



# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KOFORIDUA

Bishop's Office.  
P.O. Box KF 625.  
Koforidua  
Ghana, West Africa

Tel: (233) 3420 22536  
Fax: (233) 3420 21890  
(233) 3420 22728  
Residence: (233) 3420 20077  
Email: fafari54@gmail.com  
cdk@kofdiocese.org

## THE DOCTORS FOR AFRICA e.V. (UROLOGISTS)

### Introduction

I am happy to share my personal experience with the above group/Association as far as their work in some of my hospitals is concerned. These are the Holy Family Hospital in Nkawkaw and the St. Dominic Hospital in Akwatia.

Before my appointment as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Koforidua, I was the Vicar General for the then Bishop of Koforidua Diocese, Most Rev. Gabriel Charles Palmer-Buckle. As Vicar General, he delegated almost all hospital assignments to my office to handle. This was how I came to know the Association especially through Mr. & Mrs. Gerhard Ruebsam. At that time too the Dominican Sisters from Speyer, Germany were in charge of the general administration of the St. Dominic Hospital, Akwatia.

Ghana, as a country has had very limited number of qualified Urologists and this affects care for patients who need such specialized medical care. As a result of this, urological care for patients are mainly limited to the Teaching/Regional hospitals in the big cities. And even in these cases it is mostly the solvent patients who are able to afford such medical interventions. The many other patients who are unable to afford such specialised and expensive medical care often are left to their fate. Most of them die.

Since I got to know the Association I have been privy to the great interventions in urological cases that they have and continue to handle in our hospitals. Our mission hospitals are mostly located in rural areas where many of the people are poor and often do not have access to proper health care. The other scenario is that even though Ghana operates a National Health Insurance scheme, reimbursements to health facilities has and continues to be a big challenge. As I write, I am informed that the Health Insurance owes as much as twelve (12) months to most of the health facilities. Added to this is the fact that urological cases are not covered under the Health Insurance scheme. This worsens the plight of patients with urological problems.

It is for this that I am personally very grateful for this wonderful intervention by the doctors for Africa e.V. (Urologists) without which many more patients would have lost their lives.

I am aware that for some years now, they have been sending Urologists every year to six of our mission hospitals here in Ghana, namely; Akwatia, Battor, Dzodze, Jirapa, Kpandu and Nkawkaw. Apart from

being the bishop of Koforidua where some of the hospitals are located in my diocese, I was also privy to this information in my capacity as the Bishop responsible for Health for the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference for seven years.

### *Visits by Doctors*

These hospitals are visited by the Urological doctors at least twice every year and these visits last not less than two weeks. Before the arrival of Doctors, the beneficiary hospitals make announcements in the communities and churches to inform people with urological conditions to go to the hospitals for the necessary examination and preparation. These are compiled and given the dates of the arrival of the Doctors. So by the time the Urological Doctors arrive, these patients are ready.

Such visits by the Doctors have very positive benefits to the receiving health facilities. Some of which are the following:

- Education and training of local doctors and other clinical and/ or surgical staff
- Support for medical infrastructure for the beneficiary hospitals
- Offering of medical and technical support to the hospitals
- Making sure there is sustainability of the medical care
- Financial assistance to poor patients to undergo such medical interventions
- Free biopsy procedure and free report by a pathologist. In this regard, let me share just one example of the uncountable support and help that patients receive and which I am aware. The previous Doctors for Africa Team that visited St. Dominic Hospital, Akwatia in February 2019, performed sixteen (16) prostates or bladder biopsy. They went and worked on the reports. The reports on eight (8) patients with prostate carcinoma and two (2) with bladder cancer were sent to the Managers of St. Dominic Hospital earlier and these cases will be treated by the current (June) Urological team in the hospital here in Akwatia before their departure.

This is a simple but significant example of life saving medical intervention by the Doctors for Africa that have measureable impact on the lives of patients.

Besides this I am well informed that the Association handles/supports the following cases:

- Examination and Treatment of 150 patients per visit
- On average, about 50 surgeries are performed per visit
- Support for the six hospitals on annual basis amounts to about 50.000,- Euros
- Spends about 24.000,- Euros on patients' support
- Installation of hand hygiene dispensers and disinfectants
- Installation of photovoltaic systems to improve stable power supply
- Construction and modernization of laboratories to improve health care in our patients
- Equipment for theatres
- Beds and mattresses
- Improvement of medical technology

The Association continues to provide the necessary competent medical technical consultants for the hospitals. In this way they ensure guarantee of the highest professional and security in the discharge of their work.

Apart from the provision of board and lodge for the Association, all other costs are born by the Urological Doctors. This is a real financial saving for the hospitals and of course a huge benefit to the patients.

## Conclusion/Gratitude

In conclusion, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Urological Doctors for this great volunteering spirit by which many lives continue to be saved. Some of the beneficiary patients I chanced to meet occasionally have never hidden their joy and happiness in regaining their health from these medical interventions. They are very much aware that without the free medical care they could not have afforded these interventions.

I am also grateful to the Association for placing your expertise at the disposal of our hospitals. I am very much aware that our local staff are being trained and learning a lot from your visits. I cannot but continue to thank you also for all the medical and infrastructural development that you bring along with this partnership. What will our hospitals do with urological cases without your intervention?

*It is my hope that this partnership will continue to grow and thereby offer professional medical for our many but poor patients. Thank you.*



**Most Rev. Joseph Afrifah-Agyekum**  
Catholic Bishop of Koforidua – Ghana  
June 25, 2019