



THE INFORMER



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A MOTHER AND CHILD IS THE REASON WE EXIST

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WHPHA

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EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ONE OF THE BEST IN PNG



From right - Dr Sam Yockopua and Mr Michael Pundia are about to cut the ribbon to officially open the refurbished Emergency Department, watched by Emergency Physician, Dr John Junior McKup.

Mt Hagen Hospital now has one of the best Emergency Departments in the country to serve its patients.

The newly-refurbished facility is fully equipped and adequately staffed with two specialist

physicians, five medical officers, six health extension officers (HEOs), 26 nurses and five hygiene staff to provide the best service for its patients.

They are rostered on two eight-hourly shifts (morning and evening) and a 10-hour shift during the night, providing 24-hours coverage every day to ensure every patient that visits the emergency department is checked and treated without delay.

In its continued efforts to provide a better health service for its people, the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) has spent in excess of K1 million to upgrade the facility.

It was jointly officially opened on Tuesday, 28th August 2018 by the Deputy Chairman of the WHPHA Board, Mr Michael Pundia and the country's Chief Physician, Dr Sam Yockopua.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the WHPHA, Mr David Vorst said the refurbished emergency department was one of the best because there was consultation between the

emergency staff and the senior management on the final design before it was approved.

He said the facility was upgraded but there was more to be done, adding that the WHPHA was now in consultation with international partners to go into a public private partnership to build a new hospital on a new site in the next 12 months.

Deputy Chairman, Mr Michael Pundia said the National Doctors' Association and the WHPHA had a common interest and objective and that was to ensure that the doctors and nurses had the tools that were necessary to provide high quality care for patients.

He said nowhere was that more important than in the emergency department where the doctors, nurses, health extension officers and other staff dealt with life and death situations every day.

Mr Pundia said the WHPHA's operational budget has been slashed four years running including next year but through very careful management, more than K1 million had been secured to buy drugs which was the responsibility of the Government but had failed to do so.

"And not only that, we have also managed to find the money to upgrade this place to give our patients and staff a much better and safer Emergency Department.

"Let us hope that none of us here today will need the services of the emergency department but if we do we will be in the care of excellent specialists in doctors Scotty Kandelyo and John Junior McKup and their dedicated team of registrars, HEOs and nurses in a building which goes some way in supporting modern emergency medicine", he said.

Dr Sam Yockopua said he was happy to see the emergency department being upgraded to a higher standard and congratulated the executive management for a great job. He said it made sense for the management to upgrade the emergency department first because this was where life and death situations were handled.



WHPHA staff gathered to witness the official opening

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Mass polio vaccination campaign launched in the Highlands

A mass polio vaccination campaign for all the Highlands provinces except Eastern Highlands was launched in Wabag, Enga Province on 27th August 2018.

The Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, Sir Puka Temu officially launched the campaign in the presence of global partners, the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, Rotary International and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) as well as the Secretary for Health, Mr Pascoe Kase.

The campaign which was carried out from 27th August to 9th September 2018 covered the provinces of Enga, Chimbu, Jiwaka, Western Highlands, Southern Highlands and Hela. Eastern Highlands was covered in June following a confirmed case of polio.

The polio vaccination campaign in the country is being organised by the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Authorities with support from WHO, UNICEF, GPEI and Rotary International following the discovery of the first

confirmed case in Lae, Morobe Province in June.

In the Western Highlands, the Provincial Health Authority launched its vaccination campaign for the province on 27th August 2018, supported by WHO and UNICEF as well as the local radio stations and the business community.

Digicel PNG has also assisted by providing a toll free number for the public to call the WHPHA and get information on the polio virus, how it spreads and what they can do to avoid it.

The province has an estimated population of over 63,000 children under 5 years and the public was told that the aim of the WHPHA and its partners was to vaccinate all these children or do a 100 percent-plus coverage so that no child was left unvaccinated.

The WHO's EPI adviser, Dr Dessie Mekonnen who officiated at the launch told the public that polio was a highly infectious disease that could cause paralysis and even death among children under 5 years.

He said there was no cure for it and that the only way to prevent its spread was through vaccination and appealed to all parents to take their children to the nearest health facility or vaccination point to have them vaccinated.

Dr Mekonnen said vaccination was effective, easy and simple to administer and required just four rounds of drops to effectively prevent the children from catching the disease.

"We must make sure that no child is left behind – we have beaten polio before and we can do it now too, it is not hard", he said.

During the launch, Dr Mekonnen also vaccinated a child to demonstrate how the vaccine was administered and this was then followed by four hours of vaccination of other children by staff of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority.

The WHPHA then sent teams out to the four districts of Western Highlands the next day to vaccinate all children under 5 years in all the



catchment areas during the prescribed period from 27th August to 9th September 2018.

Upon completion of the vaccination program, the teams had reported a total coverage of 89 percent of the target population of under 5 year olds which is herd immunisation that has been achieved for the first time in years which the WHPHA is very proud of.

Pictured left, Dr Dessie Mekonnen administering a polio vaccination to a child while above, 3-year-old Carmela Koipa receives her vaccination and below, the crowd that witnessed the launch in Mt Hagen.



Chairman takes time off to visit staff in wards

Some employees of Mt Hagen Hospital were caught off-guard recently when the Chairman of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority Board, Mr David Guinn made a surprise visit on them.



Mr Guinn was at the hospital to attend a Board meeting on 3rd July 2018 when he decided to use the opportunity to visit and chat with clinical staff in some of the wards.

The visit gave him an opportunity to learn about work-related issues affecting staff in the respective wards and what the Board and Management could do to address them.

Acting Director for Curative Health Services, Dr Paulus Ripa and Director of Nursing, Sr. Roselyn Kali accompanied the Chairman on the visit which took them to the medical, surgical, children's and labour wards and the intensive care unit.

Mr Guinn was also given a tour of the newly-refurbished Emergency Department which includes the Accidents and Emergency (A&E) and the Adult Out-patients Department (AOPD).

Work is still continuing in the AOPD and is expected to be completed within the next week. The A&E has been completed and patients are currently being treated and either discharged or admitted to wards depending on the seriousness of their injuries or illnesses.



The Emergency Department has been renovated at a huge cost and will be officially opened in late August to show the public the importance the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority places on patient care.

Pictured left - Chairman Guinn, Dr Ripa and Sr Kali are being briefed on the operations of the Intensive Care Unit by Sr Kel Ronom and above, Sr Elizabeth Malt briefs them on the surgical ward.

TB and HIV programs to be enhanced

Tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) programs carried out in Western Highlands Province will now be further enhanced as a single program with funding assistance of more than K80,000 from Global Fund.

Global Fund will provide the funds over a three year period starting June 2018 following policy changes agreed to by both the National Department of Health and the Fund to combine the TB and HIV programs as a single program to share manpower and other resources.

TB and HIV programs have been carried out separately in the past but under this arrangement, only one program will be carried out with annual reviews and training courses conducted for all staff.

A number of organisations have been identified as recipients of the fund such as Anglicare, Catholic Church, Susu Mamas and SDA and they would assist provincial health authorities and non-government organisations involved in health to carry out these programs.

The Anglicare office in Mt Hagen which is responsible for funding reviews and training programs for Western Highlands, Enga and Jiwaka Provinces recently conducted a TB/HIV collaboration mid-term review meeting for responsible organisations in Western Highlands.

The review which was the first of its kind for Western Highlands was aimed at bringing all TB and HIV program staff together and getting them to meet and know each other, introduce the Government's policy change on TB and HIV, find out if they had any issues in their workplace and pass resolutions for improvement.

The three-day review and refresher meeting was held at the Hagen Airport Motel and was attended by more than 20 health workers from all



health facilities in the province including church health services and non-government organisations.

Under the current arrangement, World Fund will provide funding for four quarterly supervisory visits, two refresher workshops and two annual reviews over the next three years.

Pictured above - the participants pose for a group picture during a break and right, the group in a session with Dr Magdalyn Kaupa, the Highlands Regional Deputy Chief Paediatrician.



SUPPORT OF STAKEHOLDERS NEEDED TO PREVENT SPREAD OF POLIO

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) needs the support of all stakeholders including business houses and non-government organisations to help prevent the spread of polio in the Western Highlands, says its Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr David Vorst.

Speaking during a partners meeting at the Mt Hagen Hospital campus recently, Mr Vorst said the population under 15 years was at risk but those under 5 years were at an even higher risk and the WHPHA needed the support of concerned partners as well as the community to stop its spread.

"We want to see how you can work with us to stop the spread of polio. It is a hygiene issue and we need to work closely with the communities to help deliver both the message about hygiene and ensuring that all children 5 years or younger were vaccinated", he told those present including representatives of business houses, church health services, World Health Organisation and news reporters.

He welcomed those present, saying their positive response to such an emergency at short notice was very encouraging as they would then put together all their ideas on how best to tackle the spread of the virus.

WHPHA's Acting Deputy Director Rural Nursing Services, Dannex Kupamu thanked the

stakeholders for responding favourably and contributing ideas on how best to carry out awareness and vaccinate the children.

"There is no cure for this disease and we need community wide awareness and response to

prevent the spread of this virus. All children under 5 years must be vaccinated and we must look at 100 percent or more coverage to save the future generation", he said.

Mr Kupamu said vaccination was the only way to prevent the disease from spreading and added that all parents must be encouraged to take their children to the nearest health facility to be vaccinated.



Stakeholders discussing the way forward on the spread of polio and its prevention in the Western Highlands

SHP health workers trained on malnutrition

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has declared an all-out war on severe acute malnutrition in the Southern Highlands Province (SHP) by reaching out to children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers with life-saving nutrition interventions in the last three months.

UNICEF's Nutrition Specialist, Dr Hanifa Namusoke PhD said during this period, more than 12,100 children between the ages of six months and five years and over 6,700 pregnant and breastfeeding mothers had been reached and treated.

Dr Namusoke said the interventions resulted from an upsurge in malnutrition cases in the province following the 7.5 magnitude earthquake on 26th February 2018 which also affected neighbouring Hela and Enga Provinces.

The interventions included screening and treating acute malnutrition, micronutrient supplementation, deworming and counselling of mothers on infant and young child feeding.

Dr Namusoke said the destruction of subsistence family farms by the earthquake and the landslides that followed had raised the risk of increasing the severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate from a pre-existing national average of 2.6 percent to 4 percent in the affected provinces.

She said combined with an increased prevalence of diarrhoea, there was a risk of rising mortality rates of children under the age of five.

"The country and especially the affected areas



Above - The participants pose for a group picture and below left, some of the participants in a practical exercise.

have one of the world's highest rates of stunting (49 per cent), which could also be aggravated by increased morbidity and incidents of SAM.

"Infant and young child feeding and care, and hygiene practices need to be improved, along with improved access to clean water and sanitation", she said, adding that UNICEF's nutrition response aimed to ensure that an estimated 31,000 children aged 6-59 months were screened for acute malnutrition, while over 1,200 (4 per cent) were treated for SAM.

Dr Namusoke said all other children (about 47,616) that remained at risk of malnutrition would receive a one-off high dose of vitamin A and a three-month package of micronutrient powders while close to 43,000 children (12-59 months) would receive deworming tablets.

In addition, an estimated 69,600 pregnant or lactating women would benefit from infant and young child counselling messages and cooking demonstrations, she said.

Dr Namusoke said despite nutrition being new in SHP, the Provincial Government appreciated its importance and was working closely with UNICEF and the Provincial Health Authority to strengthen existing structures to ensure nutrition services were delivered to women and children who needed them most.

She said as part of this, more than 20 all cadre health workers from districts in the eastern end of

the province including Ialibu/Pangia, Imbonggu and Kagua/Erave were put through an intensive training course recently on how to identify and treat a child with severe acute malnutrition.

The week-long training was conducted by UNICEF's nutrition team and Mr Gabriel Kuglsuna, a trainer from Kundiawa General Hospital in Chimbu Province. The training was conducted at the Conference Room of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority on the Mt Hagen Hospital campus from 25th - 29th June 2018.

As the lifesaving nutrition interventions for women and children could not be halted because of the recent violence in Mendi town, the venue had to be moved to Mt Hagen so that training of the health workers could be completed without delay to prepare them for the interventions.

Prior to the violence in Mendi, 116 community health workers from Nipa/Kutubu and Mendi/Munhu Districts had gone through the same training course to help them identify and treat children with SAM in their respective districts.

Dr Namusoke said the participants had been taught both theory and practical aspects of how to identify and treat children with SAM and she was confident they would do a good job when they returned to their respective health facilities.



Call for creation of physiotherapy positions in rural areas

The National Department of Health (NDoH) and Provincial Health Authorities (PHAs) have been urged to create positions for physiotherapists in rural health facilities to serve the needs of disabled people in rural areas.

The 4th National Physiotherapy Symposium held in Alotau, Milne Bay Province recently had expressed concern that 85 percent of the disabled people lived in the rural areas but there were no physiotherapy services available to them.

The symposium which was held from 28th - 31st August 2018 heard that only those who had access to roads and financial resources managed to visit major hospitals to get treatment while the rest simply missed out and this was a major concern for them.

The participants of the symposium which carried

the theme of "Physiotherapy services to the rural communities of PNG" strongly recommended that the NDoH and PHAs take urgent steps to address this situation.

The bi-annual symposium which was hailed as a success was attended by physiotherapists from around the country as well as other partners and non-government organisations such as the National Orthotics and Prosthetics Services and Callan Services.

The National Executive of the PNG Physiotherapy Association had decided that Mt Hagen would be the next venue for the symposium and Physiotherapist, David Mambu

Pictured right - Physiotherapist, David Mambu with a carving from the Milne Bay Province which will be passed on from province to province to indicate the next venue for the symposium.

from the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority had accepted the decision to host it in 2020.

