

**November 24, 2010**

There is no health without mental health.

These were the comments made by Litia Sili from College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at the National Education Conference in Lautoka.

Ms Sili said mental health was a prominent and social issue.

“It includes mental illness, suicide, substance abuse and child abuse,” she said.

She said 12 per cent of Fiji’s people can have mental illness and require treatment in the country.

Ms Sili said seven per cent of the above people will have psychotic illness.

According to Ms Sili, nurses were the primary providers of mental health care yet often do so with minimal specialist education and training.

She said according to World Health Organisation Health Report Recommendation, there was a need to train mental health and psychiatric nurses.

“Nurses make up the great per cent of the workforce (40-50 per cent) globally,” she said.

Ms Sili said there were also a need to create national training centers and train specialists in advance treatments.

She said the way forward methods should include appropriate training to perform wider variety of functions within the health services and incorporation of mental health component into basic and post basic training.

“Provision of well trained and culturally safe health work place is critical to the alleviation of mental health problems and illness in Fiji,” she said.