

**Wednesday October 2, 2013**

## **FNU, Ministry of Health sign MOU to cement ties**

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and Fiji National University has formalized the working relationship between the two entities, as well as paving the way for the setting up of FNU's own medical hospital and the expansion of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences to Labasa.

Signed on Nasinu Campus last week, the MOU highlights the partnership between FNU and the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the responsibilities and contribution of each party with respect to the training of medical, dental, public health and allied health students, including nurses and doctors, and the provision of health services by the Ministry in various institutions.

The signing also paves the way for the establishment of FNU's own medical hospital.

The MOU was signed by FNU Council Chairman and Minister for Education, Ambassador Filipe Bole, Minister for Health, Dr Neil Sharma and FNU's Acting Vice Chancellor, Dr Mahendra Reddy.

Ambassador Filipe Bole said the MOU will further strengthen the role of FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences and also allow it to provide more programmes and training for medical students and professionals.

"There are two things that this MOU will bring about; firstly to formalise what we have been getting free - in the use of facilities and training of students and the operation of FNU's School of Medicine and School of Nursing.

"Secondly, the MOU will lead to the establishment of the College's medical hospital."

Health Minister, Dr Neil Sharma said the MOU signing was significant as it was the first consensus to be formalized between FNU and the Ministry since the University took over the Nursing and Medical schools in 2010.

Dr Sharma said the establishment of the FNU academic hospital would also provide great benefits not only to students but to the wider community.

"Our working relations need to be maintained; teacher and student roles need to be clearly demarcated; there are responsibilities of the students and the responsibility of the Ministry in the placements of the students," said Dr Sharma.

"We are happy that we are also working with the University in developing the University's academic hospital. Once established, the facility will not only benefit aspiring medical practitioners but the country as a whole," Dr Sharma said.

The Minister also emphasized the need for educational facilities to be set up in Vanua Levu to ensure students in the North are not deprived of pursuing a career in medicine.

“With the government’s Look North Policy, we feel there is a need to set up an additional campus in the North so students in the area are catered for.

“We have a robust hospital system there, what we need is a lot more tutors so that we can send students to the North to learn from what is on offer in that area,” Dr Sharma said.

Under the MOU, medical students will now be able to access files, records and relevant details from the hospitals and the Ministry.

FNU Acting Vice Chancellor, Dr Mahendra Reddy said the MOU highlights the vital affiliation between the two parties.

‘It is time we put this relationship on paper, so both the communities - FNU and the Ministry of Health - understand how important it is to have this institution. This is an important step for the University as it looks to the Ministry for the development of its staff and for placements of students to get a firsthand experience in the clinical aspect,’ said Dr Reddy.

“At some universities, it is compulsory that its medical college has a hospital on its own, but FNU is quite fortunate to have the facilities that your Ministry has so that our staff and students get the required training and exposure. The establishment of the academic hospital will indeed be a significant step for our young university,” added Dr Reddy.

Present at the signing of the MOU were FNU’s Council members and senior staff.

For more information please contact Communications Office on 3393110.