

For Official Release
PR 002-10212021
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
October 21, 2021



“Governor Lemanu Commends Congresswoman Uifaatali and Australian Minister for the Pacific Sen. Zed Seselja.”

"The state-of-the-art medical facility will also include high-speed telehealth capabilities."

"We take pride in being the 'anchor of the US' here in the South Pacific.

Wherever the US needs us, we are standing by to assist."

Governor Lemanu would like to commend Congresswoman Uifaatali on her continued efforts to keep this Administration's commitment to American Samoa to building a "new hospital" on the forefront. Especially on a regional level.

"I commend Congresswoman Uifaatali for all her help," stated Governor Lemanu. He continued, "American Samoa has been keeping a close eye on the activities of the newly established trilateral security partnership between Australia, United Kingdom, and United States (AUKUS). We are excited to see how the territory's plans for a new hospital will support the regional medical network in the future. I would also like to thank the Honorable Zed Seselja for acknowledging American Samoa's presence in the AUKUS plans. The state-of-the-art medical facility will also include high-speed telehealth capabilities. We take pride in being the 'anchor of the US' here in the South Pacific. Wherever the US needs us, we are standing by to assist."

In a March 24th, 2021 House Committee on Natural Resources virtual meeting, Governor Lemanu gave a testimony where he outlined that one of American Samoa's most significant problems in healthcare was the need to upgrade to a new hospital.

Chairman Honorable Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D) was very responsive to the concept of "equity and fair treatment" and how this initiative is a great way to display the face of America in the region that is "important for national security and diplomacy." This example of America to the area will need to show that we are "prosperous, equity and fairness, and providing the resources" for American Samoa to take care of its people and grow its economy. Chairman Grijalva also mentioned that this "would be the best example of diplomacy that we can provide for the region of what democracy can do for citizens of the United States and its Territories."

Ranking member Rep. Bruce Westerman (R) also acknowledged his first-hand experience in visiting American Samoa. Mr. Westerman remarked how much of a "shock" he was at the state of Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center (LBJ TMC) and mentioned that American Samoa would require approximately "\$100M for modernization and would need \$750M for a brand new hospital." He also expressed his concerns for increased spending of federal funds annually to send a high population of disabled US Veterans to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii for care, because LBJ TMC is not up to VA standards. He stated how a new hospital was part of a more common-sense solution for spending the build back better funding for American Samoa.

###