



2021 Universal Health Coverage Day Commemoration

The Nigeria Governors' Forum joins the rest of the world to commemorate the 2021 Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC) which provides another opportunity to reflect on the state of health care access in the country and appraise the status of implementation of health policy thrusts generally.

It is known and accepted the world over, that social health insurance is an important mechanism for overcoming the financial barriers to access to healthcare and minimizing the financial hardship associated with healthcare delivery.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum is concerned about the low penetration of health insurance and other financial protection mechanisms in the country. The resultant financial barrier can further limit access to health care services, worsen the burden of diseases and militate against meeting national and international development goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Health is one of the six core mandate areas of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and that keeps the Forum abreast of the benefits of deepening health insurance penetration to accelerate poverty reduction, catalyse economic growth, and create jobs.

Considering the foregoing, the Forum has thrown its weight behind the implementation of pro-UHC policy thrusts especially health insurance decentralization policy that ushers in the creation of State Social Health Insurance Schemes (SSHIS). The support provided by the Forum has led to the creation of State Social Health Insurance Agencies in 34 States. The remaining two States will also join within the shortest possible time. These agencies have enrolled more than 3 million citizens over the last 2 years across the 36 States. They also serve as an important vehicle for implementation of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF).

The NGF commends the Federal Government for the introduction of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund which will ensure access to basic minimum healthcare to the most vulnerable and less privileged in the society. The Forum affirms its commitments to continue to collaborate with Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) by urging its members to make adequate financial provisions for the implementation of the SSHIS, including the BHCPF, and prioritize financial protection for the poor and downtrodden throughout the country.

As part of efforts at ensuring that health is better prioritized and receives adequate political attention at all levels, the Forum is collaborating with the UHC 2023 Forum, an indigenous initiative geared towards putting UHC on the political front burner. The Nigeria Governors' Forum will continue to support all national and state-level policy thrusts aimed at expanding access to care and minimizing financial hardship associated with health care costs. The Forum is also putting mechanisms in place



to raise the accountability bar for health policy implementation and funding through its flagship peer-review approach.

It is our hope that all these measures will translate to expansion of health insurance coverage for the teeming population of Nigerians and set the country on the right trajectory for Universal Health Coverage.

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