



Reproductive health counsellors for Kiribati

By Online Editor

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A Fiji counselling service provider has extended its services to the region.

Pacific Counselling and Social Services (PCSS) director Joanne Cohen said 23 Kiribati nationals went through the basic communications skills training in December and were accredited to practise as reproductive health practitioners.

Cohen said PCSS had joined forces with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in the training of forty-eight individuals in Kiribati who had received training in the field of HIV and subsequently accredited to perform pre and post-test counselling for HIV testing.

So far, she says PCSS has trained close to 250 reproductive health practitioners in 13 Pacific island countries, including Fiji.

“These counsellors are trained to provide a high quality of service to the public ensuring that they are given the opportunity for informed consent in line with the human rights approach,” she said in a statement.

“Accurate knowledge about HIV/STIs is made available to the public enabling the people to gain an insight into safe practices to prevent the spread of HIV/STI.

“It also provides an opportunity for testing during which with the assistance of a trained practitioner the person is able to do a self risk assessment, exploration of individual future preventative measures, an understanding of the results, how the results are provided and treatment available.

“The process is aimed at empowering people to make informed decisions that help them to make permanent changes to live healthier and happier lives.”

Cohen said Kiribati Ministry of Health was able to offer counselling and testing services at all its clinics in Tarawa and hoped to extend the service to the outer islands.

SOURCE: FIJI TIMES/PACNEWS