership

This was a partnership between the Executive arm of the County and Kisii County Assembly. Each of the 45 wards was allocated 10,000 face masks which were distributed to the residents through elected MCAs.

MCAs supported the course through budgetary cuts from the assembly allocations during the supplementary budget.

Up to 54,000 fabric masks were distributed to leaders of the Boda Boda sector from all the

nine Sub-Counties of Kisii County for distribution to all Boda Boda riders in the county. Different groups identified as vulnerable including mama mboga's and other members of the community received free masks.

**"The County government procured 600,000 quality, reusable face masks for free distribution to members of the public across the 45 wards."**

Through Public private partnerships the County has received a consignment of assorted PPEs for frontline health workers amid the Covid-19 pandemic, donated by the Equity Group Foundation and partners.

An adequate supply of PPEs comprising of Goggles, face shields, surgical gowns, nitrile gloves, surgical masks, N95

respirator masks, head covers, gumboots, medical scrubs and shoe covers have been made available for healthcare staff.

Lake Victoria South Water Works Development Agency has donated 10 water tanks to set up hand washing points towards mitigating the spread of Covid-19.

Other partners include, The Aga Khan Foundation who have also donated PPEs and other medical equipment, the Safaricom Foundation and Scope International donated automated sanitizing booths.

The County also received a donation of 5,000 face masks from the Kisii Polytechnic, K-YES, a program funded by USAID, which has partnered with local organizations in the County including, Kisii County Youth Bunge Forum, Gusii Youth Bunge Sacco and Gusii Youth Development Forum. They have donated items such as thermoguns, locally made detergents and fabric face masks that have been distributed across all the 45 wards.

## Adequate bed capacity

Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital Isolation Centre has 310 beds serving three units;

The 250 bed isolation ward has been set aside for mild cases. There is also a 60 bed treatment centre for critically ill patients and those with mild symptoms of COVID-19 virus and a 10 bed holding area at our Out patient department for suspected cases before confirmation.

The units have piped oxygen from the oxygen

production plant and tapped water from the water treatment plant.

### Laundry services

The isolation centre has a separate laundry and kitchen services.

### Ambulatory services

There is an ambulance solely dedicated for Covid-19 related cases.

### Staff accommodation

A 50 bed self-contained hostel has also been set aside to isolate healthcare staff who

may contract the disease.

### Doctors' Plaza

The county is building a seven storey doctors plaza which will be used by the practicing doctors for their private locums. This will minimise movement of the medics in and out of the public facility.

### Waste management

A modern Incinerator for management of highly infectious waste is at work for disposing of waste including those from Covid-19 wards.

### Enough PPEs for all HCWs

We have also established an Emergency Operational Centre within KTRH that holds;

1. The sample collection team
2. The contact Tracing team
3. Data management team
4. Ambulance teams

We have a dedicated medical care staff for the management of COVID-19 patients.



An Intensive Care Unit at KTRH. The facility has more than 10 beds. [PHOTO: JOHN NYABWENGI]