

# Hoima hospital's new oxygen plant breathes hope into Bunyoro

By Wilson Asimwe

The oxygen plant at Hoima Regional Referral Hospital has started producing up to 200 cylinders of medical oxygen daily, a milestone that is transforming healthcare delivery in the Bunyoro sub-region and neighbouring areas.

The plant is equipped with double-capacity production technology, enabling it to simultaneously fill medical cylinders and supply oxygen directly to the hospital through a modern medical gas piping system, Dr Ibrahim Bwaga, the hospital director, said.

On Monday, Dr Bwaga said the plant had not been operating optimally since its installation two years ago due to an unstable power supply and the high cost of running a generator.

He said the hospital has now installed a transformer, which is powering the plant to full capacity. Bwaga said this means the hospital can finally meet its own oxygen needs while also supplying lower-level health facilities within Bunyoro sub-region.

He added that to ensure sustainability, local biomedical and technical staff have already been trained to operate the plant and conduct first-

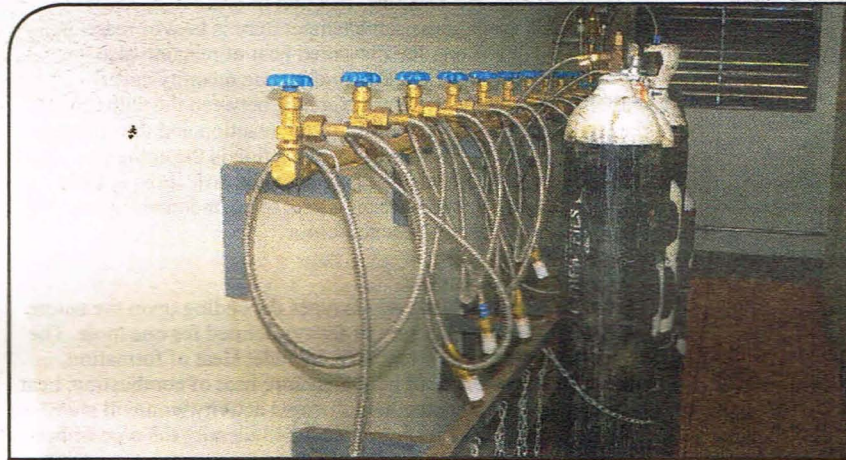
line maintenance, reducing dependence on external engineers and minimising downtime. He said oxygen remains one of the most critical resources in any hospital, often referred to as "a big and rare medicine which every hospital and every person craves for."

"The new plant has helped to relieve people and health facilities of this challenge," Bwaga said. With the plant now operating at full capacity, Hoima Regional Referral Hospital will not only meet its internal demand, but also serve as a reliable oxygen hub for the wider region.

He said the hospital had been spending about shm per week on fuel to run a generator that powered critical services, including the oxygen plant.

Bwaga said the hospital serves a wide catchment area covering Hoima city and the districts of Kibaale, Kakumiro, Kagadi, Kikuube, Buliisa, Masindi, and Kiryandongo in Bunyoro sub-region, as well as parts of Kyankwanzi and Kiboga in the central region.

He said this dependence on generators had become financially unsustainable, especially with increased demand from refugees in settlements in Kikuube and Kiryandongo.



**Medical oxygen cylinders connected to a gas piping manifold at Hoima Regional Referral Hospital in Hoima city**

"The oxygen plant had been relying on a generator because it was not connected to a stable power supply. The installation of the transformer is a major milestone because we are now producing our own oxygen," Bwaga said.

He also said the Government has allocated funds to address staffing shortages in the next financial year.

"We are going to attract several specialists to Hoima to help treat our people. The Government has already provided the funds," Bwaga said.

He said the hospital has been struggling to deliver services due to a shortage of specialists



**Bwaga: Facility's director**

needed to operate equipment and manage patients.

Some of the missing workers include a senior anaesthetist, paediatrician, dispenser,

gynaecologist, surgeon, and obstetrician.

Following renovation and expansion works, Bwaga said the Government installed new equipment and created additional units to improve service delivery.

The hospital senior administrator, Gloria Iyamet, said the facility had been spending about shm per week on fuel to run the generator, a cost she described as high and unsustainable.

"We have been spending shm per week on fuelling the generator to power the oxygen plant. I am happy that the Government has provided a transformer to run the facility,"

she said.

Iyamet commended the Government's commitment to strengthening the health sector, saying it was aimed at improving service delivery.

She also revealed that the hospital had received and installed two new X-ray machines.

Iyamet said the new mobile X-ray machine, equipped with computer-aided software, is designed to enhance tuberculosis (TB) screening and diagnosis in the district and beyond.

The facility now has three fixed machines in addition to the newly acquired mobile unit, which was received earlier this year.

She expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Health, assuring that the equipment would be properly managed and used to benefit the community.

Iyamet described the acquisition of the machines as a major milestone for the Bunyoro sub-region, saying they will significantly improve TB screening and diagnosis while strengthening overall service delivery.

Yunus Businge, a resident of Buhimba in Kikuube district, urged medical staff to ensure proper management of the new equipment.