

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PROMOTING HEALTH SECURITY: POTENTIAL, ROLE, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF A MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

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TAIPEI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY (TMU) healthcare system has a very significant role in the development and promotion of healthcare services across Taiwan, serving the nation since its inception in 1960, and we believe it can play an important role in health security as well.

Currently, TMU has 10 colleges dealing with various fields of healthcare sciences, catering to more than 6,000 students—including more than 500 international students, principally from less-fortunate countries across the developing world. TMU has 5 affiliated hospitals, 1 of which is in Mainland China. In total, TMU has more than 6,500 faculty and staff across the university and hospital systems, including more than 1,000 in academia and research.

TMU leadership embraces corporate social responsibility, an important enterprise practice, and has approached social responsibility from 4 distinct dimensions: environmental efforts, ethical employee practices, volunteering, and philanthropy. As part of its social responsibility efforts, TMU encourages volunteering services through students' service learning, offers adequate scholarship opportunities to economically disadvantaged students, and provides medical services to underserved areas in Taiwan.

In addition to domestic efforts, TMU plays a pivotal role in supporting health security internationally. TMU has ongoing programs in São Tomé and Príncipe, Swaziland, and the Marshall Islands for the provision of various public health and healthcare services, health promotion, and research:

- In collaboration with Taiwan CDC and mosquito control experts, TMU implemented a program that resulted in a decrease in the prevalence of malaria from 47% to 5% in the entire population of São Tomé and Príncipe from 2003 to 2015.
- TMU assisted Swaziland health authorities in implementing prevention and treatment programs for HIV and helped assess and improve childhood nutrition.
- TMU trained healthcare professionals in São Tomé and Príncipe, Swaziland, and the Marshall Islands in the diagnosis and treatment of parasitic infections.
- TMU offers opportunities to complete higher education, including scholarships, to citizens of São Tomé and Príncipe, Swaziland, and the Marshall Islands.

Academic institutions like TMU have an obligation to engage domestically and internationally through these types

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Table 1. Medical Missions by Taipei Medical University, Taiwan

<i>Country</i>	<i>Staff number</i>	<i>Services</i>
São Tomé and Príncipe	4 doctors 1 nurse 1 administrative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical services • Hospital management • Public health
Swaziland	4 doctors 1 nurse 1 administrative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical services • Hospital management • Public health research
Marshall Islands	1 nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical services • Health promotion • Healthcare administration • Public health

of public health and healthcare programs. With a wealth of expertise and resources, these institutions can make a significant impact on global health security by bolstering public health and healthcare capacity in the areas most in need of support. While individual programs and institutions can make a considerable impact, a coordinated effort across institutions to systematically identify and respond to health security gaps can make the most efficient use of available resources and increase the overall global health security benefit.

Future Directions

Based on TMU's experience in engaging domestically and internationally to support global health security, we offer the following recommendations for TMU to further improve Taiwan's role and capacity in the global health security arena. These recommendations may also be applicable to other academic and private institutions who wish to embrace their corporate social responsibility:

- Establish connections and coordinate with domestic government partners to design and implement initiatives to build public health preparedness and core capacity in support of the International Health Regulations (IHR) and Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) action packages.
- Coordinate with domestic government partners, other academic and private institutions in Taiwan, and international NGOs to design and implement corrective actions to improve weaknesses identified in Taiwan's 2016 IHR Joint External Evaluation (JEE) report.¹
- Build on existing collaborative relationships and establish new international programs to further improve health

security capabilities in accordance with the IHR and GHSA action packages.

- Engage with government partners to assist in hosting future JEEs domestically. This could include providing critical information regarding domestic health security capacity and assessing progress made since previous JEEs as well as identifying lessons learned and implementing corrective actions.
- Facilitate international engagement in countries with which Taiwan has diplomatic ties (eg, Swaziland) to encourage and implement JEEs internationally. This could include sharing Taiwan's JEE experience, providing international expertise for external assessment teams, conducting mock assessments, and assisting with corrective action programs.

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