



For Immediate Release:

April 28, 2010

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SAINT FRANCIS HOSTS AMBASSADOR OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A Meeting to Discuss a Unique Partnership with the Goal of Improving Health Care in the South Pacific Nation of Seven Million

(HARTFORD, CT) A special visitor spent the afternoon at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center on Wednesday, April 22, 2010.

Evan Paki, Ambassador of Papua New Guinea, met with Christopher Dadlez, President and Chief Executive Officer of Saint Francis. The focus of the meeting was to discuss medical exchanges to make Papua New Guinea (PNG) self-reliant in providing better healthcare to its almost seven citizens and prepare local physicians to work in PNG's government-funded public hospitals.

"Saint Francis is honored to be a part of an emerging nation in improving the health care provided to its citizens," said Christopher Dadlez.

In an effort to reach that goal, the government of Papua New Guinea has decided to build a state-of-the-art teaching hospital and medical center – to be known as Pacific Medical Center - in the capital city of Port Moresby.

"On behalf of the people and government of Papua New Guinea, I deeply appreciate the tremendous support that we will be receiving from a leading U.S. teaching hospital and medical center such as Saint Francis; your support will contribute meaningfully towards saving lives and transforming my nation's healthcare system for the better," Ambassador Paki told Mr. Dadlez and other leaders at Saint Francis.

In addition to Saint Francis, the Pacific Medical Center project is being supported by Loma Linda University Medical Center, Stanford University Medical Center, William J. Clinton Foundation, and a number of other charitable and corporate organizations interested in or already working to advance global health.

“Pacific Medical Center – once it is built is operating - will not only help improve the lives of Papua New Guineans but other Pacific islanders as well who are scattered across about ten island nations and most of whom are already depending on PNG’s existing medical institutions to have their own doctors trained”, according to Andrew Gerber, a successful Florida-based former real estate developer-turned-volunteer/philanthropist who has been appointed by the Papua New Guinea government as the team leader and project developer of the Pacific Medical Center project.

The operation of this modern medical facility will require physicians, nurses and ancillary staff to receive additional training.

“Physicians from Saint Francis will train the staff and then travel to Papua New Guinea to provide medical services and to follow up on that training,” said Mark Gerber, MD, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

Saint Francis, along with Stanford University Medical Center and Loma Linda University Medical Center, has agreed to participate in this training by receiving their medical personnel here in the U.S. as part of a mentor program.

Through IT capabilities, our Papua New Guinea colleagues will be able to link their entire country with this new hospital and hospitals/physicians in the USA.

Founded in 1897, Saint Francis is a major teaching hospital licensed for 617 acute inpatient beds and 65 bassinets and is the largest Catholic hospital in New England.