

businessnews

Botswana's finest doctors repatriate home to support Bokamoso investment

by Sunday Standard Reporter

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When it officially starts business in November, Bokamoso Private Hospital (BPH) will not only be an admiration for motorists using Metsimotlhabe-Molepolole highway, it also needs the best medical brains to support one of the biggest private health care investments in the region.

This week, Kabelo Ebineng, Chief Executive Officer of Associated Fund Administrators (AFA), revealed that, collectively, the project will cost about P700 million.

"Our vision for Bokamoso is to provide world-class specialty care right here in Botswana and to do that without compromise, and at quality and outcome levels equivalent to anything which may be found in RSA, US , UK or any other place renowned for such," said an upbeat Ebineng.

Bokamoso is the brain child of two local non-profit medical aid schemes, the Botswana Public Officers' Medical Aid Scheme (BPOMAS) and the Pula Medical Aid Fund Trust (PULA).

The two medical aid schemes have partnered with Operating Room International Limited Liability Company (ORI) of New York, and Vanderbilt University Medical Centre (VUMC) of Nashville, Tennessee, both from United States of America, to build the state-of-the-art hospital in Mmopane on the outskirts of Gaborone.

Ebineng revealed that the hospital is planned to open to patients in the first week of November adding that they want to make sure that the building will be completed by September. The state of the art equipment is planned to be installed for 2 months.

He explained that Bokamoso has begun recruiting some of the 'finest doctors and nurses' to staff the hospital. "We have 25 nurses from Botswana going through a 4 month training program being run by Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. We made offers to 70 more nurses from Botswana just last week," he revealed.

Ebineng added that since Bokamoso is going to offer a number of specialties that are currently not available in the country, it is necessary to hire a number of nurses (and doctors) from outside the country.

The experts are expected to relocate here and practice at the hospital once they obtain their licenses from the Nursing and Midwifery Council.



The hospital is planned to have over 70 specialist doctors on staff when the hospital opens; a lot of whom are Batswana doctors who are being repatriated to Botswana, like Dr. Molebedi Segwagwe, who is a gastroenterologist working in the UK.

"Additionally, we have a number of non-Batswana doctors from leading US, UK and other countries' institutions who are relocating here and will practice at the hospital once they obtain the necessary licenses from the Health Professionals Council," he said. It has been realised that for very long, people of Botswana have had to rely on South Africa for healthcare in a large number of specialties. This is not only costly, but the quality of the care is compromised because it takes longer to receive the care and the patients and family are greatly inconvenienced.

The AFA chief revealed that BPHT has been in conversation with the government to allow patients who they are sending to South Africa to come to Bokamoso for their care, so that the patients and their families are not put to disadvantage by travel and money requirements.

That is why Bokamoso promoters say they are purchasing some of the latest medical and information technology in the region.

Ebineng revealed that it is planned that all Bokamoso's radiology equipment be digital, so that the images can be available on line anywhere (around the country and globally).

This will include a 64 slice CT, a state of the art MRI, a catheterisation lab and digital ultrasound and chest X-Rays.

Also the hospital will be paperless, to a very large extent; regarding medical records.

"The desire is to have a hospital information technology platform that will have all the patient records on-line. This should enable doctors and nurses to document, order tests and see results all on computer, around the hospital and at other sites," he explained.

The hospital will have 330 beds of which 30 will be earmarked for a Rehabilitation Centre to be operated semi-autonomously from the main hospital.