



FAMILY PLANNING-A VITAL TOOL FOR GOOD HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Participants at the Family Planning workshop in Suva this week at Devos on the Park in Suva

A two day workshop on family planning concluded this week with the aim to equip health professionals with skills and knowledge to effectively reach out to the Fijian families through creating awareness, counselling and information sharing on family planning and reproductive health. The workshop held at the Devos on the Park in Suva enabled interactive discussions and planning among health professionals in the area of family planning and reproductive health.

The workshop is a collaborative effort between Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services together with Fiji National University and Royal Australia New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The workshop aims to empower health professionals to reach out to women and youths with information and service allowing them to choose wisely about their family planning.

Course Facilitator and President of the Pacific Society of Reproductive Health from the Fiji National University, Dr Pushpa Nusair said that by promoting family planning, we are actually contributing to economic growth in terms of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Family planning is an integral part of economic growth to meet the sustainable development goals as we have a large adolescent population and there is opportunities to enhance family planning programs," Dr Nusair said. Through this workshop the participants will have a broader perspective of family planning and acquire adequate knowledge and information to address issues like unplanned pregnancy and the health issues associated with pregnancy. Dr Nusair further stated that by ensuring family planning is accessible to our adolescents, women and girls can help them choose when to get pregnant, the chance of them completing their education and contribute better to the society. One of the participants of the workshop, a midwife, Ms Losena Liveleka from Navua Hospital described the workshop as informative as she would be able to relate the importance of family planning to women in urban and rural communities.

"Looking at the mothers coming in for clinics, some of them do not have a clear view of what family planning is all about so after attending this workshop I will be able to advise them on the safe practices of family planning," Mrs Livaleka said.

RENOVATIONS TO GIVE A NEW LOOK AND COMFORT AT NADI HOSPITAL



Workmen carrying out the renovation works at the Nadi Hospital's Emergency and GOPD Department

The ongoing renovations and refurbishment work currently undertaken at the Nadi hospital is expected to efficiently allocate more space and resources to meet the increasing demand for health care services. Nadi Hospital serves a large population of over 91,702 people in the sub-division thereby it has become necessary for the health ministry to enhance the service delivery and accommodate for the increase in demand for the health services.

Work on the renovation of the operation theatres, General Outpatient Department (GOPD), Emergency Department (ED) is expected to be completed later this year will create a conducive environment for enhanced comfort and care for the patients.

Subdivisional Medical Officer (SDMO) Nadi, Dr Abdul Shah expressed his appreciation to the Health Ministry for its prompt actions to facilitate the staffing and resources needed for the hospital. This has resulted in the allocation of additional doctors and x-ray technicians which has boosted the hospital's human resource capacities.

Dr Shah confirmed that the hospital now has 4 dedicated doctors to provide services in the

General Outpatient Department (GOPD) which has significantly reduced patient waiting time. Dr Shah said that through the current renovations both the GOPD and ED should be fully air conditioned with proper seating arrangements, thereby increasing patient care and comfort level. The patient wards along with the maternity wards are also being renovated and 16 new television sets with new wall fans will also be installed at the wards during this renovation. He said the operating theater at the Nadi Hospital will also be upgraded which will enable the local and overseas visiting teams to efficiently conduct surgeries and operations. Dr Shah said that the renovations will provide a new look and comfort at the Nadi Hospital which is one of the busiest health facilities in the western division.

Meanwhile, Dr Shah said that the new upcoming development namely the new Votualevu Health Centre once completed will greatly ease the patient load currently handled by the Nadi Hospital. Plans are in progress for the development of the new Votualevu Health Centre, while discussions are also being held for the proposed new health centre in Sabeto.

FIJI RECORDS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS THE FAMILY AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS



(pictured from left) Vice Chancellor FNU, Professor Nigel Healy, President of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health Dr Pushpa Nusair with Health Minister Rosy Akbar and members of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health at the health symposium in Suva

Fiji has over the recent years experienced positive trend in terms of enhancing the accessibility of family and reproductive health services to the families in Fiji. This was revealed by the Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Rosy Akbar during the official opening of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health Symposium held at the Grand Pacific Hotel on Tuesday this week.

"I am pleased to say that the Reproductive Health indicators in Fiji have indicated a general trend of progress and improvements over the years and having said that the contraceptive prevalence rate has increased over the years from 30% to 44% for women of child bearing age however there is still high unmet need among youths.

"The Ministry in partnership with UNFPA has also developed a comprehensive training package for health workers on family planning method and counseling for women which has seen an increased offer of family planning options. The Ministry allocates funding of two hundred thousand each year for maternal and reproductive health capacity building programs for the staffs. Apart from this, there are other allocations made available through other public health programmes that will also directly benefit women and children in the country. Reproductive health is a major component of care since it is interlinked with many health indicators," Minister Akbar elaborated.

The Health Ministry with the support of its stakeholders has also revised and modified the Scope of practice for Nurses that allows them to enhance the family planning and reproductive health

services they provide at the health facilities. Modern contraceptive are also available up to nursing station level in Fiji which ensures universal access to women of child bearing age.

Work is also in progress with the local Sexual health & HIV specialists and WHO along with UNAIDS to review two key documents in the field of Sexual health namely the Antiretroviral Treatment Guideline and the Sexually Transmitted Infection Management Guideline. Minister Akbar said that having these updated guidelines, policies, practice manuals aligned to acceptable international standards are also key to the delivery of our reproductive health services.

The Health Minister expressed sincere gratitude to all the donor agencies and NGO's who have given their support namely UNFPA for providing free contraceptive to the Health Ministry for the benefit of women and girls in the 'child bearing age'. Appreciation has also been expressed towards donors such DFAT, WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS and other NGO's such as the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health for providing support in terms of finance, capacity building programs and technical experts in achieving universal access and providing quality care to Fijians.

Minister Akbar emphasised that such multisectoral collaboration and networking strengthens the commitment and ability for capacity building and health programs development for the empowerment of families in Fiji and the Pacific region.

HEALTH MINISTRY CONDUCTS SPECIAL WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM



Participants being counselled at the program to address obesity and focus on healthy diet and physical activity

A pilot program conducted to address obesity with a special focus on healthy diet and physical activity (PA) for workers has resulted in a significant reduction of weight and systolic blood pressure. The program has been jointly conducted by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services /JICA technical Project for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Disease (NCD). It was held from August to December 2017 at FPNP and Lyndhurst Limited.

The objectives of the weight loss program focused on the following:

- Individual and Group motivational counseling was conducted monthly;
- Physical exercise classes after work was also provided
- Weight and height scales placed at common open areas
- Distribution of self-help materials on nutrition (3 Food Groups and My healthy plate of food) and record book

- Medical check-ups before and after the three-month program was facilitated.

After the intervention 70 percent of the participants at FPNP lost weight while 56 percent at Lyndhurst Limited are still being guided towards weight loss. The participants were overwhelmed with this initiative and whole heartedly expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services along with JICA for such innovative, life changing programs. Some of the positive comments provided by the participants include, "Feel more energized, more fit and haven't taken sick leave since the program started, "I can concentrate more on work," "Thank you for this program. It has really raised my health awareness which I will make it a way of life."

The findings from this pilot program will be disseminated and referred for workplace health promotion activities in Fiji soon.