

Increase in Covid-19 positive cases in NCD is a concern for WHPHA

The increase in the number of Covid-19 positive cases in the National Capital District is a worrying concern for the country and all citizens must adhere to the safety guidelines of the virus and keep themselves safe.

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority is concerned that Western Highlanders would be worst affected due to the number of flights that arrive in Mt Hagen from Port Moresby every day with only very basic screening possible.

It is also concerned that the Highlands Highway is open to all traffic with no roadblocks at the provincial borders and is urging all citizens to take every precautionary measure when travelling such as adhering to the 2-meter social distancing practice and frequent and proper hand washing.

During an emergency meeting of the WHPHA Covid-19 Task Force recently, it was decided that strict controls would be imposed at the main entrance to Mt Hagen Hospital and everyone entering the hospital would be screened.

As a minimum to enter the hospital a person's temperature will be checked and on the basis of that they will be further screened or allowed to come into the hospital. This applies to patients and visitors alike, a spokesman for the hospital said.

It further decided that all vehicles would be turned back at the front gate except for those belonging to staff with passes and those transporting critically-ill patients for the Emergency Department but all occupants would still need to be screened.

The main gate would be closed and only the small one would be open for people to enter which would also make it easy for temperature



Pictured above and below - A clinician checking the temperature of all patients at the main gate before allowing them to enter the hospital premises to seek medical treatment.

checks to be done on everyone entering the hospital premises.

Social distancing would also be maintained at the main gate, the car park, revenue section and the pharmacy and people would be encouraged to use the hand wash basin at the gate and wash their hands or use hand rub solution before entering the hospital premises.

Health Promotion teams would also be conducting awareness in the City as well as in the rural areas starting this week to further strengthen the messages previously delivered to ensure everyone understood the seriousness of the disease.

Right - Team leaders involved in the fight against Covid-19 in the Western Highlands Province meet regularly to discuss the next course of action, particularly with regards to the screening and testing of patients.



In this issue:

Page

Increase in Covid-19 positive cases in NCD is a concern for WHPHA	1
Double celebrations for Mt Hagen mothers	2
Three Highlands hospitals receive patient monitors	2
More people make donations to WHPHA	3
Local woman donates food to Mt Hagen Hospital	3
Bukapena Health Centre launches its new generator	4

Double celebrations for Mt Hagen mothers

There was double celebration for 15 mothers who went for their normal antenatal clinic at the Susu Mamas Urban Clinic in Mt Hagen City recently.

The mothers not only attended the clinic and celebrated the National Breast-feeding Week but they were also given ponchos to take home and wear to protect their newborn babies from neonatal hypothermia.

The ponchos which have been jointly sponsored by UNICEF, Digicel, Tininga and Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) were distributed to the 15 mothers and two fathers as part of the "Saving Lives, Spreading Smiles" (SLSS) program.

UNICEF piloted the SLSS program in the Tambul/Nebilyer District in 2018 as part of the Kangaroo Care initiative which focuses on preventing and managing bleeding after delivery, a common cause of death in mothers and neonatal hypothermia (low body temperature) in newborn babies.

About 600 ponchos with caps have been made and printed for distribution to expectant mothers in the Western Highlands and the 15 mothers and two fathers were the first to receive them.

Digicel PNG's Regional General Manager for the Highlands, Julian Briggs and Leo Berka, a Member of the WHPHA Board of Governance were on hand to present the ponchos.

Mr Berka when addressing the gathering thanked UNICEF, Digicel and Tininga for their continued support, saying their involvement would ensure the success of this program.

He said the WHPHA and Susu Mamas who are driving this program would not be able to do it alone, adding that team work was the best way to see great results.

General Manager for Susu Mamas, Douglas Apeng said his organisation was small and depended largely on partners such as Digicel and Tininga for donations to carry out its services effectively.

WHPHA's acting Director for Population Health, Fredah Pyanyo said the Kangaroo Care initiative

was a very vital project to save children, especially newborn babies and the support given by UNICEF, Digicel and Tininga was very much appreciated.

She said the mortality rate for the Western Highlands had been high in the past but since the introduction of the SLSS program, this had dropped dramatically and expressed her gratitude to all those involved.

Susu Mamas' Terasita Waki (left), Digicel's Julian Briggs and WHPHA's Fredah Pyanyo (right) are pictured with two mothers and a father proudly wearing the ponchos.



Member of WHPHA Board of Governance, Leo Berka addressing the mothers and fathers.

Three Highlands hospitals receive patient monitors

Mt Hagen Hospital in the Western Highlands and Wabag and Sopas Hospitals in Enga Province are the proud recipients of 16 new patient monitors.

The monitors have been donated to these hospitals by the Port Moresby Rotary Club and Medical Repurposing Network, a Non-Government Organisation based in Australia.

Mt Hagen Hospital has been given eight of these monitors while Wabag and Sopas Hospitals have received four each.

Twelve boxes containing the 16 monitors were delivered to Mt Hagen Hospital recently by world-wide courier company, TNT Air Cargo who assisted the hospitals by meeting the freight cost from Port Moresby to Mt Hagen.

Medical Repurposing Network who supplied the monitors collected and checked them thoroughly before sending them to the Rotary Club of Port Moresby to deliver to their choice of recipients.

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority is very happy for the kind donation as these monitors would greatly help clinicians to monitor their patients and give them appropriate treatment.

Chief Executive Officer, David Vorst said the equipment had arrived at a time when various departments within Mt Hagen Hospital needed this to monitor their patients and thanked Port Moresby Rotary Club and Medical Repurposing Network of Australia for the donation.



Two of the monitors have been given to the Intensive Care Unit, two to the Emergency Department, two to the Theatre and one each to the Medical Unit and the Surgical Department.

Pictured above: The eight monitors for WHPHA being tested by biomedical technician, Philp Victor before being distributed to the respective departments or units and right, TNT courier driver, Jackson Kerowa is pictured with the boxes of monitors after delivering them to WHPHA.



MORE PEOPLE MAKE DONATIONS TO WHPHA

More kind-hearted people in the Western Highlands are approaching the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) to make donations to help those in need.

The latest is a second-hand clothes dealer who has facilitated the donation of a wheelchair, crutches and bales of pyjamas by the Australian supplier of her clothes.

Miriam Raim, owner of Payless Clothing in Mt Hagen delivered the equipment and pyjamas during a small but significant ceremony at Mt Hagen Hospital earlier this month, witnessed by some of her employees as well as hospital staff.

The Australian supplier had asked Miriam if Mt Hagen Hospital needed such equipment and after consulting Dr Malts Wai who belongs to the same church as Ms Raim, it was agreed for the crutches and pyjamas to be sent.

The equipment which included a wheelchair, 16 pairs of crutches and three big bales of pyjamas was sent in the same container as the clothes for Payless Clothing who paid for the freight and delivered them.

Ms Raim who did not wish to name her supplier said she was happy to facilitate the delivery of such



Payless Clothing owner, Miriam Raim (standing second from left) is pictured with WHPHA staff in front of the equipment she delivered.

equipment as part of her contribution towards helping the hospital and added that the supplier was willing to assist with more equipment if needed.

Acting Hospital Manager, Dr Joseph Kuk thanked the unknown donor for its kind assistance and Payless Clothing for meeting the freight cost and delivering the equipment free of charge.

He said if the donor wanted to donate more equipment and send them in a separate container, WHPHA could be approached to meet the freight cost.

Meanwhile, Chinese construction company, China Harbour Ltd has assisted the WHPHA to help prevent the spread of the virus by donating 200 Covid-19 rapid testing strips, 3,000 masks and 168 bottles of alcohol hand rub solution.

The company is currently building the four-lane road from Kagamuga Airport to Tega junction and the Highlands Highway from Tega to Keltiga through Mt Hagen City. Its contribution is part of the ongoing community support for Covid-19.

WHPHA Chief Executive Officer, Mr David Vorst in a letter to the company management has thanked them for the generous donation.

He said the items were essential to the WHPHA's goal of stopping the spread of Covid-19 throughout the Western Highlands Province.

"The receipt of personal protective equipment (PPE) has been patchy through the National Health systems and we are most grateful for this additional support as funding is also limited when it comes to buying, and sourcing these items," he said.

Dr Kuk told Ms Wak that she was not a clinician to treat patients with medicine to help them recover but what she had done would make them happy and get help through the healing process.

He encouraged her to continue to help those in need so that she could be blessed more.



The donated medical equipment and the bales of pyjamas are pictured after delivery at Mt Hagen Hospital.

Local woman donates food to Mt Hagen Hospital

A local woman who has a heart for sick patients has donated some food items to Mt Hagen Hospital to feed its inpatients.

Ms Evelyn Wak from Koglamp village outside Mt Hagen City said when delivering the food items early this month that as a Western Highlander, she was sorry for those who were sick and hospitalised and had decided to help with some food to feed them.

She said God blessed everyone in many different ways and she wanted to use her little blessings to help fellow Western Highlanders who were in need.

Ms Wak who owns Sweat Clothing, a second-hand clothing outlet in Mt Hagen donated both garden produce and processed food. They included 7 bags of kaukau, 2 bags of cabbages, 5 bags of 20kg rice, 4 cartons of Maggie noodles and 4 bottles of 1-litre cooking oil.

This was not the first time for her to make such a donation. She had made some cash donations previously including a recent one to help fight against the spread of Covid-19 in the province.

The acting Manager of Mt Hagen Hospital, Dr Joseph Kuk said not many people were kind-hearted like Ms Wak and thanked her for the kind donation.

He said Ms Wak had set a good example for other Western Highlanders to follow and help the hospital

at this time when it was having difficulties feeding its patients due to financial constraints faced by the country.



Ms Evelyn Wak (standing centre with string bag on the side) is pictured with WHPHA staff and the food items.

Bukapena Health Centre launches its new generator

Thanks to the Brian Bell Foundation, Bukapena Health Centre in the Mul/Baiyer District of Western Highlands will now have electricity at its facilities.

The Foundation has assisted the Health Centre with a new 6.5KVA generator, part of a K350,000 financial assistance to the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) to pay for essential services, including the purchase of drugs and equipment.

The generator was officially launched at Bukapena Health Centre in late June this year by the Director for Nursing with the WHPHA, Sr Janet Yamu before a crowd of more than 100 people including nine ward councillors from the local area.

Two senior medical officers – Deputy Chief Surgeon for the Highlands, Dr Benjamin Yapo and Deputy Chief Gynaecologist for the Region, Dr Joseph Kuk – were also present to witness the occasion.

Ward Councillor, Harrison Kont when welcoming the guests said services at the Health Centre had improved greatly in the last five months since the arrival of the new Sister-In-Charge, Sr Merolyn Koke.

He said as a result, the number of visits to the facility had more than doubled and asked if the number of staff could be increased to meet the demand.

Sr Yamu said the aim of the WHPHA was to improve services at the facility level so that people could seek treatment there instead of travelling to Mt Hagen Hospital which was already under-staffed.

She said when the community and the health workers co-operate and work together, services can improve and the people can benefit immensely from such relationship instead of travelling to Mt Hagen which was costly.

Sr Yamu said the PHA did not have enough manpower to send additional staff to the rural facilities and urged the people to look after the facilities and the staff well in order for them to receive much needed services.

Dr Joseph Kuk told the people that the Bukapena area was big enough for a district hospital to be built for the people in the Mul Local Level Government area to bring all clinical services close to the people but funding was a major obstacle.

He said the catchment population was big and warranted a district hospital but the WHPHA was unable to build it due to financial constraints and urged the people to talk to their politicians to source the necessary funds and build it.

Dr Kuk said once built and the WHPHA's organisational structure approved by the Personnel Management Department, more staff including a health extension officer and a doctor could be based there to serve the local population.



Photos from top: (1) The local community was also proud that its health centre would now have electricity. (2) Officials from the WHPHA and staff of Bukapena HC with their OIC, Sr Merolyn Koke pose for a picture in front of the generator. (3) Director Nursing Services, Sr Janet Yamu cuts the ribbon to officially launch the new generator as her deputy for nursing administration, Michael Kaweya looks on. (4) The local community gathered plenty of garden produce for the visitors to take home in appreciation of the presentation of the new generator. (5) The stage was decorated to welcome visitors for the official launch.