



**SPEECH BY H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR,
DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE OPTICAL LABORATORY
AND OPTICAL SHOP AT THE NAKURU COUNTY REFERRAL AND
TEACHING HOSPITAL ON 11TH JUNE, 2026**

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Medical Services;

Our esteemed partners from ATscale, Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI),
and OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation;

The County Executive Committee Member for Health;

Chief Officers and members of our County Health Leadership;

Hospital Management and Healthcare Workers;

Representatives of Professional Bodies;

Organizations of Persons with Disabilities;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the official launch of the Optical Laboratory and Optical Shop at the Nakuru County Referral and Teaching Hospital.
2. Today is more than the unveiling of a new facility. It is the opening of new possibilities for thousands of people whose lives will be transformed through better vision. It is a day that reflects our commitment as a county to ensure that quality healthcare is not a privilege for a few, but a right accessible to all.
3. We often say that health is wealth. Yet, for many families, something as basic as a pair of spectacles can remain out of reach. Across our communities, there are children struggling to read classroom notes because they cannot see clearly. There are farmers, traders, teachers, drivers, and professionals whose productivity is affected by uncorrected vision problems. There are older persons who lose their independence because they cannot access timely and affordable eye care services.
4. For many years, those requiring spectacles have often had to seek services from private providers, sometimes at considerable cost and with long waiting periods. For many households, especially those with limited resources, this has

meant postponing treatment or living with avoidable visual impairment. Today, we are changing that reality.

5. The establishment of this Optical Laboratory and Optical Shop marks a major milestone in Nakuru County's journey towards accessible, affordable, and inclusive healthcare. Through this facility, patients will now access lens cutting, edging, glazing, fitting, and dispensing services right here within our public healthcare system. This means shorter waiting times, lower costs, and faster access to quality spectacles for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. This achievement is historic not only for Nakuru County but also for the healthcare sector in Kenya. I am proud to note that Nakuru County Referral and Teaching Hospital becomes only the second public health facility in Kenya, after Kenyatta National Hospital, to establish a fully equipped optical laboratory capable of producing spectacles within the public healthcare system. This is a remarkable accomplishment.
7. With a capacity to process up to 500 optical jobs every day, this facility will serve not only residents of Nakuru County but also patients from neighbouring counties across the Rift Valley region and beyond. This investment further strengthens our position as a regional centre of excellence in specialized healthcare services and demonstrates our determination to continuously improve healthcare delivery for our people.
8. This success also reminds us of an important truth: meaningful progress is achieved when institutions come together with a shared purpose. I therefore wish to sincerely thank all the partners who made this project possible. To the Ministry of Health, thank you for providing technical leadership, coordination, and oversight that ensured this project aligned with the national agenda of strengthening assistive technology and rehabilitation services.
9. To ATscale and the Clinton Health Access Initiative, thank you for your invaluable investment towards the procurement and installation of specialized optical laboratory equipment, lenses, frames, consumables, and staff training. Your support has laid a strong foundation for sustainable service delivery. To the OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, thank you for sharing your technical expertise in laboratory design, setup, and capacity building. Through your support, our technicians are now better equipped to deliver quality services to patients.
10. As Nakuru County Government, we are proud to have contributed by providing the laboratory space and undertaking the necessary infrastructure improvements, refurbishment works, electrical installations, plumbing, and

facility preparation required to operationalize this laboratory. This partnership demonstrates what can be achieved when governments, development partners, healthcare professionals, and communities work together to address real needs and create lasting impact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The true significance of this facility will not be measured by the sophistication of its equipment or the beauty of its infrastructure. Its true value will be measured by the lives it changes. It will be seen in the child who can finally read a blackboard clearly and perform better in school. It will be seen in the young entrepreneur who can work more efficiently and grow a business.
12. It will be seen in the elderly grandmother who regains her independence and confidence. It will be seen in persons living with disabilities who gain greater inclusion and opportunities to participate fully in society. It will be seen in families whose financial burden is reduced because quality eye care services are available closer to home and at affordable cost. That is the impact we seek as a government.
13. As we celebrate this achievement, I want to assure our partners and the people of Nakuru that we remain committed to sustaining this investment. We will continue to support adequate staffing, maintenance of equipment, capacity development of healthcare workers, and further investment in specialized healthcare services.
14. Our vision is clear. We want a healthcare system that is responsive, inclusive, efficient, and accessible to every resident regardless of their social or economic status. As we move forward, we shall continue investing in health infrastructure, medical technology, human resources, and innovative solutions that improve the quality of care available to our people.
15. In closing, allow me to leave you with this thought: The launch of this Optical Laboratory is not just an investment in equipment; it is an investment in people. The true value of this investment will be measured by the thousands of children who will learn better in school, the workers who will become more productive, the elderly who will regain their independence, and the families whose quality of life will be transformed through improved vision.
16. As Nakuru County, we remain committed to building a healthcare system that is accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of our people. Together, we are restoring sight, restoring opportunity, and restoring hope.

Thank you.

H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, EGH
GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY

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