

For Official Release
PR001-02262025
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
February 26, 2025



The Governor addresses the Department of Health General Assembly.



The first General Assembly for the Department of Health (DOH) was held on Friday, February 14, 2025, where staff and management were welcomed, along with the newly appointed Director, Dr. Saipale Fuimaono, and his leadership team. The assembly commenced with a service, followed by remarks from the Governor and the Director.

In his special remarks, the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula expressed his gratitude, stating how honored he was to be invited to the Department of Health General Assembly. "The Lieutenant Governor and I, our mandate is to bring good change to our country within the next four years, and our health sector is one of the priorities for the administration. We need to practise honest governance throughout the government. Primarily, that means everyone, including myself, should be an honest person in doing my

duties to be of service to the people of Tutuila and Manu'a." The Governor expressed gratitude to those serving within the Department of Health, stating, "To all of you working in Public Health, both locally and off-island, I extend my sincere appreciation for your dedication to our people. I recognize that each of you has developed a deep commitment to serving American Samoa, and many of you now consider it your home." In recognition of Director Saipele's distinguished career, Governor Pulaali'i emphasized that Director Saipele has dedicated over forty years to Public Health, making invaluable contributions to the health sector through his medical expertise and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Governor Pulaali'i continued by saying "Quality healthcare is essential for our community's well-being. As I understand it, LBJ Hospital provides critical care for the sick and injured, while the Department of Health plays a pivotal role in preventing illnesses through awareness programs and other initiatives. If these two core functions operate collaboratively under transparent and effective governance, our public health sector will thrive, ensuring a healthier future for our people." The Governor emphasized the importance of honesty and a strong work ethic in fulfilling professional responsibilities. He noted that some employees do not fully commit to their required working hours and urged all staff to reflect on their productivity by asking themselves, "Did I truly work the full eighty hours?" The Governor continued, "I implore you to work diligently and earn the full eighty hours each pay period, as taxpayers are entrusting you to serve the people of American Samoa." Furthermore, Governor Pulaali'i mentioned that with the state of LBJ Medical Center and his encounters with doctors and patients, his vision is that instead of having more chairs for the public, he would rather have fewer chairs because our community is getting healthier.

Governor Pulaali'i continued "I am a simple, common sense type of Governor. I look at your new Director, I look at you -the employees of DOH- and I envision our community now moving forward, engaging in a healthy mode for our people. Committing to serve the people of American Samoa involves promoting a healthier lifestyle by implementing effective prevention measures. By doing so, we can reduce the need for frequent hospital visits, leading to a healthier and happier community."

In concluding his remarks, Governor Pulaali'i encouraged the Department of Health to remain grounded in their faith, stating, "In all honesty, I should not be here, but I was inspired by the Holy Spirit and felt a calling to serve my people as Governor. Although we may have different faiths, we all serve one God and are united in our commitment to the people of American Samoa. Once again, I urge you to serve with honesty, integrity, and faith at the forefront. With this approach, we can achieve anything. May God bless your Director and the Department of Health."

In a brief statement, Director Fuimaono expressed his gratitude to the Honorable Governor for entrusting him with the leadership of the department. He also extended his appreciation to the employees for their hard work and dedication, emphasizing his anticipation for their

continued commitment to serving the people of American Samoa. Director Fuimaono concluded “During my confirmation, I emphasized that the most critical role for the Department of Health in this administration is prevention. The Department is committed to taking all necessary actions to implement preventive measures to safeguard the health of our community. We need teamwork to fulfill this role, and I believe we will come together for a healthy future for American Samoa.”

The General Assembly closed with a cake-cutting ceremony led by the Honorable Governor and Director Fuimaono, symbolizing the beginning of a new chapter for the Department of Health in serving the people of our territory through Public Health initiatives.

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