



THE INFORMER



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A MOTHER AND CHILD IS THE REASON WE EXIST

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WHPHA

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Keep healthy and make PNG a wealthy nation

Papua New Guinea would become a safe, healthy and wealthy nation by the year 2050 if the people ate the right kinds of food and kept themselves healthy.

Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, Hon Elias Kapavore said this in Mt Hagen recently while delivering his keynote address during the celebrations to mark 25 years of strong governance to the community by the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority.

He said if people ate more garden produce and less processed foods, they would keep themselves healthy and contribute more to the wealth of this nation.

Minister Kapavore said the saddest thing was that because a lot of people were not eating the right kinds of food, many young people between the ages of 30 and 40 were looking a lot older than they should be.

Whilst speaking in the presence of Western Highlands Governor, Paias Wingti, Mr Kapavore said the Governor's message to the people to work their land and eat garden produce to keep healthy was the way go for a healthy and prosperous nation.

He also commended Governor Wingti for introducing the hospital board system in 1994 when he was prime minister, saying through this system which involved both private and public sector partnership, most public hospitals were now operating successfully.

The Minister also said that later when the Provincial Health Authorities Act 2007 was passed by Parliament, Western Highlands was the first to have a provincial health authority established in 2011 and he was pleased the system was operating effectively in the province.

He said because it was operating effectively, donor agencies were keen and willing to assist with funding to improve its services as well as to build new infrastructure to enable more people to have access to health services.

The Managing Director of Mt Hagen-based Tininga Group of Companies, Pat Duckworth speaking on behalf of the business community, congratulated the Board of Mt Hagen Hospital and Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) for providing strong governance and leadership in the last 25 years.

Mr Duckworth said he had big respect for Mt Hagen Hospital and the WHPHA because the hospital was a regional referral hospital whose services benefited not only the people of Western Highlands but other neighbouring provinces as well.

He said when his company made a decision to assist someone, it looked at organisations such as the hospital and WHPHA because there was good leadership and more people benefited from their services.

"We are Hagen-based and when we want to help, we look at an organisation where all the

people of Western Highlands will benefit from and not just one group only.

"We look at good leadership and strong governance and we see that Mt Hagen Hospital and WHPHA have that so we assist them to assist not only the people of Western Highlands but other provinces as well who seek their services," Mr Duckworth said.

Chairman of the WHPHA Board, David Guinn said the Board system had seen much improvement in the delivery of health services in the country and commended Governor Wingti for introducing it.

He said in the Western Highlands where he had been Board Chairman of Mt Hagen Hospital since 1994 and later continued in the same role when the WHPHA was established in 2011, much had been done to improve health services in the province.

Mr Guinn said through the hard work of the Board members as well as the senior executive management and staff, Mt Hagen Hospital has become one of the best hospitals in the PNG health system and he was proud to have been involved with this transformation.

He said he was also pleased that the new WHPHA Board had worked tirelessly with the senior executive management team over the last few years to continue to improve health services as well as infrastructure development.

"With the assistance from Government, our National Parliamentarians, donor agencies such as DFAT and ADB, NGOs and FBOs, much had been achieved in improving the services available to the people", he concluded.



This singing group also participated at the celebrations



Above - Senior surgeon, Dr Benjamin Yapo discussing a health issue with Governor Wingti and Minister Kapavore and below, Minister Kapavore meeting the crowd.



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Clinicians undergo specialist training in Hospital Care for Children

Forty-five health care workers who deal with sick children from major health facilities in the Highlands region are now equipped with more advanced knowledge and skills on how to care for paediatric patients.

The doctors, nurses, health extension officers and community health workers have spent a week in Mt Hagen, undergoing intensive training in Hospital Care for Children to upskill their knowledge on children's health.

About 6-7 health care workers from each of the seven Highlands provinces of Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Simbu and Eastern Highlands attended the training workshop which was conducted at Mt Hagen Hospital from 17th – 21st June 2019.

A visiting specialist from Melbourne University, Prof Trevor Duke who specialises in paediatric intensive care, conducted the training. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Child Health at the University of PNG and coordinates specialist child health training in PNG and the Solomon Islands and has been at the forefront of setting up and running this program in the two countries.

The participants who were selected from major health facilities such as hospitals and health centres throughout the region were put through intensive training on common diseases that are the cause of child mortality such as pneumonia, diarrheal diseases and severe malnutrition.

Pneumonia is the most common cause of paediatric admissions and deaths in the country and the participants have been trained on among other areas, the use of oxygen concentrators and how to give oxygen to these children.

The participants were told that through the use



Clinicians from the Highlands Region are pictured with Prof Trevor Duke after the week-long training

of such measures, paediatric deaths in the country had been steadily reduced and for the first time the case fatality rate in PNG hospitals had fallen below 7% in 2018.

At Mt Hagen Hospital, deaths in children had fallen steadily from all causes from 7% of all admissions in 2013 to only 3.5% in 2018. A major contributor to this fall in death rates was due to the ongoing training of all staff annually including this one which is the fourth such training.

The training program which has been developed in PNG and spearheaded by the Paediatric Society of PNG was first trialled in the country in 2012 and has since been widely

accepted and used throughout the country.

The World Health Organisation has also adopted it for use in other countries in the Asia/Pacific region as well as Africa and has been translated into many different languages.

Chief Executive Officer of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority, Mr David Vorst when officially opening the training workshop welcomed the participants and urged them to learn as much as possible, especially those from the rural facilities who did not have as much opportunity to learn as those in major hospitals.

The training program has been sponsored by the Ross Foundation of Victoria, Australia.

GOVERNOR WINGTI URGES HIS PEOPLE TO TILL THEIR LAND

Western Highlands Governor, Paias Wingti has urged his people to work on their land and eat garden produce in order to live a healthy life.

He said foods that made people healthy such as kaukau, potatoes, corn, broccoli and vegetables were grown in the soil and people must do more gardening and eat the right foods to be healthy.

"Buai, smoke, beer, coke and lamb flaps are bad, the best foods are taken from the soil such as kaukau, potatoes, corn, broccoli and vegetables.

"We must re-adjust and take a different direction in life. I don't want to see you in Hagen town any more – go back home and work on your land and eat more garden produce and live a healthy life", he said.

Mr Wingti said this while addressing a big crowd at the Queen Elizabeth Park in Mt Hagen City recently during celebrations to mark 25 years of strong governance to the community of Western Highlands by the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA).

He said the board of governance system in public hospitals and now provincial health authorities were working effectively to deliver health services in the country and he was happy because that was his dream when he was prime minister in 1994.

He said health and education were his

government's main focus and he had come up with a concept for business and government to work together to manage these services, resulting in the good outcomes seen today.

The Health Department's Deputy Chief Surgeon for the Highlands Region, Dr Benjamin Yapo when speaking on behalf of the staff of the WHPHA said the board system was good because it put in place clear policy guidelines for hospital and PHA managements to follow.

He said the WHPHA had a good Board which put in place a good structure that gave clear directions for the management and staff to follow for improved health care services for the people of Western Highlands and the neighbouring provinces.

Dr Yapo said staff at Mt Hagen Hospital and other health facilities in the province treated patients from start to finish, ensuring they were given the appropriate care and treatment and he was not sure why patients travelled to Kudjip and Kundiawa Hospitals for treatment.

He said staff at the hospital and health centres were committed to their jobs and he assured the public that anyone who sought their services would still be seen and treated.



Governor Wingti and other guests meet the crowd and visit health displays after the official speeches.



TININGA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH HEART PROBLEMS



The Tininga Group of Companies has this year once again come to the aid of paediatric patients from Western Highlands requiring open heart operation by sponsoring their travel and accommodation costs.

The company which continues to support such worthy courses each year has this time made a donation of K16,000 to send 15 children with heart disease from Mt Hagen to Lae and Port Moresby for further screening and operations.

The donation is to assist the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) pay for transport, airfares, accommodation and meals

Photo: Dr Jonah Kurubi (right) accepting the cheque of K16,000 from the Managing Director of Tininga, Mr Pat Duckworth.

for the children and their guardians as well as a doctor and nursing officer who are required to accompany them to both Lae and Port Moresby.

Whilst those requiring a closed heart operation would be sent directly to Port Moresby later this month, others would travel to Lae for further screening and assessment by a visiting cardiologist before being sent to Port Moresby for surgery if required.

Tininga Managing Director, Pat Duckworth said when presenting the cheque last week that the Mt Hagen-based retailer was proud to partner with the WHPHA in many ways and saw the partnership as a way to help the wider community of Western Highlands and the surrounding provinces.

"Tininga has been assisting with the WHPHA Heart Patient Project for several years now and is pleased to be able to make a difference to the lives of the children involved", Mr Duckworth said.

Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's Director Medical Services, Dr Jonah Kurubi when accepting the cheque thanked Mr Duckworth for his continued support.

He said the WHPHA and the children with heart problems and their parents were very thankful to Tininga for helping to give these children a second chance in life.

"On behalf of the WHPHA and its senior management, I thank you for your continued support over the years which will make a difference in these children's lives and wish you every success in your operations", Dr Kurubi said.

Saving Lives, Spreading Smiles – a new way of preventing death

Preventing death among mothers through the management of bleeding after delivery and neonatal hypothermia in newborn babies is one of the priorities of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA).

Through the initiative of UNICEF with the support of WHPHA, a new maternal and newborn care program launched in Mt Hagen last September is being taken on seriously by the latter to prevent unnecessary deaths.

The program – "Saving Lives, Spreading Smiles" – will ensure up to 30,000-plus babies born in Western Highlands over the next three years receive a comprehensive package of care to ensure they survive.

The package of care involves the prevention and management of bleeding after delivery through the use of a Non-Pneumatic Anti-Shock Garment (NASG) for mothers while a hypothermia alert device known as the Bebi Kol Kilok (BKK) will be used to prevent and manage neonatal hypothermia for the babies.

Western Highlands is the first province in the country to have the program launched with funding support of K2 million from UNICEF Australia. The funding assistance will also cover the cost of setting up a world standard neonatal intensive care unit in the province.

Keen to see this project launched as soon as possible, the WHPHA is being proactive and training up as many Village Health Volunteers (VHV) as possible to help expectant mothers deliver safely and to care for the newborns through the use of the bebi kol kilok.

The use of the non-pneumatic anti-shock garment helps to prevent the mother from bleeding after delivery while the bebi kol kilok alerts the mother when the baby is cold so that she could cuddle it against her chest under her shirt/blouse to keep it warm.

UNICEF are also taking the lead in funding the training of the VHV program and providing the necessary materials such as the garments and clocks to be issued to the volunteers after completion of the two-week training.

The training is conducted by experienced clinical staff of the WHPHA at the Mt Hagen Hospital campus where the volunteers are also accommodated and fed. The course covers both theory and practical sessions which involve the volunteers having hands-on experience in the wards, especially the labour and children's wards.

It is conducted twice a year with the second one currently under way at the Hospital and the participants are all from the Tambul/Nebilyer District which is one of the coldest parts of the province. About 20 volunteers, all mothers, are selected to attend each session.

The new package of care promotes simple cost-effective life-saving practices that are so crucial for mothers and newborns to survive, according to the Chief Executive Officer of the WHPHA, Mr David Vorst.

Mr Vorst said his staff had been working hard to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality and he was pleased that the paediatric case mortality rates were now nearly a third lower than the national average.



Officials from UNICEF Australia, NDoH, WHPHA and the WH Provincial Government with three mothers and their babies demonstrating the use of the bebi kol kilok during the official launching of the SLSS program last year.

He said the "Saving Lives, Spreading Smiles" program would see a further improvement in these key indicators and more mothers and babies would survive.

According to UNICEF PNG, some 6,000 babies died every year before they reached four weeks of age. It said neonatal hypothermia was the underlying cause of many of these deaths, however 42 per cent of these deaths could be prevented with correct management of hypothermia.

"Newborn mortality in PNG is a huge concern to health leaders and needs urgent attention. Programmes like this are good interventions that can prevent babies and mothers from dying," UNICEF said.

Mt Hagen Eye Clinic rated 4th Best Performing Clinic in PNG

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's Eye Clinic at Mt Hagen Hospital has been rated the 4th Best Performing Eye Clinic in PNG after Madang, Kimbe and Rabaul.

The rating and subsequent awarding of a Certificate of Acknowledgement was announced by the Fred Hollows Foundation of New Zealand during the 10th Annual Ophthalmic Clinicians Refresher Workshop in Port Moresby from 4th – 6th June 2019.

The certificate was awarded for "Exceptional Clinical Performance for three years by statistics" in recognition of its efforts in checking and treating eye patients who sought its services during this period.

Mt Hagen Hospital's eye specialist, Dr Waimbe Wahamu and three of his eye clinic nurses – Regina Ken, Esther Nii and Judith Dupi – who attended the workshop received the certificate on behalf of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority.

The three nurses also presented papers on their respective areas of responsibility during the three-day workshop which was held for the first time outside of Madang where the Fred Hollows Foundation is based.

Sisters Regina Ken and Judith Dupi presented

papers (cases) on Eales Disease and Herpes Zoster Ophthalmicus respectively while Sr. Heather Nii presented an audit paper on admissions of eye patients at Mt Hagen Hospital in the last 3 years.

The nurses said participants from other hospitals also presented papers on various topics such as examining, diagnosing and treating patients as well as doing refractions and ordering spectacles and they had learnt quite a lot from the workshop.

Upon their return, the nurses presented the certificate to the Chief Executive Officer of the WHPHA, Mr. David Vorst. They also presented a Fred Hollows T shirt as a token of appreciation for allowing them to participate at the workshop.



WHPHA CEO, David Vorst displaying the T shirt, flanked by the three nurses from left – Judith Dupi, Regina Ken and Heather Nii.

WHPHA Promotes Healthy Living at Mt Hagen Show

This year's annual Mt Hagen Cultural Show which was held from 17th – 18th August 2019 had attracted many people including tourists from around the world.

Many traditional dancing groups from the Highlands region as well as coastal provinces had also made their presence felt by displaying their colourful costumes in performances which had attracted many show goers, especially tourists who captured them all on camera.

Companies and organisations based in Mt Hagen also used the opportunity to display and sell their products and services.

Food stall holders also ensured those who were hungry did not have to look far to fill up their stomachs by preparing and selling cooked food as well as snacks and drinks.

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority used the event to conduct awareness on various health issues including lifestyle diseases which are currently claiming many lives due to the uncontrolled eating habits of many people.

A mobile blood bank clinic was also set up where the public was advised of the need to check their blood levels and to also donate blood to save lives and many people responded favourably.

Other sections which displayed their respective activities included health promotion and prevention, family support centre, dental health,

environment and sanitation, physiotherapy and national orthopedics & prosthetic services.

The management of the WHPHA has acknowledged and thanked the staff who had worked during the two days to help promote health activities as well as carry out awareness on preventable diseases.

"We hope those people who visited our stalls have learnt something worthwhile that would help them and their families", said Chief Executive Officer, David Vorst.



Staff of the WHPHA displaying the various activities of their sections and assisting clients who visited the health stall during the show.

