**MNCH2 INTERVENTION DESSIMINATION:**

**“EVERY ONE COUNTS- INMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HEALTH”**

***“What Accountability in Health Means for Katsina State”***

Keynote Address

by

**Dr. Kabir Mustapha -** Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Health Katsina State

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PROTOCOL:

……………………I stand here before you today to deliver a keynote address on the event of MNCH2 Intervention Dissemination*.* ***“What accountability in health means for Katsina State”…..***

**WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?**

Defining accountability in the context of the day……. - An entity (or individual) is accountable when its actions, practices, and policies are - open to inspection by those whom they affect, - those to whom they have obligations, and - those who regulate them, and when there are clear consequences for actions, practices, or policies that are illegal, harmful, unethical, different from what was agreed upon, or incompetent. Accountability assures stakeholders those who have an interest in or are affected by the entity's operation or actions that the entity is telling the truth about what it's doing, and that its actions, practices, and policies are legal, ethical, and reasonably effective. Accountability has become an essential aspect in the health sector globally.

**ACOUNTABILITY IN HEALTH**

……. Around the world governments face pressures to provide health services effectively, efficiently and equitably. Reform and strengthening efforts in industrialized and developing countries have **adopted similar approaches to getting health systems to perform better: downsizing, privatization, partnerships, competition in service delivery, performance measurement and indicators, and citizen participation.** All these approaches converge in emphasizing accountability as a core element in implementing health reform and improving system performance. Accountability in the health sector is very critical since every human being must access health services and in turn pay taxes, which implies that, health care managers must demonstrate a strong sense of accountability.

The current concern with accountability and health systems reflects several factors: - First is dissatisfaction with health system performance. In industrialized countries, this has centred on cost issues, quality assurance, and access. In developing countries (Nigeria), discontent has focused on these same issues, plus availability and equitable distribution of basic services, abuses of power, financial mismanagement and corruption, and lack of responsiveness. **Policymakers and citizens want health care providers to exercise their responsibilities professionally and correctly according to regulations and norms, and with respect for patients.** Second, accountability has taken on a high degree of importance because the specialized knowledge requirements, along with the size and scope of health care bureaucracies in both the public and private sectors, accord health system actors significant power to affect people’s lives and well being. Further, health care constitutes a major budgetary expenditure in all countries, and proper accounting for the use of these funds is a high priority. **All health systems contain accountability relationships of different types, which function with varying degrees of success. For example, health ministries, public and private providers, legislatures, finance ministries, regulatory agencies, and service facility boards are all connected to each other in networks of control, oversight, cooperation, and reporting.** Often it is the perception of failed or insufficient accountability that furnishes the impetus for change. This puts accountability front and centre on the stage of current health system improvements. **Strengthened accountability is widely called for as a remedy for health system weaknesses globally.**

**TYPES OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Defining accountability more precisely also relates to specifying accountability for what? Three general categories emerge from answering this question.

* The first addresses the most commonly understood notion of accountability, viz, **financial accountability**. The literature in this area deals with compliance with laws, rules, and regulations regarding financial control and management.
* The second type of **accountability is for performance**. The literature here is arguably the largest, encompassing public sector management reform, performance measurement (score card development using Key Performance Indicators) and evaluation, and service delivery improvement.
* The third category focuses on **political/democratic accountability**. Literature here ranges from theoretical and philosophical treatises on the relationship between the state and the citizen, to discussions of governance, increased citizen participation, equity issues, transparency and openness, responsiveness, and trust-building

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Financial accountability - concerns tracking and reporting on allocation, disbursement, and utilization of financial resources - using the tools of auditing, budgeting, and accounting. **The operational basis for financial accountability begins with internal agency financial systems that follow uniform accounting rules and standards.** Beyond individual agency boundaries, finance ministries, and in some situations planning ministries, exercise oversight and control functions regarding line ministries and other executing agencies. Since many executing agencies contract with the private sector or with NGOs, these oversight and control functions extend to cover public procurement and contracting. Legislatures pass the budget law that becomes the basis for ministry spending targets, for which they are held accountable. **Obviously, a critical issue for the viable functioning of financial accountability is the institutional capacity of the various public and private entities involved**. For example, hospitals need to be able to account for the disposition of the funds they receive from various sources if they are to be granted higher degrees of autonomy.

**PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Performance accountability refers to demonstrating and accounting for performance in light of agreed-upon performance targets. Its focus is on the services, outputs, and results of public agencies and programs. **Performance accountability is linked to financial accountability in that the financial resources to be accounted for are intended to produce goods, services, and benefits for citizens.**

Nationally, the National Health Management Information System (NHMIS) serves as accounting platform for service delivery across Health programmes. Hundreds of NHMIS indictors are generated daily and routinely and summarised monthly for upload onto the DHIS2 for subsequent analysis in over 1,730 health facilities in Katsina State. Health system service delivery as one of the building blocks of health system is accountable through the NHMIS data. The interdependence of other building blocks namely Leadership and Governance, **Human resource for health, Health care financing, essential medicine and supply and Health management information system present an intertwined system whose performance is proxy to Service delivery indicators performance.**

However, it is distinct in that financial accountability’s emphasis is on procedural compliance whereas performance accountability concentrates on results. For example, provider payment schemes that maximize efficiency, quality of care, equity, and consumer satisfaction demand strong financial and management information systems that can produce both financial and performance information. **Performance accountability is connected to political/democratic accountability in that among the criteria for performance are responsiveness to citizens and achievement of service delivery targets that meet their needs and demands.**

**Political/Democratic Accountability**

In essence, political/democratic accountability has to do with the institutions, procedures, and mechanisms that seek to ensure that government delivers on electoral promises, fulfils the public trust, aggregates and represents citizens’ interests, and responds to ongoing and emerging societal needs and concerns. The political process and elections are the main avenues for this type of accountability. **In many countries, both developing and developed, health care issues often figure prominently in political campaigns.** Building health facilities or providing affordable drugs can be attractive options for politicians in generating electoral support. Beyond elections, however, political/democratic accountability encompasses citizen expectations for how public officials act to formulate and implement policies, provide public goods and services, fulfil the public trust, and implement the social contract. Policy-making and service delivery relate to aggregating and representing citizens’ interests, and responding to ongoing and emerging societal needs and concerns. A central concern here is the issue of equity. An important government responsibility is to remedy health care market failures both through regulation and resource allocation. Poor communities, rural and urban, often suffer from lack of resources; even if government provides fiscal subsidies, facilities and caregivers are frequently scarce. **Political/democratic accountability also relates to building trust among citizens that government acts in accordance with agreed-upon standards of probity, ethics, integrity, and professional responsibility.** These standards reflect national values and culture, and bring ethical, moral, and on occasion religious issues into the accountability equation at both agency and individual levels.

Finally seeking accountability helps to make sure necessary public services are provided; to protect the public from harm; to defend its right to know; to encourage whistle-blowers and shield them from retaliation; to provide compensation for loss or injury caused by an entity's negligent or illegal activity; **to prevent the misuse of public funds**; to assure consumers get what they pay for; to guard against unethical behaviour; and to administer simple justice.