In a move to further enhance the welfare of Community Health Workers (CHWs), the Ministry of Health (MINISANTE) has announced plans to include them as members of Muganga SACCO, a savings cheme for healthcare practioners.

This was disclosed to the Parliamentary Committee on Governance, Gender, and Family by the Minister of Health, Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana, on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. The minister's presentation focused on the 2023-2024 activities of the Ombudsman's Office and outlined the Ministry's 2024-2025 plans.

Dr. Nsanzimana emphasized that the Ministry already provides various forms of support to CHWs, tailored to their capacities. "These efforts will help them improve their livelihoods and address some of the challenges faced by their cooperatives across the country," he said.

The Ministry offers CHWs several forms of assistance, including performance-based incentives every quarter, mobile phones to help them manage health data, and uniforms like raincoats, boots, and bicycles to improve their access to patients, especially during rainy seasons.

Muganga SACCO with over 12,000 members from both private and public health institutions began as a cooperative to save and lend money. It officially became a recognized financial institution by the National Bank of Rwanda (BNR) in 2022. In 2023, members were able to use international debit cards to facilitate transactions while abroad.

The SACCO has introduced technology-driven services and partnered with the Rwanda Development Bank (BRD) and MINISANTE to provide special loans, including the GIRIWAWE program.

Dr. Nsanzimana revealed that plans are underway to integrate CHWs into Muganga SACCO, allowing them to benefit from the financial services provided. Muganga SACCO is expanding, and this initiative to include CHWs is part of the ongoing reforms to support their financial inclusion.

Muganga SACCO has been discussing the idea, and the ministry believes this will help strengthen the overall health sector and improve CHWs' economic stability.

CHWs play a vital role in Rwanda's healthcare system, especially in rural areas.

They support various health initiatives, including monitoring the health of pregnant women, child development, malaria prevention, and administering deworming tablets to young children.

Dr. Nsanzimana says that CHWs' efforts are crucial in improving health outcomes and that their incentives are linked to their performance.

As of 2023, there were over 60,000 CHWs working in 518 cooperatives across the country. These cooperatives engage in various activities such as agriculture, livestock farming, and small-scale businesses, helping improve the livelihoods of CHWs.