

Media Release 28 March 2017

Kantha Bopha Hospital founder Dr. med. Beat Richner seriously ill

The Board of the Kantha Bopha Foundation in Zürich, Switzerland, regrets to announce that the Founder of the Kantha Bopha Hospitals, Dr. Beat Richner, is seriously ill. Dr. Richner will step down from his position as managing director of Kantha Bopha with immediate effect. Dr. Peter Studer, Vice President of the Board of the Kantha Bopha Foundation will take over from Dr. Richner to manage the hospitals. Dr. Richner and board members have developed a strategy to ensure the continuity of the hospitals as a model of high-quality, free child and maternal health care.

The hospitals will continue to work, as they work independently. Of the 2,500 staff, only two, Dr. Richner and Dr. biol. Denis Laurent, the Head of Laboratory and Logistics, are foreigners. To ensure continuity, Dr. Peter Studer will act as the interim head of the hospitals. He has a deep knowledge and understanding of the hospitals and has supported Dr. Richner and Dr. Laurent since the hospitals began. The education and training of Cambodian doctors will continue under the oversight of Prof. Dr. med. Felix Sennhauser, the Director of the University Children's Hospital, Zürich, and a board member of the Kantha Bopha Foundation.

The Kantha Bopha Hospitals in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh are part of the Cambodian Ministry of Health and have the status of University Hospital. In early 2015, the Royal Government of Cambodia declared the hospitals models for the Cambodian health system. In March 2016, Dr. Richner was nominated as special advisor to the Ministry of Health with the status of a Secretary of State. Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Royal Government of Cambodia have acknowledged Dr. Richner's extraordinary achievements and the important function that the Kantha Bopha Hospitals play in the Cambodian health system.

Financial support from private donors in Switzerland, and increasingly in Cambodia, has ensured jointly with the support of both, the Swiss and the Cambodian Governments, the growth and successful functioning of the hospitals. In recent years, the Cambodian Government has increased its annual contributions substantially. The Government of Switzerland, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has supported the Kantha Bopha Hospitals since they began and continues to contribute approximately 10 percent of the annual budget.

The Kantha Bopha Foundation, together with the Government of Switzerland represented by SDC, will collaborate with his Royal Highness the King of Cambodia and the Cambodian Government to work towards the long-term financial sustainability of the hospitals.

Until this long-term financing is assured, the Kantha Bopha Hospitals are counting on your private donations. Every dollar counts and helps to save lives!