

# The Fiji National Wellness Policy 2015

## Background

A result of high-level and individual influences is leading to changing dietary patterns which contribute to obesity; 80% of deaths are due to NCDs; diabetes related death rates are rapidly increasing; deteriorating infrastructure is contributing to diarrhoeal diseases and maternal mortality rates continue to increase (WHO-WPRO, 2014; WHO, 2011). The double burden of disease is further supplemented by the continuing presence of traumatic injuries and mental health issues.

Rather than being discouraged by the double burden of disease, the National Wellness Centre sees the opportunities within health statistics. Reframing the findings of the NCD STEPS Surveys (in adults) indicates that although the proportion of the population that are healthy is decreasing, they are still a significant segment and it is still a significant opportunity to encourage healthy lifestyles. Losing the good health of the population would therefore be a major, although preventable, step backwards in health and development in Fiji.

## Policy Development

Public health is well accustomed to the disease-focussed model of health promotion, which places focus on reducing the existing impact of risk factors or active disease in society, affecting the burden of disease by addressing socio-economic determinants of health (SDHs). The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS) has policies and plans to address existing poor health in early stages, including the National and MOHMS NCD Strategic plans 2010-2014, and the National Health Promotion Policy for Fiji Islands (2006), but no standard manner to maintain Wellness in the healthy population.

As the world health environment moves more towards Wellness, and evidence continues to build, this holistic approach to human health should be supported, and built into organisational policies and plans. This movement is also supported by the WHO (WHO, 2010), and some other Pacific island small states have similar programs (WHO, 2012). The logical next step for Fiji is to document government commitment to Wellness in line with international peers. Through the NWC, MOHMS is driving the move from physical health to holistic Wellness and this Policy is a starting point, leading to the formation of more sector-specific Wellness plans and policies.

## Policy Goals

- 1) To build the understanding that all sectors of society are equally responsible for population health.
- 2) To empower groups to lead people towards living in a state of Wellness by encouraging choice and adoption of healthy lifestyles and behaviours.
- 3) To maintain a clear and common understanding of Wellness, its foundations, activities and aspirations, in all people involved with Wellness.
- 4) To provide an overview of the operation of the National Wellness Centre within the MOHMS to all who interact with Wellness. This Policy sets the scene for further development of policies and plans in all areas of society.

## More Information -

<http://www.health.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/National-Wellness-Policy-for-Fiji.pdf>