

# PharmaNews

BULLETIN *Communicating with health care workers throughout Fiji*

December 2009

04

## Contents

1. Director's Update  
Special Update - Regional  
Pharmacy Unit Move into New  
Office
2. Vaccines & Cold Chain Update  
11.95 Million Secured for  
Biomedical Equipment
3. Warehouse Unit Update  
Stock Verification Tour Report
4. Clinical Update:  
2009 Pandemic H1N1 Vaccine

## From the Editor's Desk

Welcome once again to the Fourth and final issue of the PharmaNews Bulletin for the year 2009!

It has been a most challenging year for our team at the FPBSC and this issue hopes to inform and update our colleagues throughout the Divisions as well as the Region of the major highlights of the year.

So we hope you do enjoy the read and please feel free to send in your comments to email address [mary.kama@govnet.gov.fj](mailto:mary.kama@govnet.gov.fj) or post to P.O Box 106, Suva, Fiji.

We would like to wish our readers a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2010!!

Vinaka Vakalevu!

Mary.R.Kama

## Director's Address



Lieutenant Colonel  
Jonisio Mara  
Director FPBSC

The Fiji Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Services Centre (FPBSC) has been suffering from weak leadership and management for a number of years now. Wastage, losses, overstocking, pilferage and expiry of drugs and consumables have been a common feature of the Auditor's reports for several years.

Although there have been some efforts to rectify them, a lot more work needs to be done in order to effectively address these concerning issues.

The latter has prompted the Ministry of Health to carry out changes within the organisation, particularly within key management positions earlier on this year. I came on board as the Director on the 15th of July and the following officers were also part of this transition period:

- 1) Mrs. Vinita Ram - newly appointed Acting Chief Pharmacist
- 2) Mr. Apolosi Vosanibola - newly appointed Warehouse Manager
- 3) Mr. Waisea Kelo - newly appointed Acting Principal Supplies Officer

The current focus of the FPBSC is improving existing policies, systems, and processes as well as developing our human resource capacity.

If these areas are effectively addressed, our organisation will then be in a better position to meet the expectations of all stakeholders and consequently, satisfy the overarching goals of the Ministry of Health and in a more broader sense, the vision of the people's charter with regard to pharmaceutical services.

Furthermore, the long-term goal of regionalising the organization cannot be realised without the implementation of more robust systems that are supplemented and supported by a competent workforce that is committed to delivering quality services to the nation.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the future of the organisation is bright. Our goals and objectives can easily be met and I am optimistic

that the year 2010 will bring more positive results to the service as a whole. It is the people within the organisation that hold the key to achieving the results that is expected of us.

On a lighter note, I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Fruitful New Year.



Acting Chief  
Pharmacist  
Mrs. Vinita Ram

## Regional Pharmacy Unit Move Into New Office

The Regional Pharmacy unit moved into the allocated office space at FPBSC in September of this year to continue its services in the procurement and supply of quality HIV & STI medicines to 12 South Pacific countries & territories.

The countries fall under the Global Fund Round 7 Grant of the HIV/STI Pacific Multi-Country Program of which the Secretariat of the Pacific Community is the Principal Recipient.

Apart from Procurement and supply management, the unit also looks at an uninterrupted communication flow between countries, updated and advanced therapy options, providing clinical assistance where needed and providing in-country training sessions among others.

The Regional team is made up of Regional Pharmacist, Ms. Sujita Narayan and Mr. Jason Bower who is the Capacity Building Pharmacist (pictured below).



# Vaccines & Cold Chain Update

Sr. Seini Ravea, National EPI Coordinator

Bula Vinaka and welcome to our 4th issue of the *PharmaNews Bulletin*!

The vaccine and cold chain unit comes under the Essential Medicines Authority (EMA) and is headed by the Principal Pharmacist. The unit was established in 2006 with the recommendation by the JICA project, J-PIPS to the Ministry of Health after identifying a high rate of vaccine wastage at the FPBS and clinical level.

The unit has two staffs: a National EPI coordinator who looks after vaccine logistics & management and a cold chain technician who is also a driver and looks after the distribution of vaccine fridges to all vaccine & immunisation sites and also conducts servicing and repairs.

Our main objective is to ensure timely delivery of safe and potent vaccines to administration sites and we also oversee the timely receipt of all vaccines arriving at FPBSC as well as conduct training and cold chain maintenance to ensure the security of all vaccines.

A recent training conducted at the FPBSC was the 5th Regional EPI and Cold Chain training held from the 9th to the 13th of November of this year. It was attended by 39 participants from 14 Pacific Island countries and territories. The training was funded by J-PIPS/JICA and UNICEF.

Currently we stock six types of vaccines for our national routine immunisation program: BCG, OPV, TT, MR, Hepatitis B and Pentavalent (DPT-Hep B +Hib). We also stock limited supply of the Yellow Fever, HBV immunoglobulin and Anti-D-nRHD Immunoglobulin.

We would like to thank all immunisation providers in adhering to the safe system of ordering, storage, vaccination and waste disposal from rural to urban facilities and as a result doing no harm to our patients, our health workers and our communities in general.

Finally, as the National EPI coordinator, I will be leaving the program to go on retirement leave from January of 2010 and will be replaced by Ms. Litiana Volavola.

May you all have a Merry Christmas & A Blessed New Year !



Dr. Sala Saketa presents a certificate to Litiana Volavola at the recent Regional EPI training workshop



Sr. Ravea (Standing 6th from left) & Mr. Arthur (Seated right) pictured here with J-PIPS team

## 11.95 Million Proposed for 2010 Biomedical Budget

Mr. Virendra Singh, Biomedical Engineer

The Ministry of Health through the Fiji Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Services Centre created history this year by securing 8.9 million dollars to procure new biomedical equipment for various disciplines in the health sector.

This has been welcomed by all stakeholders following the existence of a huge imbalance between the provision of biomedical equipment in relation to the provision of healthcare services required to serve the people of Fiji.

With the secured funding, the Ministry was able to purchase:

- Frontline equipments for O&G departments, General wards, Outpatients departments, operating theatres, pediatric, physiotherapy, pathology, x-ray and ICU departments
- Specialised digital radiological equipment for C.W.M & Lautoka hospitals
- Specialised Laboratory equipment for Pathology departments
- Specialised endoscopy equipment for Lautoka & Labasa hospitals
- Specialised Intensive Care equipments for C.W.M, Labasa & Lautoka hospitals
- Specialised operating theatre equipment for C.W.M, Lautoka & Labasa hospitals
- Spare parts from various suppliers to sustain the existing biomedical equipment

Despite the numerous purchases mentioned above, there are still inadequacies within the Ministry of Health

Services. Most of the health care facilities still lack basic equipment to satisfy acceptable standards and to replace older ones.

So this year a forecasted budget of 11.95 million dollars has been proposed to the Ministry of Finance to purchase additional equipment to resolve these inadequacies.

The following purchases are just half of those included in the proposed 2010 budget :

- Purchase of CT scanners for Lautoka & Labasa hospitals
- Purchase of mammography machine for Lautoka hospital
- Purchase of Magnetic Resonance imaging equipment for C.W.M hospital
- Purchase of Laparoscopic equipment for Lautoka hospital
- Purchase of Arthroscopy equipment for C.W.M hospital
- Purchase of teaching microscopic equipment for Labasa hospital

If approved, the proposed budget will sufficiently address some of the inadequacies identified by the Biomedical Unit and will in turn boost the efficiency of health service delivery to the people of Fiji.



Mr. Virendra Singh (Pictured above)

## Warehouse Unit Update



**Mr. Arun Raman**  
Warehouse  
Operations Manager

The FPBSC is taking this opportunity through the Pharmanews bulletin to remind our colleagues in all Health Facilities to send in their quarterly orders on time as per circular that was sent on May 9, 2009. The timely receipt of orders will enhance the timely delivery of stocks to health care facilities.

It has been noted that some health facilities had sent in late requisitions which resulted in late supply of medicines and clinical products. The schedule below should provide some guidance to our colleagues in the Divisions in terms of expected timelines for receipt of orders.

- ◆ First Quarter - 15th November
- ◆ Second Quarter - 15th February
- ◆ Third Quarter - 15th May
- ◆ Fourth Quarter - 15th August

This year has seen many changes occur within warehouse operations and the organisation in general. One such change is the relocation of Laboratory and Dental Services to FPBSC. The Procurement and storage functions of consumable items used by the two departments will now be handled by the FPBSC.

This move will in the long run improve the supply chain management of Laboratory and Dental consumable items in terms of better storage and distribution to delivery points. The coordinator of this transfer has been delegated to Acting Principal Supplies Officer, Mr. Waisea Kelo who has divided the implementation plan into phases as follows:

### A) Preliminary Phase

- ◆ Identification of storage space at the FPBSC warehouse for shelving of incoming stocks
- ◆ Training conducted for Laboratory & Dental Procurement officers who will be based at the FPBSC
- ◆ Identification of resources and budget implications

### B) Transfer Phase

- ◆ Transfer of Laboratory consumable items
- ◆ Transfer of Dental consumable items

A Big Vinaka Vakalevu from the warehouse team.



Above: FPBS Customer Services Team from left - Jone, Mobin, Alipate & Mitieli  
Left: Bulk Warehouse staff picking items for a health facility order

## Stock Verification Tour Report, Northern Division

Mr. Alifereti Kavoa, Clinical Products Manager

The Fiji Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Services Centre had approved a tour of twenty four health facilities within the Northern Division by a team from the warehouse operations led by the Clinical Products Manager, Mr. Alifereti Kavoa.

The primary objective of this tour was to verify stocks of consumable items in terms of storage, and management practices and also expiration dates and overstocking.

The team code namely "operation control team" included the acting verification officer, the acting stock control officer, a cold chain technician and the clinical products manager. The team utilised a situational analysis tool namely the checklist form to gather relevant information on storage and stock control practices.

The staffs were interviewed on stock management practices and were asked to demonstrate while explaining. The latter was carried out in order to measure knowledge level of staff with regards to good stock management practices.

The checklist forms was also used to quantify overstocking, expired and near-expired drugs and consumables. The team worked effortlessly to achieve the objectives as well as the timelines of the exercise. The efforts of the team members resulted in the successful completion of the tour which covered the major hospitals including Labasa, Savusavu, Taveuni, Nabouwalu. However some health centers were missed out including Lagi, Rabi, Qamea and Yacata due to transport difficulties.

On a lighter note, we wish to acknowledge the various Sub divisional Medical Officers, nurses and pharmacy technicians and assistants who had supported us with regards to accommodation, meals and availing themselves for interviews. A special thank you goes to the following people:

- ◆ SDMO Nabouwalu hospital
- ◆ Health Inspector Bua
- ◆ Staff nurses at the Lekutu Health Centre
- ◆ Dr. Samu Kailawaidoko of the Labasa Outpatients Department
- ◆ Provincial administrator Cakaudrove
- ◆ Mr. Alipate Bolalevu of the Savusavu sub division
- ◆ Nursing staffs and families of the Tukavesi Health Centers
- ◆ Medical team of the Taveuni sub divisional hospital

Lastly, we would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by our fellow colleagues through the timely approval of the tour, particularly the Director FPBSC Col. Mara and consultant Mr. Rambisessar.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!



Mr. Alifereti Kavoa (Pictured Above)

# Clinical Update

## 2009 Pandemic H1N1 Vaccine - What you need to know

### 1.1 What is 2009 H1N1 influenza?

The 2009 H1N1 influenza (also called Swine Flu) is caused by a new strain of influenza virus and it has spread to many countries.

Like other flu viruses, the 2009 H1N1 spreads from person to person through coughing, sneezing and sometimes through touching objects contaminated with the virus.

Signs of 2009 H1N1 can include:

- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Sore throat
- ◆ Muscle Aches
- ◆ Chills
- ◆ Coughing
- ◆ Sneezing

Some people feel better within a week. But some people get pneumonia or other serious illnesses. Some people have to be hospitalized and some die.

### 1.2 How is 2009 H1N1 different from regular (seasonal) flu?

Seasonal flu viruses change from year to year, but they are closely related to each other. People who have had flu infections in the past usually have some immunity to seasonal flu viruses (their bodies have built up some ability to fight off the viruses).

The 2009 H1N1 flu is a new flu virus. It is very different from seasonal flu viruses. Most people have little or no immunity to 2009 H1N1 flu.

### 1.3 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine

Vaccines are available to protect against 2009 H1N1 influenza.

- ◆ These vaccines are made just like seasonal flu vaccines.
- ◆ They are expected to be as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines.
- ◆ They will not prevent “influenza-like” illnesses caused by other viruses.
- ◆ They will not prevent seasonal flu.

### 1.4 What are the side effects of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause side-effects. But the risk of any vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

#### Mild Effects

- ◆ Soreness, redness, tenderness, or swelling where the shot was given.
- ◆ Fainting (mainly adolescents)
- ◆ Headache, muscle aches
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Nausea

If the above effects occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1 to 2 days.

#### Severe Effects

- ◆ Life-threatening allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.

### 1.5 Roll-Out to the Fiji Population

- ◆ 85,000 doses of the H1N1 vaccine has been made available to the Ministry of Health through the World Health Organisation.
- ◆ Roll-Out will commence in February 2010.
- ◆ The National H1N1 taskforce recommended the following priority groups to receive the limited supply of H1N1 vaccine
  - Health care workers including all MOH establishment, medical & nursing students and general practitioners to ensure the health service is not compromised during the second wave of the pandemic.
  - Pregnant women i.e. any woman who falls pregnant in 2010.
  - Persons with an underlying chronic condition as specified by the national taskforce.

While awaiting the arrival of the H1N1 vaccine, the public is encouraged to continue practicing non-pharmacological preventative measures such as thorough and frequent hand-washing, a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, regular exercise & avoiding crowds.



5 mL MDV – pink packaging – 10 doses

2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine

#### References

1. Vaccine Information statement, Department of Health and Human services, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
2. National H1N1 taskforce, Fiji Ministry of Health