

## Certificate in Basic Pharmacy Management



The pioneer CBPM students from Western Highlands pose for a picture with some of their trainers.

Papua New Guinea will soon have trained pharmacy assistants working in rural health facilities throughout the country to help provide pharmaceutical services in rural areas.

More than 75 students from five nominated Provincial Health Authorities in the country have begun an 18-month Certificate in Basic Pharmacy Management (CBPM) training program, developed to address the pharmaceutical needs of rural health facilities.

The pioneer program has been developed jointly by the University of Papua New Guinea's Open College, the Discipline of Pharmacy at the University's School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Pharmaceutical Services Standards Branch of the Health Department following a medical supplies impact evaluation

conducted in the country in 2013.

The impact evaluation indicated a low availability of essential medicines, inadequate information and information gaps in the supply chain of medicines, particularly to the rural health facilities thus the need for the development of such training program.

The evaluation also discovered that although many facilities were making good use of the essential medicines available, there was still need for improvement to achieve quality storage, handling and rational usage of medicines.

The Certificate in Basic Pharmacy Management is studied through the distance education mode and is aimed at training pharmacy assistants who can work independently and deliver needed pharmaceutical services in the rural health facilities of the country such as district hospitals, health centres, community health posts and aid-posts.

The training program commenced in the first semester of 2016 and will end at the end of this year.

The pioneer pharmacy assistants will work in the five provinces where their Provincial Health

Authorities had been nominated to pilot the training program. These PHA provinces include Western Highlands, Eastern Highlands, Milne Bay, Western and Sandaun (West Sepik).

The program aims to increase enrolment in subsequent years to train up to 1900-plus pharmacy assistants to cover all the health centres and community health posts in the country.

Admission into the program is by prior selection by the respective PHAs and applicants must have completed grade 12 with a minimum of C grades in at least two science courses.

In the Western Highlands, 19 students from the four districts of Hagen Central, Tambul/Nebilyer, Mul/Baiyer/Lumusa and Dei had been selected and sat for their final exams on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

An Officer from the Pharmacy Discipline of UPNG's School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ms Rosewitha Iannes was present to supervise the examination which was conducted at Mt Hagen Hospital's Training Classroom.

The CBPM program is funded mainly by the National Department of Health and partly in collaboration with the respective Provincial Health Authorities.

**Below - Mt Hagen Hospital Pharmacy staff packing medicines for patients. The students are expected to do similar jobs after they graduate.**



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# New Community Health Posts Completed

Two new Community Health Posts (CHPs) built at Wagbel village and Ogelbeng outside Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands Province will soon open their doors to the public to receive medical treatment.

The keys to the two facilities were officially handed over to the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 by the contractor, Steward Construction Consultants following their completion.

Project Manager, the WHPHA Project Management Unit together with members of the Senior Executive Management did an inspection of the facilities to ensure all standard requirements had been complied with before the keys were handed over.

Work carried out at both facilities included the construction of two clinical buildings and two three-bedroom staff houses each. The clinical buildings have out-patients sections, minor surgery and consultation rooms as well as pharmacies and staff rooms. Ogelbeng also has a birthing room.

The two facilities cost in excess of K1 million each and were funded jointly by the WHPHA and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on a kina for kina basis where every kina the WHPHA had spent had been equally matched by DFAT.

Construction of the facilities commenced in early 2016 and was expected to be completed within a year but due to logistical problems and financial constraints, the CHPs had taken longer to be completed.

The WHPHA's Director for Public Health, Benson Safi who received the keys from the contractors said the facilities may not be opened soon as the necessary equipment and drugs were not available.



Steward Construction owner, Paul Berry (right) handing over the keys to the Wagbel CHP to WHPHA's Director for Public Health, Benson Safi (centre) and PMU's team leader, Kenneth Nabuga.

He said the WHPHA did not have enough money to purchase the necessary medical equipment, furniture and drugs and this was likely to cause a delay in the opening of these facilities.

The new CHPs will have three staff each - a nursing officer as officer-in-charge and two community health workers. The completion of these two facilities brings to 24, the total number of community health posts in the province.

## BSP donates furniture to Well Women's Clinic

The Well Women's Clinic at Mt Hagen Hospital has received much needed furniture and office equipment from the Bank of South Pacific.

The bank's Mt Hagen branch recently delivered personal computers, laptops, tables, a fridge, executive chairs, a lounge suite, a hot water urn and filing cabinets worth more than K20,000 to be used in the clinic's new building.

The presentation which was made on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 was done as part of the bank's commitment to providing community projects in areas it operates throughout the country as well as in the neighbouring Pacific Island countries such as Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

Branch Manageress, Mary Kundi, her deputy, John Tomba Jr, Area Manager for the Highlands, Reuben Elijah and other staff were on hand to personally deliver the equipment.

The presentation

followed a proposal submitted to the Bank by the Clinical Unit Supervisor of Well Women's Clinic, Sr. Edith Namba last year for funding assistance to purchase these office equipment.

Mrs Kundi said the funding of community projects was undertaken by the bank's 44 branches and sub-branches throughout the country and was an ongoing activity to give something back to the communities in the areas of education, health, social and community initiatives.

She said the bank had funded many projects over the years and this year, Well Women's Clinic was one of the fortunate ones to receive such assistance and urged hospital staff and patients alike to use the furniture and equipment wisely to gain maximum benefit.

The acting director curative health services with the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority, Dr Paulus Ripa said the organisation was going through a difficult financial situation and the donation had been made at the right time for the clinic to meet its obligation.

Dr Ripa said the clinical building which had been funded by Red Cross International and completed recently needed such furniture and equipment to be fully operational and the donation by the bank was very much appreciated.

As a token of appreciation, the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority had allowed the bank to paint the exterior of the clinic, a dry container building, with its colour - green - following a request to do so.



From left - Mrs Mary Kundi handing over the furniture to Dr. Paulus Ripa as Well Women's Clinic Supervisor, Sr Edith Namba looks on.

# NURSES WILL FINALLY HAVE THEIR ACCOMMODATION UNITS BUILT

Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority nurses will soon have their long-awaited accommodation units built.

This follows the recent signing of a contract between the nurses, a contractor and the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority.

The signing of the contract paves the way for contractor, SRM Limited to start work on the nine stand-alone 3-bedroom houses immediately and have them delivered to the nurses within eight months.

Construction of these units has been delayed for nearly two years due to contractor issues and other problems faced by the previous contractor.

During the signing of the contract, the Managing Director of SRM Limited, Lloyd Hemlet Imbong told the nurses that because the project had been delayed for so long, his company would work long hours each day to try and complete the houses within the given time frame.

He added that his employees would work 8–10 hours a day to try and fulfil the nurses' dream of having their own accommodation units but he needed the nurses' help if he faced any problems along the way.

The nurses said the signing of the contract was a dream come true for them and would assist the contractor in whatever way possible to ensure the project was completed within the given time frame.

The nine houses will cost approximately K2 million and will be funded by the PNG Nurses Association.

The management of the WHPHA has apologised for the long delay in getting these houses built and thanked the nurses for their patience while the issues with the previous contractors had been addressed.



*Acting CEO of WHPHA, David Vorst (right) is about to put the WHPHA stamp on the contract after signing it while contractor Lloyd Hemlet Imbong (left) and WH Nurses Association President, Mary Culligan await their turn to sign.*

## Immunisation against measles

All parents in the Western Highlands Province whose children had not been immunised against measles recently had been urged to take them to the nearest hospital or health centre to be immunised immediately.

West Sepik Province and health authorities in Western Highlands feared it would inevitably spread into the province in a matter of weeks or months and all precautionary measures had to be taken.

An outbreak of measles had been reported in The Health Department had announced that

due to the seriousness of the disease, all children aged six months to two years who had not been immunised must be taken to the nearest hospital or health centre to be immunised.

The last outbreak of measles in the country occurred in 2014 and in the Western Highlands, 14 children died from the disease while thousands of other children were infected.

Immunisation teams were sent to all parts of the province but not all children up to two years had been immunised and the likelihood of the virus spreading again was inevitable.

As a precautionary measure, the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority had urged parents with children aged between 2 and 5 years to also have them immunised if they had not been immunised yet.

Measles is a very contagious disease that can spread through coughing and sneezing. The virus causes infection of the respiratory system which cannot be treated.

The only protection the body has is through immunisation but it must be given several weeks in advance in order for the body to prepare its immune system to fight against the disease.

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority was concerned about the spread of this disease and had appealed to all parents to have their children immunised if they had not been immunised yet.

The Authority had also organised immunisation teams to visit all four districts of the province and set themselves up at markets and other public places to immunise those who could make it to their nearest health facilities.



*Photo: A mother comforts her child as she is being immunised against measles by Community Health Worker, Yari Kila at the Mt Hagen Urban Clinic.*

