

WRITTEN RESPONSE 38-2026

Wednesday, 29 April 2026

38/2026 Hon. Premila Kumar to ask the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister inform Parliament, in relation to the Free Health Scheme launched in June 2021, which provides free GP, dental, and laboratory services to individuals earning under \$30,000 annually – (a) what the yearly total cost incurred, and the number of patients treated are, from the launch of the scheme, for each type of service (free GP, dental, and laboratory tests); and (b) how is the scheme monitored to prevent any abuse.

BACKGROUND

1. The Free Medical Scheme commenced on June 2021 with the aim to improve access to medical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2022, the Free Medical Scheme expanded to providing dental services and lab services.
2. The Free Medical Scheme therefore includes, General Outpatient Services (GP), Dental Practitioners scheme (DP) and Medical Laboratory Scheme (ML). The scheme is eligible to all Fijians earning \$30,000 and below.
3. Currently, there are fifty(52) approved General Practitioners, four (4) Dental Practitioners and eighteen(18) Medical Laboratories clinics serving Fijian citizens across the country.
4. Since its inception, a total of 162,166 have registered under the Free Medical Scheme.

NUMBER OF PATIENTS AND COST OF SERVICES

5. From 1 January 2022 till date, a total of 644,101 patient visits have been facilitated under the Scheme with the total cost of \$33.5 million.

Table 1: Number of Patient Visits Served Under the Respective Schemes

	Number of Patients seen by GP, DP, ML (Jan 21 – June 26)	Total Cost FJ\$
GP Scheme	561,197	26,128,811.30
DP Scheme	25,310	1,991,547.98
ML Scheme	57,594	5,394,777.15
Total	644,101	\$33,515,136.43

6. Tabulated below are the detailed cost per and patient visits per annum:

Table 2: Cost by Scheme per Annum

Scheme	2021 - 2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2025 - todate	Total
GP	4,005,335	11,073,899	5,097,147	5,952,430	26,128,811.30
DP	89,610	1,665,948	19,650	216,339.98	1991547.98
ML	143,972	143,972	406,300	470,0533.15	5,394,777
Total	423,8917	128,838,19	552,3097	108,693,03.43	33,515,136.43

Table 3: Number of patients served per year

Scheme	2021 - 2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2025 - todate	Total
GP	100,617	253,433	33,562	173,585	561,197
DP	1,503	21,143	243	2421	25,310
ML	1,633	27,929	4,676	57,594	91,832
Total	103,753	302,505	38,481	233,600	678,339

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

7. To ensure accountability and prevent misuse, FijiCare Insurance Limited has been engaged as an independent verification agency to assess claims submitted by service providers.
8. In addition, the Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics oversees claims verification by:
 - (i) Detecting incorrect or inflated billing;
 - (ii) Cross-checking submitted claims against portal records;
 - (iii) Identifying irregular billing patterns, such as tests conducted without GP referrals or excessive testing inconsistent with diagnoses.
 - (iv) A thorough assessment is done by the Ministry before payments are made.
 - (v) There are three layers of verification including, FijiCare Insurance Limited, Free Medical Scheme Team and the Ministry's Finance team.
9. Any discrepancies are investigated with the approved service providers through FijiCare Insurance Limited, and service providers may be required to justify their claims. Where necessary, on-site inspections are conducted to assess both billing practices and quality of care.
10. The scheme also provides a dedicated telephone line on 9980311 for beneficiaries to report concerns, ensuring that issues are addressed promptly.
11. Furthermore, internal audits serve as an additional safeguard, ensuring that public funds are used appropriately and in compliance with relevant laws and policies.
12. For instance, cases of double billing—where providers charged for the same service under different government initiatives—have been identified and addressed.

13. Through these monitoring mechanisms, approximately \$35,000 of government funding have been recovered and saved.
14. The Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics will continue to review the scheme to ensure sustainability and viability of this initiative.

Thank You.