

Medical Services Pacific (MSP), with the contribution of many generous women, has been relieving the burden of rural women in the Central and Western division of Fiji. MSP distributed bras to women in Lawai Village and to female market vendors and health clients at Sigatoka Town to mark the annual UN celebration, after the kind donation of eleven boxes of undergarments by Fijian expats Dr Temalesi McCaig and Nurse Coordinator Vunirewa Uuilakeba. This gift is in recognition of the lack of access many rural women face in regards to apparel shopping and finding affordable, comfortable bras.

Over the past 3 months, MSP is raising awareness on the importance of regular health checks to prevent breast and cervical cancer. Early detection is extremely important and provides an opportunity for effective treatment of cervical cancer. The free bra giveaways are an added bonus to support women and girls who attend a cancer screening or a health check at MSP.

In remote rural communities, women and girls often lack the financial means, awareness or access to obtain the comfortable under-apparels. For rural women who historically rely on subsistence farming to support their families, a new bra is seen as a luxury item that is unaffordable as the priority for spending money for these women is food and education for their children.

Unfortunately, the lack of a bra means many women experience back aches due to the unsupported weight at their chest, as well as rashes and skin irritations due to a lack of the good air circulation that a fitted bra can provide. Additionally, women often appreciate the sense of dignity wearing nicely fitted clothes to church and rural events.

MSP is deeply grateful for this generous donation by Dr Tema and Mr Vunirewa, who collected bras in New Zealand and for the support and assistance with freight donation from Rotary Auckland, Ms Pauline Watson, Ms Tina Gunn and the Uplift Project, and the wonderful team at Air New Zealand. Together with the MSP outreach team, we have been able to support rural women on the International Day of Rural Women, as well as in other MSP Outreach visits to rural and remote areas.

Two teams from MSP were involved with the distribution of the bras at Lawai Village and Sigatoka Town. At each location, the teams provided free information and clinical services relevant to the women, including cervical cancer screening and breast examinations. Every woman that accessed health services was given a bra.

The remainders of the undergarments were distributed at the maternity ward at the CWM Hospital, Dilkusha Children's Home, St Christopher Children's Home and through additional outreaches undertaken by the MSP team (Suva and Nausori Market vendors, members of the Tailevu Women Resource Centre, Wai-ni-makutu village in Namosi, Tadevu settlement in Navua, Vutia village in Rewa), as well as to child survivors visiting the MSP One Stop Shop.



*Right: MSP staff assisting rural woman in Sigatoka to take her bra size*



*Left: Ms Seinibici (MSP Community Educator) raising awareness with women in Sigatoka*



*Right: Ms Begum and colleague look through cartons of bras received for distribution to rural*



*Rural woman checking for her bra size at a community outreach*

\*\*In addition to the undergarments, MSP also received 'Breast Models' as donation for distribution to those in need. Four of the Breast Models (two small and two medium sized) have already been given out to breast cancer patients who attended to MSP's One Stop Shop over the November/December period.

## Stocktake Report

Stock take done by: Finance Manager (Roselyn), Program Manager (Nileshni), M&E Advisor (Takuro)

Date consignment received/ cleared from customs – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Date Stock take done: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Note: This stock take was done after distribution at 3 outreaches (2 in Sigatoka and 1 WRC in Tailevu)

Item	Quantity	Important Comments/ Notes
14 Mamacare Breast Model 1 training manual from Cancer Society NZ 1 cassette 1 tape (Examine your breast demo)	Packed in 1 Bag	These will be given out to breast cancer patients attending to MSP's One Stop Shop.
Breast models (Jellyboobs)	17	17 in total, all sizes These will be given out to breast cancer patients attending to MSP's One Stop Shop. As at 16 <sup>th</sup> January, 4 of these have already been given out to breast cancer patients.
Undergarments (Panty) Small – 27 Medium – 41 Large - 55	123	These have been distributed to rural women and children in the MSP outreach programs and also to child survivors who attended to MSPs One Stop Shop.
Undergarments (Bras) Small – 261 Medium – 156 Large – 58 Extra large – 101	576	These have been distributed to rural women and children in the MSP outreach programs as noted above, children's home and also to child survivors who attended to MSPs One Stop Shop.
Vests and tights	21	21 in total, all kinds, used ones These have been given out to the children at the St Christopher and Dilkusha Childrens Home and to survivors attending to MSP's One Stop Shop.