

Weekly Health updates

June 2018

MINISTRY of HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES
Shaping Fiji's Health



BUDGET 2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISES KIDNEY DIALYSIS COSTS



(Pictured on the right) Medical professionals attend to a dialysis patient

There is positive news for those who need to seek dialysis treatment, as for the very first time, the government through the 2018-2019 budget has subsidised the dialysis costs for families who otherwise will not be able to afford the dialysis costs. A total of \$3.5million have been allocated in the Ministry of Health and Medical Services 2018-2019 budget to subsidize the cost of treatment for patients currently on haemodialysis treatment in Fiji, and \$2million towards infrastructure and specialized equipment.

While presenting on the Ministry's budget in the parliament this week, the Health Minister, Hon. Rosy Akbar highlighted that it would be the first time, for Fiji to see the dialysis costs being subsidised to \$150 per session, and those with household income under \$30,000 will just pay 50 percent of treatment cost. This will be coordinated through new standalone Government kidney centres in Suva and Nadi and the centre run by the Board of Visitors in Labasa. Minister Akbar emphasised that this will significantly ease the financial load on families and reduce the emotional burden that families and patients carry with them from these diseases.

Meanwhile, the National Kidney Research and Treatment Centre is currently in development. Its operations will commence in the very near future, from a temporary location. Plans are also underway to commence the National Peritoneal Dialysis Program, and two of the local nurses have been trained in Australia specifically for this.

Minister Akbar said that improving accessibility

of services and subsidizing the dialysis cost will significantly enhance equity, accessibility and affordability to Fijians with NCD complications.

However, the Health Minister reiterated that Dialysis is still not a lifestyle option.

"It is not only costly and time consuming. We need to emphasise to all Fijians the importance of avoiding diabetes or, if they are affected, complying conscientiously with their treatment regime to avoid their condition deteriorating. It is possible to live for many years with well-managed diabetes without the need for dialysis," Minister Akbar explained.

Meanwhile, the government through the 2018-2019 budget has also increased the overseas treatment allocation to \$2million from \$1.3million allocations in 2017-2018 financial year. The referral of patients' abroad remains an integral part of the services that the Ministry of Health and Medical Services facilitates for our Fijian families.

The total allocation in the 2018-2019 budget for the Ministry for Health and Medical Services is \$335million. This comprises of \$260 million allocation for operating expenditure and \$60.5 million for the capital expenditure and VAT of \$14.5 million. There is an increase of FJ\$13.9million in the 2018-2019 budget allocation for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, that reflects on the Government's significant investment in upgrade and expansion of existing health facilities, construction and equipping of all health facilities in Fiji with modern medical equipment and resources.

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Hon. O' Connor also outlined the efforts made to enhance the transport facilities for those communities in rural and maritime zones.

"I am pleased to say that, the Ministry's ambulances have been increased, marine vessels have been repaired and now operable, and the aged Ministry-owned vehicles having been replaced with Government-leased vehicles. There is an increased allocation of \$500,000 in the 2018-2019 Budget for the purchase of Boats and Outboards as well.

This budget is truly and rightfully, a Family Friendly Budget and as the Assistant Minister responsible for Public Health, I welcome the allocation of \$12.7m to this activity. Public Health programmes through outreach to schools and communities continue to focus on ensuring our people remain healthy where they live, work, learn and play," Hon. O' Connor said.

MINISTRY ADVOCATES WASH HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS



(Seated middle) Assistant Health Minister and Medical Services Hon. Alexander O' Connor at the launching of the 2018 WASH Program at the Xavier College in Ba last week

Having a good hand washing and hygiene habit is critical in the prevention of communicable diseases like typhoid. This was the message conveyed by the Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Alexander O' Connor during the official launching of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) program at Xavier College in Ba last week. As part of this launch, the Health Ministry in partnership with Punjas and Oceans Group and Company installed WASH stations in schools around western division.

"The objective of this initiative is to reachout to various schools and educate the students on preventative measures which help to prevent diseases like typhoid that is associated with poor sanitation and hygiene practices" he said

Hon O Connor reminded the students that they should practise proper hand washing habits as a routine of their daily life.

"Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of diseases. Wash hands before eating or preparing food and after using the toilet", added Hon O Connor.

He also thanked the sponsors for collaborating with health Ministry in such programs to promote healthy lifestyles.

"We all acknowledge with appreciation today's launch and the tremendous support by our generous sponsors, Ocean Group and Company along with Punjas Fiji Limited, who have contributed to the installation of a Soaps and Wash stations that enables the practise of regular hand washing".

He also thanked the Ministry of Education for the support rendered to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services in promoting such initiative.

HEALTH OFFICERS COMPLETE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING (PEN)



Participants of the PEN model training at Pacific Harbour

The Central Eastern Division Health Services through its Divisional Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Unit has completed a series of 4 trainings for the 162 Health Workers on the Package of Essentials for Non Communicable Disease (PEN) Intervention. The 4 trainings took place at Lagoon Resort at Pacific Harbor from 19th April to 9th of July 2018.

The training for the 23 Medical Officers, 9 Nurse Practitioners, 49 Nurses, 14 Dieticians and 7 Physio Therapist were identified from the central division while 12 Medical Officers, 3 Nurse Practitioners, 39 Nurses, 5 Dieticians and 1 Physio Therapist represented the Eastern division.

This training will enable the officers in the sub-divisions to run PEN Clinic in their facilities to assist the public.

Fiji has adopted the WHO Package of Essential for Non Communicable Disease intervention for Primary Health Care with goes along with the revised Fiji

Cardiovascular Therapeutic Guidelines and Diabetes Management Guidelines to include risk reduction protocols.

A training manual was developed to map out ways to operationalize these protocols in Fiji's Primary Health Care settings.

The major outcomes of the PEN training is such:

- Enables the participants to develop better application of Behaviour Change and Motivational Interviewing
- Understand the fundamentals of the PEN protocols and how to operationalize it at the Primary Health Care facilities
- Understand how to utilise the monitoring tools and how to effectively operate PEN in Special Outpatient Department.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services continues to undertake such training programs to boost the professional development of the health staff in order to enhance the health care service delivery in Fiji

MINISTRY TO CONTINUE ITS REACHOUT TO MARITIME AND RURAL COMMUNITIES



(Seated on third from right) Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services with health staff during the visit to Cikobia Island this year.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services will continue to reachout to health facilities in the maritime and rural areas. This was emphasised by the Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Alexander O' Connor during 2018-2019 budget address in the parliament this week.

Since joining office, Hon. O' Connor has inspected 185 health facilities of the total 202 health facilities in Fiji.

"I had travelled far and wide within our island nation and I had gained a fair understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our health system through frank discussions with our local advisors, leaders and communities. I aim to complete visitations to the remaining seventeen health facilities, as such have planned to undertake this task over the next two weeks, including Rotuma," Hon. O' Connor said.

The 2018-2019 health budget has also received significant allocations for the upgrading and expansion of the health facilities, construction of



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P: 3314988 M: 8905053 | 9904055