

### 3. Integrating e-learning into continuing professional development for Pacific health workers



Many health workers choose POLHN for the latest self-development and professional development courses. Continuing professional development of health workers is a priority in the Pacific.

In 2003, WHO and Pacific ministries of health established an e-learning platform, the Pacific Open Learning Health Net (POLHN), to address the continuing professional development needs of health workers in the Pacific. The platform now links around 20 000 health workers from 15 Pacific island countries and areas to thousands of free courses through its partners and 45 learning centres.

Due to the wide range of topics and flexible delivery options, an increasing number of health workers have signed up for POLHN's self-paced courses in recent years. The team of POLHN country focal

points provides constant motivation to independent learners.

POLHN partners with academic institutions and course providers to build institutional capacity and provide greater access to flexible learning for health workers across the Pacific. POLHN sponsors about 100 health workers each year for postgraduate online programmes from FNU. In time, this effort will increase the number of health managers with postgraduate qualifications across the Pacific. In 2015, the number of instructor-led course sponsorships doubled in northern Pacific countries. With changing

work environments and increased expectations among consumers for quality care, health workers must constantly refresh their skills. In six Pacific island countries, POLHN self-paced course certificates are accepted as credits towards renewal of annual certificates of practice.

All POLHN partner countries have indicated their support for an extension of POLHN collaboration. POLHN is also continuously developing new courses and ensuring access to learning opportunities for Pacific health workers. ■