



**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**RE: MEDICAL REFERRAL PATIENTS IN THE
PHILIPPINES BEING KICKED OUT AND NO
STIPEND GIVEN**

On July 23, 2023, a social post was shared on Kewan Jela a private group on Facebook, purportedly stating that Medical Referral patients from the RMI seeking medical assistance in St. Luke's Philippines are being kicked out of the hospital due to overdue debt in PI.

The Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) would like to inform the public and to plainly state that the claims on social media are misleading and **FALSE**. The Ministry can confirm that NO patient was kicked out of the hospital after surgery.

We would like to clarify that there are different degrees of complexity of surgeries, and this helps in determining the type and extent of post-surgical care and support that is provided to such people. While some surgeries can be simple and straightforward with the patient being discharged early, others can be more complex thus requiring continued monitoring and follow-up appointments. The MoHHS has always ensured that any medical referral patient to any country receives optimal care and support as needed and entitled to.

With regards to allegations MoHHS' 'indebtedness' as captured in the social media post; we would like to place on record that there could be times when the Ministry could delay in settling outstanding balances, but these are often cleared quickly after vetting any claims it receives. Thus, MOHHS would like to emphatically state that no patient needing medical care will be neglected at St. Luke's hospital or anywhere for that matter on grounds of payment of bills.

Also, on the issue of stipend for patients and their caregivers or escorts, we want to indicate that it is another misinformation intended to mislead the public. Patients and their escorts are entitled to stipends which are often provided weekly. It must however be clarified that where a patient is on admission, his accumulated stipend is paid in bulk immediately upon their discharge. This helps ensuring they do not receive their entitlements piecemeal. The patient's escort nonetheless receives their stipend weekly.

It is very unfortunate that some people resort to generating and sharing misinformation. We do more harm than good to our community.

The Ministry of Health and Human Services implores persons who may need clarification on any issues to reach out to verify and validate the information before resorting to publication on traditional or social media. The Ministry's doors remain open.