

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

MEDIA RELEASE

Regional Communicators Meet to Develop Campaigns to Address Non-communicable Diseases

Willemstad, Curacao, 30 April 2019. The Regional Health Communications Network (RHCN) made up of communications and health promotion specialists from across the English, French and Dutch Caribbean countries and territories, met from 29 to 30 April to develop region-wide public education campaigns to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and wellness.

The RHCN was established by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in 2015 to develop, implement, sustain, monitor and evaluate communication responses to priority health issues in the Region.

Caribbean Ministers of Health have long recognised the critical role communication plays in health. In 2016, Ministers at the Thirtieth Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) proposed a region-wide comprehensive, sustained, evidence-based public education campaign, using traditional and new media to address NCDs and wellness.

“Since its inception, the RHCN has positioned itself as the lead body on public health communications in the Region driving various public health messages for healthy lifestyles in the Caribbean. The Network serves to assist policy makers in CARPHA Member States to make informed decisions about public health concerns in the Region,” said Dr. C. James Hospedales, Executive Director of CARPHA.

CARPHA, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, hosted a 2-day Curacao meeting with the aim to adapt culturally appropriate and effective pre-existing information, education and communications (IEC) materials to promote diabetes awareness and adoption of healthy lifestyles. The OECS Commission, under the World Diabetes Foundation funded project ‘OECS Diabetes Prevention and Care’, will be using the adapted IEC materials to support a year-long mass media campaign.

Through a collective and partnership approach, the RHCN will contribute to the achievement of objectives defined in the CARPHA Strategic Plan, and the Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH) which will result in healthier outcomes for all peoples of the Caribbean through empowerment and information. Over the two days, the successes of the Network were highlighted, and participants drafted a regional communications strategy and action plan (2019 – 2021) and developed a communications strategy to support the CCH IV priorities.

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