Universal health care scheme launched in Indonesia

Implementation overshadowed by inequalities in country’s health care system

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Aiming to improve access to health care services for millions of people, the government in Indonesia rolled out the first stage of its universal health care coverage scheme in January. The new insurance, called Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional, replaces all previous national and local health care programmes and is intended to provide initial coverage for people who were members of the previous public health insurance for the poor or who have a monthly income of less than 257,000 rupiah (US$24).

With the first phase implemented this year, slightly over 120 million or approximately half of the country’s population will be automatically covered by the new scheme. Coverage for all 240 million Indonesians is anticipated by 2019.

In addition to higher health care spending this year, the government has announced plans to increase the number of health care workers and make improvements to the country’s deficient health infrastructure, such as the construction of 150 new state-run hospitals.

According to World Bank estimates, the scheme will cost Indonesia up to US$16 billion each year once fully implemented. The country currently only spends an estimated US$800 million in this sector, which has raised concerns among health care professionals about the government’s ability to pay out premiums to those health care workers enrolled in the new programme.

“Hospitals are afraid they will lose money by not being reimbursed like in the past, while health workers are afraid they will make mistakes. As a result, quality of treatment has been compromised,” a neurosurgeon recently outlined.
German professor replaces Samaranayake as dean of HK dental school

Prof. Thomas Flemmig to assume top position in July

Daniel Zarchin

HONG KONG: The University of Hong Kong (HKU) has announced the appointment of Prof. Thomas Flemmig from the University of Washington School of Dentistry in the USA as the new dean of its dental faculty. The German expert in periodontics will assume his new position by the middle of the year and replaces Prof. Lakshman Samarangika, who moved on to head the University of Queensland School of Dentistry in Australia at the beginning of the year.

Flemmig’s appointment ends a worldwide search by HKU for a new faculty dean that started in late 2012. According to university officials, Prof. Edward C.M. Lo, Chair of Dental Public Health, is serving as interim dean until Flemmig assumes his new position.

Prior to his tenure in the USA, Flemmig held academic positions in several dental schools in Germany, including those of Würzburg and Münster. In addition, he has maintained an intramural practice since 1990. Speaking to Dental Tribune Asia Pacific in January, he stated that he was unwilling to comment on his appointment for the moment.

HKU officials thanked Samarangika, who headed the dental faculty from 2004, and welcomed Flemmig, re-marking that he is a “highly accomplished scholar of internal standing and a renowned periodontist.”

“He possesses rich experience in working with government agencies and professional organisations. With this combination of academic achievements, management experience and communication skills, we have high hopes that the faculty will continue to excel in research, education and dental care under his leadership,” HKU Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Lap-Chure Tsui commented.

Flemmig is the faculty’s seventh dean since its inauguration in 1982. He is also the first German to assume the prestigious position, which has been held by dental professionals from Great Britain and Sri Lanka, among others. According to the university, his contract with the Faculty of Dentistry will be limited to a period of five years.

Hong Kong’s only institution for higher dental education, the school currently provides six-year undergraduate training in dental specialties such as oral and maxillofacial surgery and paediatric dentistry. According to university figures, 110 students were enrolled in the Faculty at the end of 2013, which has an intake of 50 students per year.

International Imprint

Licensing by Dental Tribune International

Published by Dental Tribune Asia Pacific Ltd.

© 2014, Dental Tribune International GmbH. All rights reserved.

Dental Tribune makes every effort to report clinical information and manufacturers’ product news accurately, but cannot assume responsibility for the validity of product claims, or for typographical errors. The publishers also do not assume responsibility for product names or claims, or statements made by advertisers. Opinions expressed by authors are their own and may not reflect those of Dental Tribune International.
North Korea opens new dental centre

PYONGYANG, DPRK/TOKYO, Japan: Amid political tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the government of Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has recently opened a new advanced dental clinic in the eastern part of the capital Pyongyang. Located in the Taedonggang district, the Ryugyong Dental Hospital was constructed in record time and has the capacity to treat 300 people a day, according to official reports.

In a video released by the DPRK news channel in Tokyo in Japan, a clinic employee stated that the infrastructure of the centre is comparable to Western standards and offers a dental laboratory and paediatric dentistry department. It also seems to be equipped with dental equipment from leading dental manufacturers from Europe, which includes digital imaging systems, apex locators and cavity detection technology.

Similar to other matters regarding the country, little is known about the size and quality of North Korea’s oral health care system. Estimates about the country’s dental work-force are only available from the WHO, which estimates that the country employs slightly more than 8,000 dentists, or charity organisations such as Samaritan’s Purse in the US, which supports the isolated country with a number of dental care-related projects. Speaking to Dental Tribune Asia Pacific in 2012, its board member Dr Melvin Cheatham said that there is reason to believe that dental care, which is provided solely by the North Korean government, is lacking in labour and proper training. He admitted, however, there have been initiatives under the new regime to improve dental services in the recent past, particularly in urban areas like Pyongyang.

Owing to the lack of manpower, the prevalence of dental diseases remains high in Indonesia, with a quarter of adults suffering from caries and other oral lesions.

In a video released by the Indonesian Dental Association (Persatuan Dokter Gigi Indonesia, PDI) a group of an estimated 75,000 unregistered street dentists, who offer low-cost dental procedures, such as extractions and fillings, without approval from health authorities. A government regulation to ban these people from practising was overturned by the constitutional court in Jakarta last year.

Professional organisations and health experts have warned that these amounts might be too low for guaranteeing long-term quality care. They also pointed out the problem of unequal distribution or simply the lack of health care service providers and facilities throughout the country. Millions of people in the central and eastern parts of the island state, for example, are not able to see a doctor regularly.

According to reports by the Indonesian Dental Association and health experts, there is reason to believe that dental care is provided poorly, with almost 70 per cent of adults suffering from caries and other oral lesions.

N-Cement Collection

Luting materials from Ivoclar Vivadent

A strong bond provides confidence and support

Variolink® N | Multilink® N | Multilink® Speci

• Powerful luting materials
• Tried-and-tested product combinations
• A wide collection for different demands: ESTETICS | UNIVERSALITY | SIMPLICITY

www.ivoclarvivadent.com

Ivoclar Vivadent AG
Bendertstr. 4 | 9494 Schaan | Principality of Liechtenstein | Tel.: +423 235 35 35 | Fax: +423 235 33 60