

# Wealth and health for 12

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TWELVE non-communicable disease patients living on the outskirts of Lautoka have been given a chance to earn an income by living healthier lifestyles.

A program implemented by the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) resulted in 12 individuals being picked following a health status survey conducted by the organisation in some communities in the Western Division.

The Sustainable Medicine Improving Lives through Empowerment (SMILE) program identified each people's risks of getting a heart attack, stroke or their limbs being amputated.

The data collected using the World Health Organization's International Society of Hypertension tool allowed the calculation of a 10-year risk of cardio vascular incidents.

"This tool is adaptable and can be used in any setting whether it's hospital or community and is very cost effective," said medical and associate director Dr Jone Hawea.

"The research will help implement relevant interventions from the first quarter of 2015."

Those identified were put into the Shelf Gardens Changing Diet program which enabled them to grow their own vegetables for consumption and sale.

SMILE officer Shiwangni Karishma said the program was slowly growing.

"The gardens are growing well and families are replacing MSG and artificial flavourings with herbs like mint and Indian borage from their gardens," she said.

"This is what we want to see. People adopting healthier options in their fight against diabetes and other lifestyle diseases."