Media urged to pay attention to Universal Health Coverage

By Christabel Obohie ANNAN, Accra

The Ghana Universal Health Coverage (Ghana UHC), a non-governmental organisation, has emphasised the need for the media to draw attention to issues related to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Ghana.

A leader of Ghana’s UHC project, John Blase Mahama, noted that in terms of healthcare, the range of things needed for universal healthcare go beyond infrastructure.

“Whilst the infrastructure is great, it is important that the media draws attention to other areas such as the human resources for health, health research, elimination of out-of-pocket expenses, among others,” he said.

Mr. Mahama emphasised this at the Ghana UHC workshop for journalists on domestic health financing, Universal Health Coverage and budget advocacy in Accra.

He noted that with Universal Health Coverage, individuals and communities will receive health services without suffering financial hardship. “We shouldn’t look at people who have access in one way or the other but look at leaving no one behind, start by providing access to such people and increase coverage on Universal Health,” he revealed.

Mr. Mahama mentioned that UHC includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

The co-lead of Ghana’s UHC project, LaMont ‘Monty’ Evans, also explained how relevant it was to undertake the initiative of training journalists on the UHC because they are the portal for information to the communities and have a way of speaking the language of the people.

He added that the training was essential to help the media understand how they can advocate and help hold political decision makers accountable for the decision they make around health financing.

“The purpose of health financing is to make funding available, as well as to set the right financial incentives to providers, to ensure that all individuals have access to effective public health and personal health care,” Mr. Evans said.

He stated that when the media has a thorough understanding of what UHC is, it would help move the country forward.

According to the CEO, budget advocacy is a strategic approach to influence governments’ budget choices aimed at achieving clear and specific outcomes.

“Effective advocacy will build towards attaining them with smaller concrete steps, such as increased budget allocations and more solid oversight of how funds are spent,” he explained.

Mr. Evans stressed that a healthier country means that it can produce more economic activities and build a stronger nation.