

LETTER

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SAMOA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor:

The publishing and launching of the inaugural Samoa Medical Journal (SMJ) is a remarkable achievement reflecting a significant progress in medical education for the medical and allied health professions in Samoa.

The Samoa Medical Association (SMA) wishes to acknowledge the pivotal role of the Oceania University of Medicine (OUM) in facilitating and coordinating the many issues involved with creation of the journal and providing the necessary and crucial technical expertise.

Since its foundation in 1948, the SMA has strived to fulfil the need to provide its members with continuing medical education opportunities. These opportunities are very limited given the scarce resources available in small island countries like Samoa, however the SMA conducts annual scientific conferences as part of their annual general meetings and weekly CME meetings to try and meet some of this need. The journal is therefore a landmark development that will make significant contributions towards continuing medical education for the medical profession in Samoa.

The publishing of the Samoa Medical Journal challenges the SMA to engage its members in conducting and publishing medical and health research papers relevant to Samoa. It is also hoped that medical and other health professionals in the region, and beyond, will also contribute to our journal. The creation of an online version of this journal will expedite the publication of medical data and news from Samoa and make the articles available world-wide at the click of the mouse.

Until now most of the research that addressed the health and disease of Samoan people was conducted by well resourced overseas researchers. Now an opportunity exists for us to drive such collaborative projects and publish the results in collaboration with the faculty and expertise offered by OUM.

The SMJ also offers a good forum for the health workers of the Pacific region, and beyond, to discuss challenging health issues facing our region. This allows exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences that lead to improvement in the quality in health services in an ongoing manner.

For this historical achievement it is proper that we reflect and pay tribute to honour the work and great contribution by all the founding, late and senior members of the SMA, whom when celebrating the SMA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1997, dreamt of establishing a Samoa Medical Journal to publish some of the great work they have done in the past. Our pioneers and most of these distinguished doctors have passed away and they would have been very proud to have seen that their dream has finally been realised.

The SMA therefore wishes to congratulate OUM for helping us realise this goal. The SMA also pledges its full support to this collaborative effort to ensure the journals' continuous success.

Uitualagi Dr Tia Vaai  
President 2009-2010  
Samoa Medical Association