

**9 June 2015**

FAIMER  
3624 Market Street  
Philadelphia PA 19104  
USA

**ST MARY'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

- 1 I write to provide you with information regarding St Mary's School of Medicine ('St Mary's') and its operation as a medical school offering nursing and medicine degree programmes in the Cook Islands.
- 2 A letter dated 9 May 2013 was distributed to a number of agencies by the Cook Islands Ministry of Health. A copy of that letter is **attached** for your information. The letter confirms that St Mary's and its medicine and nursing programmes were accredited, approved and recognised by the Cook Islands Government.
- 3 The 9 May 2013 letter states that on 28 April 1998, St Mary's first received approval in principle (subject only to personnel clearances from Police and Immigration) to operate as an educational institution of higher learning from the Cook Islands Cabinet (which is the executive decision-making body for the Cook Islands Government and includes the Prime Minister, Minister of Health and the Minister of Education). The Cook Islands Cabinet did not take any further steps with regards to the establishment and operation of St Mary's.
- 4 The Cook Islands Cabinet allocated the authority of coordination for the establishment of St Mary's to the then Secretary of Health. The Secretary of Health then established requirements for accreditation of the programs taught by St Mary's. The programmes taught were subsequently granted approval, accreditation and recognition in the Cook Islands by the Secretary of Health for the Ministry of Health in July 1998.
- 5 At the request of the Minister of Health, St Mary's was listed by the World Health Organisation in the seventh edition of its World Directory of Medical Schools.
- 6 St Mary's began operating in the Cook Islands, offering degree programmes in medicine and nursing, in April 1998.
- 7 The Minister of Health informed the Cook Islands Cabinet that St Mary's' programmes consisted of two phases:
- 8 Medical sciences (i.e. course work to be completed in the Cook Islands); and
- 9 Clinical hospital training (to be completed outside the Cook Islands as the Cook Islands did not have adequate facilities to accommodate the required clinical training).

- 10 St Mary's maintained a building facility in the Cook Islands for the medical sciences phase of its programmes until 2004. After 2004, St. Mary's maintained a correspondence address and contact telephone number in the Cook Islands for communications and student enquiries. The last students to participate in the medical sciences phase of their degree programs in the Cook Islands did so in 2002. However, those students continued their programmes and St. Mary's continued to offer their programmes at St Mary's affiliated clinical hospital training sites outside the Cook Islands after 2002.
- 11 The Government of the Cook Islands holds few records regarding the operation of St Mary's, as student records are confidential and held by St Mary's itself. St Mary's has advised the Government of the Cook Islands that the last students completed their programmes and graduated from St Mary's in December 2009.
- 12 The graduates of St Mary's are eligible to practice medicine and nursing in the Cook Islands subject to the requirements of the Cook Islands Medical Council and the Cook Islands Nursing Council.
- 13 St Mary's is not currently registered as a private tertiary education provider in the Cook Islands pursuant to the Education Act 2012.
- 14 I trust that this letter satisfies any enquiries you may have about St Mary's.



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Elizabeth Iro Secretary of Health