



## US Health Foundation Gives Shot in the Arm to Rural Communities

An American medical team from the Lao Rehabilitation Foundation last week provided free check-ups and surgeries in Oudomxay province's La and Namor districts, and in Hadxaifong district, Vientiane.

Manager of the Sustainable Comprehensive Eye Care Project at Oudomxay Provincial Hospital, Dr. Phetsamone Indara, said the service aimed to improve the health of poor people in rural areas, especially expectant women and children. During the week-long trip to Oudomxay, Lao and American medical staff provided medical check-ups, treatment and surgeries for more than 3,000 poor people. These included 68 cataract surgeries, paediatric disease checks, and treatment for 740 children. The teams also gave dental checks to 723 primary school children from the Hmong and Khmu ethnic groups. They also provided 505 ear, nose and throat check-ups and 434 eye tests. In addition, 150 pregnant women had ultrasound imaging and more than 500 adults underwent internal medicine checks.

As well as providing medical equipment, supplies and medicine to La and Namor district hospitals, Lao Rehabilitation Foundation President Dr. Luc Janssens presented medical equipment and supplies to Hadxaifong district hospital in Vientiane, aiming at improving medical services in these areas. Dr. Phetsamone said there are still many poor people in rural areas that rely on mobile healthcare teams for treatment.

The Lao Rehabilitation Foundation of the USA and the Fred Hollows Foundation of Australia provided funding of more than 460 million kip (US\$57,523) to make the trip possible. Lao and US doctors believe the provision of free medical check-ups, treatment and surgeries will help the Lao government to alleviate poverty nationwide by 2020 as targeted.

**By Xayxana Leukai**

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