



## PRESS RELEASE

### Lawrence challenges 21 new health-care workers to become ‘great’ not just ‘good’



*Seated from left Dr. Shamdeo Persaud, Chief Medical Officer; Hon Volda Lawrence, Minister of Public Health; Dr. Karen Gordon- Campbell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Mr. Glendon Fogenay, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance) with 21 new health-care workers at their orientation and training programme on Tuesday.*

**GEORGETOWN, Guyana, MOPH – PUBLIC** Health Minister Mrs Volda Lawrence challenged the latest batch of 21 recently-graduated health-care professionals to strive to become great and not settle for being good.

“The good physician treats the disease (but) the great physician treats the patient who has the disease,” Lawrence in her keynote address said quoting Sir William Oster, one of the founding professors of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, in the United States.



“I wish to encourage you to reflect deeply on your response as you prepare to provide the health services which your training abroad facilitated,” the Public Health Minister said referring to her challenge to 19 General Medical Officers (GMOs), one physical therapist and one sports massage therapist on the need to choose between settling for being good or striving to become great.

Lawrence reminded the participants that currently, the country's health-care sector is still "fraught with challenges", but predicted that this batch of new specialists can make a difference with their devotion, care and versatility.

"Our patients are our priority. They will each come with a different story or problem, but you will be in that unique position not only to treat, but reassure them demonstrating that you care," the Minister said.

Lawrence also challenged the new graduates to complement each other to help achieve greater outcomes within the five levels of health-care in Guyana.

"I know that each of you is replete with ideas and novel ways of approach which you are anxious to share to effect change, but you must exercise patience. You cannot expect a change overnight, so your attitude in moving forward cannot be arrogance, condescension, impatience and worse still, withdrawal and complaints," she counselled.



She also emphasised the importance of exercising listening, good mannerisms and patience with their patients.

"Words are powerful and when coupled with respect, kindness, confidentiality and professionalism, our patients' response to this continuum of care will be heightened", Lawrence said.

The Minister's keynote statement was the fillip for the two-day orientation and training programme for the new doctors under the theme 'An overview of the health system in Guyana, functions of the national health care system and other aspects governing the seven major Programmes under the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)'.

"We in the Public Health Sector embrace you with love and hope that this love would be reciprocal and would transcend all barriers and challenges and filter down to the most important people in this circle, the citizens of our beloved country" Lawrence said in the Boardroom of the National Blood Transfusion Service on East & Lamaha Streets, in the capital city.

The two-day programme was facilitate by Dr Shamdeo Persaud, Chief Medical Officer (CMO); Dr. Karen Gordon-Campbell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer (DCMO) and other Programme Heads and Coordinators of the Public Health Ministry.

Dr. Tanika Luncheon, Technical Officer attached to the CMO's office was also part of the coordinating team.

Meanwhile, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance) of the Ministry of Public Health, Mr Glendon Fogenay told the participants that while they are expected to function as medical personnel, they ought to learn, know and understand the basic functions of the various programmes and departments of the MOPH.

While reminding the new officers of the importance of integrity, Fogenay expanded on the aspect of humility when carrying out their daily functions.

“Humility is very important character of a public servant....True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less. You are here as a public servant, and you are here to serve the client,” the DPS said.

At the end of the two days the 21 health specialists trained in China, Cuba, Jamaica and Russia will be inducted into Guyana's public health sector. They will be rotated in different working environments such as health centres and health posts throughout Guyana, including those in the country's sprawling hinterland communities.

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