

**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**IN THE MATTER OF AN INQUIRY INTO SUITABILITY OF OPERATIONS OF MONTANA BAY MEDICAL CENTRE, LIRA AND THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF DR. ORECH CHRISTOPHER, THE FACILITY OWNER.**

**FINDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

**Background**

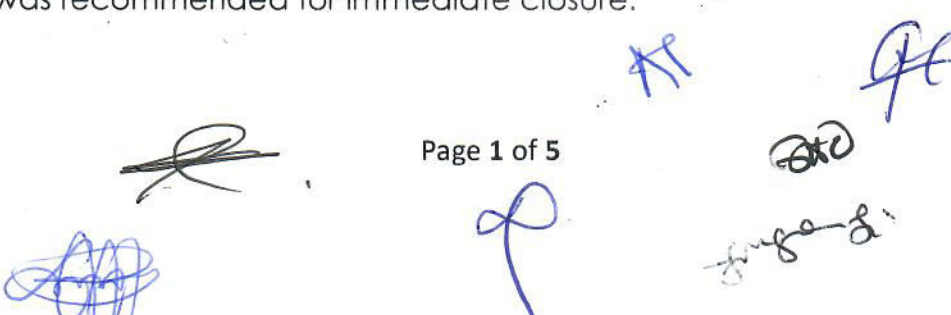
The Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council (UMDPC) received a complaint from a whistleblower on 7th August 2024 concerned about Montana Bay Medical Centre - Lira City following the death of Mr. Charles Owani, who had been managed by Dr. Orech Christopher. It was alleged that another unnamed old man who was attended to at the same health facility died about the same time as of Charles Owani. The whistleblower requested the Chairperson of the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council to investigate whether Montana Bay Medical Centre and its staff were qualified to care for and treat patients and "save other patients from suffering a similar fate".

In response, on 05<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council secretariat inspected Montana Bay Medical Center and submitted the findings to the Inspection, Quality Assurance and Research Committee of the Council that recommended a full Council inquiry.

Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council Summoned Dr. Orech Christopher on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to enable him to respond to the allegations in the said report.

Dr. Orech Christopher attended inquiry accompanied by his Counsel Odongo Daniel of M/S Okwir & CO. Advocates.

The UMDPC Chairperson explained to Dr. Orech Christopher, in the presence of his lawyer, the reason why he was summoned to the Council and the findings of the impromptu inspection to verify the whistle-blowers' allegations. In summary, the inspection report showed Montana Bay Medical Centre was operating without a valid operating license, annual practicing license, poor infrastructure, poor staffing, inadequate equipment and poor record keeping. The medical centre was recommended for immediate closure.

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Dr Orech stated that he is a medical officer and holder of a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery obtained from Mbarara University of Science and Technology in 1996. He started postgraduate training at Makerere University's Department of Surgery in 2004 and dropped out of the course in 2007.

He stated that he was the Owner and Supervising Doctor of Montana Bay Medical Center, which is situated at Angwet Angwet in Lira East Division Lira City. The Medical Centre offered general surgery, general medicine, and laboratory services. He obtained full registration and the Annual Practicing License (APL) in 2013. Despite alleging paying for APL and OPL, between 2016 and 2019, he didn't show the licenses.

Dr. Orech requested for more time to study the Inspection Report so that he could defend himself effectively. He also requested that the Council allows him to access the Medical Center so that he could load electricity units (Yaka) for security lights.

The council granted his two requests and adjourned the matter to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 to enable him to adequately prepare and defend himself. The Council further ordered him to hand over all the patient files from January 2024 until November 2024 when the facility was closed, to the Lira City Medical Officer.

During the Council session of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025, Dr Orech stated that Montana Bay Clinic was still closed since the City Health Officer and the inspection team closed it.

Because of COVID-19 (between 2020 and 2023), he was unable to renew his licenses due to a lack of money to pay, although the facility was operating and he was treating very few patients.

He had no other doctor on the team because he did not receive many patients. In case of any emergency, he alleged hiring doctors Dr. Olila (RIP) and Dr. Odong Patrick, among others, to see particular patients. However, Dr. Orech failed to produce any evidence in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or agreement to prove that Montana Bay Medical Centre had such partnerships with the said Doctors.

On staffing: Dr. Orech was asked whether the list of staff that was in the report was correct. He admitted that it was correct, but when he was asked to tender in their academic and professional qualification documents, he tendered in documents bearing different names. He also failed to produce his staff's academic and



professional qualification documents and Dr. Orech failed to verify the list of nursing staff he had submitted to the Council, including their academic and professional qualification documents, and employment contracts.

On vital signs monitoring medical equipment: Dr. Orech also admitted that he had only a weighing scale despite the facility managing patients with a range of diseases including diabetes and hypertension, among others that require items such as a blood pressure machine, thermometer, and a glucometer for regular monitoring and proper management.

On critical infrastructure: Dr Orech agreed with the inspection findings that bats had infested the theatre. He claimed that the laboratory missing in the report was not inspected because the technician had gone with the keys. He also agreed with the inspection report that there was neither a medicine store nor a pharmacy at the facility, and the team was not shown any medicines that were being administered to In-patients or would be dispensed to outpatients on prescription. He stated that since the facility was under renovation, he had kept the drugs in another place, away from Montana Bay Medical Centre.

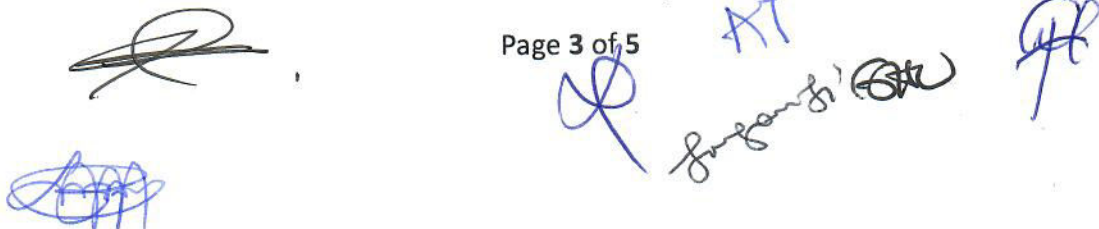
On infection prevention and control: Dr. Orech agreed with the inspection report findings that on the day of the inspection, there were no medical waste segregation bins. He stated that there had been dustbins at the facility, but he didn't know what had happened on that day when the team went to the facility.

Dr. Orech stated that the toilets were not labeled for males and females and that the doors had fallen off, but none of the staff had reported that issue to him. He said the rain could have rubbed off the labels on the toilets for males and females since it was a rainy season.

Dr. Orech also admitted that there was no signage at the facility and no perimeter wall. He argued that the access road that connects to the facility is not very busy, without many motor vehicles and motorcycles (boda bodas); thus, it was not necessary to build a boundary wall. He pledged to put a signage after renovation. Dr. Orech prayed for leniency from the Council to allow him time to renovate and improve his facility to meet the required standards.

**Witness: Dr Bernard Otucu - the Lira City Health Officer**

Dr. Otucu Bernard stated that he was 46 years of age, a Medical Doctor with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree obtained from Mbarara University of Science and Technology in 2005, a Master in Public Health from

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Makerere University obtained in 2018, and a postgraduate diploma in Public Administration from Lira University in 2021. He stated that he first worked as the Principal Medical Officer at Lira City and was promoted to a City Health Officer from January 2024.

Dr. Otucu stated that Lira City constituted a Lira City Ethics and Standards Committee, which conducts routine inspections. The committee, headed by the City Health Officer, conducts quarterly inspections of private and public facilities to emphasize quality and safe health service delivery within the city.

He stated that on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023, when the committee inspected Montana Bay Medical Center, Dr. Orech was not at the facility, but they found one medical officer, one clinic officer, two nurses, and a lab technician. The team did not find any evidence of a renewed Annual Practicing License for any of the staff and no operating license for the facility. They did not find any records of staff at the facility like academic documents, staff file nor contracts.

The medical center was unclean and untidy, including the theatre, outpatient department, and inpatient wards. Waste segregation was not being done; instead, there was open dumping and open burning of medical waste. The theatre equipment was unclean and improperly stored. There was no available register for patients. The health facility staff refused to sign the inspection report. The LC1 Chairman was then invited to verify and witness the report which recommended immediate closure.

Dr. Otucu further stated that on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the committee returned to Montanna Bay Medical centre as it had not implemented the recommendation to close. Dr. Orech Christopher was still absent and all the staff members on duty ran away. Dr. Orech did not report to Lira city Ethics and standards committee.

### **Findings of the Council**

The Council inspection report was corroborated by the report from the Lira Ethics and Quality Assurance Committee report and Dr Orech's testimony including:

1. Dr. Orech was operating an unlicensed medical center from 2015 to 2024.
2. Dr. Orech did not have an Annual Practicing License for the period 2015 to 2024.
3. Critical shortage of human resources, as no other staff could be verified during the two inspections.

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4. Lack of medical records and there was no routing reporting as required by Ministry of health and the Council.

The Council also noted that Dr. Orech was holding out as a Surgeon yet he never qualified as one, which is unprofessional and unethical.

**Recommendations of the Council**

1. The Council hereby recommends that the facility remains closed until Dr. Orech makes all the required renovations, procures new equipment including vital signs monitoring equipment, Theater equipment, new hospital beds, recruits qualified and licensed health care staff with clear staff contracts and files and addresses all the other gaps identified during the previous inspections so as to meet the required minimum standards for operation of a private health facility and thereafter re-applies to the Council for re-inspection.
2. During the process of renovation, no patient should be treated or managed at the said facility until it is re-inspected and approved by the Council to re-open.
3. Failure by Dr. Orech Christopher to follow the above recommendations shall lead to severe sanctions including his permanent erasure from the register.
4. Dr Orech will receive a letter of severe reprimand for operating an unlicensed and unsafe facility, and doing so without an Annual Practicing License, as required by law.

Signed on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of April 2025 by

1. Assoc. Prof. Joel Okullo (Chairperson) 
2. Dr. Ayub Twaha (Vice Chairperson) 
3. Dr. Okello Maxwell (Member) 
4. Prof. Joseph Ngonzi (Member) 
5. Dr. Asiphos Owaraganise (Member) 
6. Dr. Daniel Tumwine (Member) 
7. Dr. Muyanga Andrew Mark (Member) 