



Challenges in Maintaining Authority in Health Regulation

Prof. John Charles Okiria

Chairperson Allied Health Professionals Council-Uganda

Dean and Teaching Professor – Clarke International University- CHARTERED



PROUDLY HOSTED BY



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



#AMCOA2025



Health regulatory bodies play a critical role in safeguarding public health by ensuring safety, efficacy, and quality in healthcare services, pharmaceuticals, and medical technologies. However, maintaining authority and public trust in the face of evolving global health landscapes is increasingly challenging



#AMCOA2025

Challenges

- **Rapid Technological Advancements**

- Emerging technologies (e.g., AI in diagnostics, gene editing) outpace regulatory frameworks.
- Difficulty in balancing innovation with safety and ethical concerns.

- **Globalization of Healthcare**

- Cross-border trade of health care, pharmaceuticals and medical devices complicates enforcement.
- Variations in regulatory standards between countries dilute authority.

Challenges

- **Resource Constraints**

- Limited budgets and staffing impairs effective oversight.
- Dependence on industry funding may compromise perceived impartiality.

- **Conflicts of Interest**

- Close ties between regulators and industry stakeholders can lead to accusations of regulatory capture.
- Transparency and accountability mechanisms are often inadequate.

Challenges

- **Legal and Bureaucratic Limitations**

- Slow and rigid regulatory processes.
- Regulatory decisions may be overturned or delayed by litigation.

- **Misinformation and Public Distrust**

- Proliferation of health misinformation, especially on social media. For example -Vaccine hesitancy and skepticism about scientific consensus undermine regulators' credibility.

Challenges

- **Public Health Crises (e.g., Pandemics)**

- Emergency authorizations and expedited approvals can raise concerns about lowered standards.
- Crisis response preparedness.

- **Political will, interest and “perceived interference”**

- Governments/ individuals in Government may exert influence on regulatory decisions.
- Regulatory agencies risk being perceived as biased or lacking independence

- **Traditional and Alternative medicines regulation**

- Who are the practitioners ?
- What are dosages and routes of administration of their medicines?
- How do we quality assure the “medicines from the spiritual world”?
- What are the guidelines of suitability of premises for a shrine?
- Do they need training or inheritance or they are spiritual based?
- Do we have a legal access to these shrines/premises if yes are we competent to regulate
- Should they be part of our regulatory framework?

Strategies for Strengthening Authority



- Enhancing transparency and public engagement.
- Investing in regulatory science and workforce.
- Promoting international collaboration and harmonization.
- Ensuring regulatory independence and accountability.
- Strengthening policy frameworks and enforcement

Conclusion

- Maintaining authority in health regulation requires a delicate balance between fostering innovation, ensuring public safety, and upholding public trust.
- In an increasingly complex and skeptical world, regulatory agencies must continuously adapt, communicate effectively, and reinforce their legitimacy through integrity, science, and responsiveness.

Thankyou

Special greetings from the Allied Health Professionals Uganda

