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**Ministry of Health**

**Ministry of Health, UB, UCLA will jointly improve health care in Belize**

**Belmopan - 07 August, 2003.**

The 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the UCLA/Belize Distance Education Project concluded on Wednesday with the participants agreeing to meet again in the first week of January 2004. The 1st Steering Committee Meeting had been held in Los Angeles in January 2003.

Mr. Henry Anderson, Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Health, thanked those in attendance for their contributions to making the effort a success.

Dr. Snekendu Karr, inspired by the tremendous amount of information his team had received, and all they had learned about Belize, said that it was possible to make Belize one of the healthiest places in the world.

Dr. Karr, along with Dr. Osman Gabal and Dr. Donald Morinsky, are Professors at the University of California in Los Angeles, (UCLA) School of Public Health, which signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Health and the University of Belize in January 2002. This cooperative agreement broadly outlines the objectives of a collaborative effort to promote the training of health inspectors, nurses, administrators and other allied health personnel, joint research and publication, and educational collaboration in the fields of public health, nutrition, environmental sciences, economy, social policy, social welfare and administration, anthropology, archaeology and health services including mental health. It will also facilitate exchanges of health specialists; faculty and students of the involved institutions, and it will utilize the resources of the Consortium for Belizean Development.

Mr. Roy Young, the Consul General of Belize to Los Angeles, thanked the University of Belize and its President, Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, for their generous facilitation of the three-day meeting.

Also in attendance were Mr. George Greenwood and Mrs. Joan Greenwood, and Dr. Robert Bennett and Mrs. Evelyn Bennett from the Belize Alliance for Social Services, a member of the Consortium for Belizean Development.

Mrs. Marjorie Parks, Deputy Director of Health Services and Dr. Paul Edwards, Epidemiologist in the Ministry of Health accompanied Mr. Anderson.

The first day's meeting opened with a presentation on Belize's health system and ongoing Health Sector Reform Project by Mrs. Marjorie Parks, and an epidemiological profile of Belize as well as an overview of the Belize HIV/AIDS project by Dr. Paul Edwards.

Dr. Morter-Lewis then made a presentation on the technical capabilities of the University of Belize, and the group toured UB's computer facilities. They also toured the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, Cleopatra White Health Centre, and the Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre.

On Tuesday the group visited the Hattieville Health Centre and the Western Regional Hospital in Belmopan as well as UB's Belmopan Campus.

At the opening of today's session, Belize's Minister of Health, Hon. Jose Coye, told the assembly that it was his vision that efforts like this one would accelerate a shift to a preventative health culture and an integrated approach to health in Belize. He also said that he hoped that it would re-invigorate public debate on what health should be in Belize. The rest of the session was devoted to a discussion on HIV/AIDS developments, and on areas for specific cooperation and exchanges, and a general discussion that wrapped up with the participants expressing their conclusions