



## Northern patients to benefit from new medical equipment

Authorities expect to provide patients with better health treatment in Luang Prabang, Oudomxay and Xayaboury provinces following the handover of modern medical equipment. The new equipment, worth US\$63,590 was supported by the Lao Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc., aiming to help patients, especially expectant mothers and children, access better health services. The handover included ultrasound-echography, EKG, fetal dopplers, monitoring, nebulizers, pulse oximeters, suction machines, delivery sets, small surgery sets, oxygen concentrators and analyzers and other needed equipment.

According to a recent statement from a foundation official, the medical equipment was provided last week to five hospitals in Xayaboury province, two hospitals and a dispensary in Oudomxay province, and two hospitals in Luang Prabang province.

The equipment will be used by health authorities of respective hospitals for providing free dental, ear, nose and throat (ENT) and eye examinations, along with general health checkups.

Regarding Oudomxay province, the foundation's coordinator Dr. Phetsamone Indara, said a team of doctors from Lao Rehabilitation Foundation and provincial and district hospitals had already provided services to local people before supplying the medical equipment to hospitals. Dr. Phetsamone highlighted the check-ups in Oudomxay from May 23-26 aimed to prevent mother and infant mortality, dental cavities and deafness while improving health education in oral hygiene and ENT care, and provide information for expectant mothers. "As a result of the recent service thousands of people in Oudomxay province received free healthcare check-ups," Dr. Phetsamone said.

Despite the doctors' work, there were still many people with oral, ear, nose, throat and eye diseases in remote areas of the country in need of assistance, "Many of these conditions could easily be prevented and treated if education and the right equipment were available in each district," he added. The main causes of infant mortality are breech and transverse presentations in pregnancy, which should be followed up at the provincial hospital. However, for the majority of people limited funds and lack of awareness are the main obstacles to accessing healthcare, but distance, limited access to hospitals and the fact that many people cannot afford to travel to provincial hospitals remain major challenges. As for cavities and deafness, these are pressing public health problems and the healthcare of expectant mothers and children is a priority for the Ministry of Health.

In the near future, Lao Rehabilitation Foundation plans to provide more medical equipment to hospitals in Huaphan province to help improve healthcare services for local people. The handover ceremony of medical equipment for hospitals and dispensary in the three provinces of Luang Prabang, Oudomxay and Xayaboury was attended by the foundation's President Dr. Luc Janssens, local health authorities and other invited guests.

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