



MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S RESPONSE TO SAMOA OBSERVER'S ARTICLE – “HOSPITAL'S CONDITION GETS WORSE” DATED TUESDAY, 13th JUNE 2023

The Ministry of Health acknowledged the issues raised in the article dated 13th June 2023.

The Ministry had already proposed its annual maintenance plan for the whole National Hospital Buildings. Maintenance work for old outpatient building is near completion with intention to shift outpatient and emergency services before the Ministry could proceed with any major works needed to address issues as raised.

The Ministry at this stage can only carry out minor works to ensure continuity of emergency and outpatient services at its current location while maintaining and ensuring the safety of patients, the public and staff.

While the Ministry is trying its best to address the issues as pointed out, the hospital facilities and equipment is more than 10 years old. Most of the parts for centralized systems' equipment and elevators are outdated and hard to source which requires major over-hall and replacement. In addition, most of the technical know-how is either limited or not available in-country and has to be sourced from outside of Samoa. The central air conditioning systems that are already in place causing leaks cannot be isolated to one section or floor of the building. It is connected to the whole building and therefore the whole building needs to be shut down for any major works to be conducted thus disrupting all services provided at that building. Write-off items as highlighted which are not inside the hospital buildings are placed there awaiting transfer to Vaimea as per government policy. Maintenance work is conducted every day across all Ministry buildings including all hospitals both central and rural and there is an adequate budget to do these although large procurement orders have to go through usual finance process.

The procurement processes are under-way for procurement of heavy-duty beds that can cater for the weight of patients and this process takes time. Meantime, we have sufficient beds to cater for the current need given the recent outbreak has now subsided. The issue with broken beds and equipment as identified in the article, it is our general experience and a major challenge that we face every-day dealing with some who, through carelessness or willful disrespect cause damage to equipment (beds) public facilities (lavatories). It is why the Ministry has in place policies on the number of visitors, no children allowed, no food from home, restricting to one caregiver per patient, to ensure a longevity and safety of these government assets.

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