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## \$400k in medical supplies for Fiji

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From left, Viliame Qio, staff nurse Tavaita Dau, Siteri Lewaroqo and Nivita Sharma look through the equipment in Suva on Thursday. Picture: JONA KONATACI

THE health sector and Diabetes Fiji received a container load of medical supplies worth \$400,000 this week.

The aid was made by an American non-profit charity EqualMed and would be shared with various hospitals and health centres around the country.

EqualMed founder Nivita Sharma handed over the medical supplies, which included crutches for patients, syringes, and other supplies.

Ms Sharma said she heard stories about Fiji and how patients were suffering from the lack of medical supplies and this resulted in her starting the mission.

"Learning about the needs of Fiji motivated me to bring more for the country and these items aren't necessarily going to the Ministry of Health. They're going directly to hospitals and health centres, apart from Diabetes Fiji," she said.

"When I visited in 2013, I saw what the condition was like in hospitals, health centres and that's what pushed me to bring more on my next trips."

She said the general manager of Outrigger Resort, Peter Hopgood, friends, relatives and Fijians around the world contributed towards her initiative to ship medical supplies to the country.

Diabetes Fiji program manager Viliame Qio said the supplies would be used at the health facilities for those living with diabetes.

"It's a timely donation because our amputation rates are going up and more patients are presenting with foot problems. Some of the things that were donated will assist the nurses in their care for patients," he said.

Mr Qio said diapers donated would be given to senior citizens suffering from diabetes.