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PRESS RELEASE

Paiam hospital re-opens after 3-year closure

PORT MORESBY, 30 September, 2019, 0900HRS: After a three (3) year closure, the Paiam Hospital in the Porgera district was re-opened to the community to access health services on 24 September.

Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Solomon Kalit with staff and Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) Senior Manager Community and Social Responsibilities (CSR) Timothy Andambo welcomed the first lot of patients when the hospital gate was opened at 10am.

The hospital saw a total of 393 patients in the first four days of operation after re-opening, including the birth of four babies.

At this time, the Paiam Hospital is offering limited services for outpatient, emergency, radiology, maternity and referral services, while it works with various stakeholders including the Enga Provincial Health Authority (EPHA) and PJV to enable full operation in the coming months.

On 23 September during a community and stakeholder gathering at Paiam to announce the re-opening of the hospital, many locals expressed their excitement and commended the efforts of those involved in getting the hospital to re-open. Some leaders have expressed their concern for authorities to get the hospital to full-scale operation immediately.

Kasiwan Pundi from Yarik, a widow of the late paramount chief and landowner of the Porgera gold mine pit, Pakiru Pundi, was among the first group of people that turned up for treatment on 24 September. She was very happy that the hospital has been re-opened because she said many people had suffered during the time it was closed.

“We are very happy that the provincial government and PJV have put in the effort to open the hospital...we appreciate your efforts. If we were dogs, we would be wagging our tails to show our appreciation,” she said.

Another Porgera local, Priscilla Tipa from Paiam said the limited medical services within the valley meant only those with financial means were able to travel to other centres for treatment after the hospital closed.

“As a woman I am happy to see the maternity ward open, as many pregnant women had faced difficulties delivering their babies at home, or while traveling to a hospital, and some had even died due to complications.

“We are very happy that it is open now, and we will get treatment here regardless of our financial status,” she said.

Paiam community leader Epoarene Lawaipa also expressed his excitement and acknowledged the efforts of those responsible for getting the hospital to re-open.

‘I want to say thankyou. I am very happy that the hospital is open, because people suffered when it was closed.’

Meanwhile, the re-opening of the hospital enabled for the safe delivery of a healthy baby boy for Kandep woman Stella Kundala just before 6am on 28 September.

Mrs Kundala said she did not know where she would have gone to have her baby if the hospital had not re-opened.

“Because Paiam Hospital is open, I was able to come and have my baby safely delivered by medical staff,” Ms Kundala said.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Porgera Gold Mine in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea, is operated by Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”)– through an equal partnership between Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin Mining Group Company Limited – which owns 95 percent participating interest in the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV). The remaining 5% in PJV is owned by Mineral Resource Enga (MRE) Limited – a consortium consisting of the Enga Provincial Government and the Porgera landowners.

The Porgera Mine employs over 3,300 Papua New Guineans, and over the life of the mine has produced more than 20 million ounces of gold and contributed approximately 10% of PNG’s total annual exports.



Mr Andambo (second from left) together with Paiam hospital staff welcome the first lot of patients into the Paiam hospital after the gate was opened.



Paiam hospital nurse Joel Manas attends to Roselyn David and 11-month-old son Remmy David at the Paiam hospital.



Mrs Kundala (right) with her newborn baby boy in the lap of her sister in law Saina Kama at the Paiam hospital.

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