

**Second Pacific Health Summit for Sustainable Disaster Risk Management**

The Second Pacific Health Summit for Sustainable Disaster Risk Management, organised by CDC/PEHI<sup>1</sup> was held in Sigatoka, Fiji Islands, in June 2005. As last year, the PPHSN Coordinating Body Focal Point (SPC) was invited to participate in the summit<sup>2</sup> and was represented by Dr Tom Kiedrzyński, SPC Epidemiologist.

The summit brought Pacific Island health ministers, national planners and donors together. Its objectives were to review the 10-year regional plan for emergency response developed during the First Summit last year and to prepare concept proposals to address the most important issues faced in disaster planning, response, mitigation and recovery in this diverse area. The CDC will publish these concept proposals and distribute them among potential donors. Each proposal has a designated contact person or institution, and this person or institution, together with others involved or not in the development of the document, is also expected to use it for the purposes of fund-raising and project proposals.

The summit offered, therefore, great opportunities for PPHSN to link some epidemic-related capacity developments (e.g. health services' surge capacity) to disaster management activities. An influenza pandemic was also identified by the participants as a potential disaster for which we need to plan preparedness.

A working group including Dr Tom Kiedrzyński, Dr Mark Jacobs, NZ Director of Public Health, and Mr Mick MacCuddin, American Samoa Health Planner, developed a concept paper titled "Strengthened National Influenza Preparedness (SNIP)", which describes a project aimed at strengthening and accelerating influenza pandemic preparedness in the Pacific Islands region (a summary of this project is provided below). This new proposal is meant to complement other PPHSN activities relating to regional and national preparedness for an influenza pandemic that have been carried out in the region since last year.

The influenza pandemic threat is obviously a high-level priority now and in the future, and preparedness planning would benefit from organised and coordinated regional and national approaches. Another idea behind this proposal was that influenza pandemic preparedness planning, once done, will make preparedness for other epidemic communicable diseases easier.

Dr Tom Kiedrzyński also participated in the development of a concept proposal entitled "Pacific Regional Network for Training and Support in Disaster Risk Management".

For more information, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> CDC/PEHI = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention / Pacific Emergency Health Initiative

<sup>2</sup> A brief summary of the First Summit was published in Inform'ACTION 18.

**Project Title**

Strengthened National Influenza Preparedness (SNIP)

**Problem Statement**

A future influenza pandemic is inevitable. The current epidemics of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Southeast Asia pose a significant risk of developing into the next pandemic. Pacific Island countries will not be safe from future pandemics — previous pandemics had enormous health and social impacts, with up to 25% of the total population dying in some PICTs during the 1918 pandemic. The major increase in speed and volume of international travel in the last few decades means that PICTs are now even more exposed.

PICTs are also very vulnerable to the impacts of future pandemics because of the limited capacity of their health systems. In that context, planning for the future pandemic is vital. The need for action has been recognised by regional ministers of health, and a regional pandemic preparedness plan is in place. However, no PICT currently has in place a completed and tested national plan, and the need for such plans is now urgent.

**Overall Project Goal**

To reduce the impact of the future influenza pandemic on PICTs

**Measurable Project Objectives**

1. Each PICT has in place a national influenza pandemic plan.
2. Each national plan has been tested and updated as necessary.

**Collaborating Agencies**

PPHSN (including Influenza Specialist Group), PICT governments/health ministries/EpiNet teams, WHO, SPC, CDC, other national health ministries/agencies (Australia, NZ, France, US), donor(s)

**Project Location**

Coordination based in SPC, Noumea NC, with national implementation

**Duration of Proposed Project**

Two years

**Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology**

Overseen by PPHSN Influenza Specialist Group, focusing on:

- preparation of materials;
- documentation of multi-sectoral participation in national workshops;
- preparation and approval of national plans; and
- reports of tests.

**Budget estimated at US\$610,000** (including salary of one full-time epidemiologist, one trip a year to all PICTs by epidemiologist, travel of national experts, one national workshop and one testing exercise for each PICT, equipment and operational costs)

**June 2005**