

## **WRITTEN RESPONSE 107-2024**

**Monday, 5 August 2024**

**107/2024 Hon. Penioni Ravunawa to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the number of patients and the cost of services to patients seen under the Free Medical and Dental Health Care Schemes from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023**

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### **BACKGROUND**

1. The Free Medical Scheme commenced on June 2021 with the aim to improve access to medical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2022, the Free Medical Scheme expanded to providing dental services and lab services.
2. The Free Medical Scheme therefore includes, General Outpatient Services (GP), Dental Practitioners scheme (DP) and Medical Laboratory Scheme (ML). The scheme is eligible to all Fijians earning \$30,000 and below.
3. Currently, there are fifty-two (52) approved General Practitioners, four (4) Dental Practitioners, and twenty (20) Medical Laboratories serving Fijian citizens across the country.

### **SERVICES**

4. The following services are covered under the General Outpatient Scheme:
  - Consultation, review, and referral charges
  - Injections (2 per patient in a single visit)
  - Major and minor dressing
  - Multi-urine dipstick
  - ECG
  - Nebulizer and oxygen supply
5. The Medical Laboratory Scheme covers the following:

- Complete blood count
  - Sugar and cholesterol test
  - Basic metabolic panel
  - Glycated hemoglobin
  - Liver function
  - Renal function
6. The Dental Scheme covers the following:
- Consultation/oral examination
  - Extraction (2 per patient per day)
  - Temporary and permanent fillings
7. The cost of these services is borne by the Fijian Government at an agreed price with individual GPs, private medical centres, dental practitioners and medical laboratory services providers.

### **NUMBER OF PATIENTS AND COST OF SERVICES**

8. From 1 January 2022 till 31 December 2023, a total of 365,661 patient visits have been accommodated under the Scheme at a total cost of \$16.5 million (table 1).

**Table 1: Number of Patient Visits Served Under the Respective Schemes**

	<b>Number of Patients seen by GP, DP, ML (1 Jan 22 – 31 Dec 2023)</b>	<b>Total Cost FJ\$</b>
<b>GP Scheme</b>	316,268	<b>\$11,915,441.55</b>
<b>DP Scheme</b>	19,550	<b>\$1,737,726.95</b>
<b>ML Scheme</b>	29,843	<b>\$2,828,614.82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>365,661</b>	<b>\$16,481,783.32</b>

9. From its inception in June 2021 to July 2024, a total of 444,739 patient visits have been accommodated at a total cost of \$19.1 million.
10. The Free Medical Scheme is funded from 0.5 percent of the 1 percent FNU Levy.

11. Further details on the Free Medical Scheme is available on [www.freehealthschemesfiji.com](http://www.freehealthschemesfiji.com).