

# HEALTH Record

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FREE

# HEALTH Record

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# Gov't. will continue to invest in hinterland healthcare - President Ali

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali has reaffirmed his government's commitment to expanding and investing in healthcare across Guyana's hinterland, noting that there have been significant improvements over the past four years.

The Head of State made this statement while addressing Indigenous leaders at the recently concluded National Toshao Council Conference (NTC), which was held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Highlighting a series of major accomplishments, he noted, "In 2024, because of the investment we made in healthcare in Region One (Barima-Waini), we had zero referrals out of the region."

He also reported that less than one per cent of patients required medical evacuation, citing improved neonatal services and upgraded health centres as contributing factors. Between 2021 and 2024, Region One benefitted from the training of over 330 healthcare workers and the provision of essential transportation, including 16 ATVs, six

ambulances, pickups, minibuses, motorcycles, and more than 25 boats and engines to enhance patient and health worker mobility.

"This is investment in healthcare to move patients, to move health workers," President Ali remarked.

At the Mabaruma Regional Hospital, surgeries increased dramatically from just 15 under the previous administration to approximately 570 in 2024.

Similarly, the Moruca District Hospital conducted 85 elective surgeries within the same year.

More than 10,000 residents of Region One received eye tests, with 7,012 of them receiving free spectacles.

Against this backdrop, close to 1,000 women were screened for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) even as 56 vaccination sites were set up across Region One.

Additionally, the President pointed out that under the previous administration, there were no oxygen plants in Region One. Today, the region is producing 200 large and 1,050 small cylinders of

oxygen locally. "These are the developments that we talk about," he said.

Across other hinterland regions, the President commended the implementation of telemedicine sites, a reduction in malaria cases, and improvements in the availability of drugs and medical supplies.

With this, he pledged that there would be further upgrades undertaken with expanded laboratory services, the implementation of the electronic health record system, among other things.

"We're going to continue this investment," said President Ali.



# Health Ministry launches “One Health Project” to bolster national emergency preparedness

The government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Health, officially launched the Guyana One Health Project on May 30 at the Aiden Hotel in Georgetown.

The launch marked a critical milestone in Guyana’s continued efforts to strengthen its pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacities. Funded through a grant from the Pandemic Fund and credit support from the World Bank, the project aims to fortify Guyana’s resilience to health emergencies using a “One Health” approach, a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and transdisciplinary model that recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.

The project development objective is to strengthen Guyana’s capacities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to health emergencies through a “One Health” approach and, in the case of

an eligible crisis or emergency, respond promptly and effectively to it.

In his keynote address, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, underscored the project’s scientific foundation and strategic importance. “We thought it was important that we situate the proposal into things that we really needed. If we’re going to do a good One Health project, we also needed to understand what was going on with the animal population,” the Minister said.

Dr Anthony emphasised that the project is rooted in lessons learned from COVID-19 and is designed to address health threats at their source including those originating from animals.

Also delivering remarks was Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Honourable Dr Ashni

Singh, who highlighted Guyana’s long standing engagement with international financing institutions

“We demonstrated our capacity to absorb and successfully deploy resources. I also want to publicly acknowledge the United States of America for your continued support,” Dr Singh said.

The One Health Project aligns with Guyana’s commitment to advancing the international health regulations and aims to improve key public health systems, enhance multi-sectoral coordination, and strengthen veterinary and environmental health capacities.

Also present at this event were Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Mr Malcolm Watkins; Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh; Technical Project Lead, Dr Anand Persaud; and other directors and senior officials.





# Toshaos praise healthcare transformation in their communities

The government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Health, has been taking steps to fulfil its manifesto commitment to providing enhanced health services for all Guyanese.

Part of that commitment to the health sector includes plans to improve conditions of service and remuneration for healthcare workers, technicians, nurses and doctors, as well as plans to upgrade health facilities countrywide, including the expansion of diagnostic services such as medical imaging, ultrasound and echocardiogram, at key regional hospitals, and improve ambulance services.

Improving access to healthcare services in remote parts of Guyana, also form part of the government's plans.

On the sidelines of the 2025 National Toshaos Council Conference, Chairwoman of the Saxacalli Community Development Council (CDC) in Region Three (Essequibo

Islands-West Demerara), Ms Helen Williams, said that her community's health post was recently renovated.

She said an extra room has been added to the Health Post, providing a more comfortable environment to both staff and patients and the waiting area was tiled. The health facility also now has wi-fi access in place.

Ms Williams stated, "Concerning visitation, we get a monthly doctor visiting from Region Three. Not only doctors [but] we get mid-wife, we get dentist, and so on."

She pointed out that the availability of medication has improved significantly and instances of a shortage is a thing of the past. The health facility also facilitates malaria testing, she said in a short video that was posted on the Ministry of Health's Facebook page.

"That's one for the river; and I believe that's the only Health Post in the river that do malaria testing," she said.

They also received a river ambulance from the Ministry of Health that would aid in the transportation of patients to the hospital, and supplies.

Also speaking was Toshao of Wiruni in Region Ten (Upper Demerara-Berbice), Mr Rohan Fredericks. "Quite recently, the health centre was upgraded. We have three health workers presently, now. We're doing the telemedicine presently," he said in the video which is also on the Health Ministry's Facebook page.

Mr Fredericks said, in Wiruni, healthcare vouchers have been distributed, providing persons there with the opportunity to receive spectacles and other health services they may require.

"I'd like to encourage the government to continue investing in the health sector so that each and every person could benefit," he said.



Another Toshao, Ms Marsha Williams of Mainstay Village, Essequibo Coast, endorsed the transformative healthcare enhancements in her village.

“Across my village, the health is improving I must say. We’ve recently had an extension to our health post, where we have now our pharmacy room, or our drug room which we’ll call it. And I know our pharmacists will feel more comfortable, and not be mixed with our midwife. She can be able to do her work more effectively,” Ms Williams said in another video, also on the Ministry’s Facebook page.

Additionally, the health post has an oxygen plant, and a new nursing assistant to work along with the midwife. An application for Community Health Workers (CHWs) has also been sent out by Ms Williams.

She acknowledged that change is

coming rapidly to her village, and underscored that with the recently issued medical vouchers, most of the residents have opted to use them to improve their healthcare. Ms Williams said a number of residents (children and the elderly) have been able to utilise the eye-testing voucher.

Ms Wendy Francis, the Toshao of Capoey Village, in Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), said her village has undergone tremendous development in the health sector. These changes include an increase in number of persons checking on their health. A medical team visits the community, Ms Francis said, adding that the residents would make good use of the services offered.

“Our community, sometimes, when you go to the doctor at Suddie (Essequibo Coast), you take time, but now most of the time they are going for

the rescue of the people. They’re going in there so we could have everything. We don’t have to leave on the road,” she said, as she sought to explain how greatly access to healthcare has improved in her community.

Ms Francis expressed a heartfelt thanks to the government of Guyana for the tremendous work being done in Amerindian villages. “We haven’t got access to that (medical teams) before, and now it’s coming into our community.”

Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Honourable Ms Pauline Sukhai, in April this year, attended the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII24), where she mentioned the increasing investment in healthcare infrastructure, and telemedicine in Amerindian villages.

## MOH in talks with international partners about national mental health plan

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, met with Dr Kim Eva Dickson, Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO) Representative to Guyana, and Dr Soumitra Pathare, PAHO/WHO International Consultant, at his Brickdam Office, Georgetown on May 12.

The meeting focused on advancing mental health initiatives under the Guyana National Mental Health Plan 2023-2030 and the PAHO-United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)-MOH Joint Programme for Mental Health. Together, they discussed strategic actions to strengthen mental health services and promote well-being across Guyana. Also in attendance was Dr Timothy Morgan, Coordinator of the Mental Health Programme.





# New era for mental wellness

## -as 915 hotline, animated series launched in Guyana

In a landmark move to improve the nation’s mental health landscape, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Office of the President and SBM Offshore, a local company, officially launched the National Mental Health Initiatives on May 14, alongside the debut of the “Mental Health Matters” animated series.

These initiatives aim to strengthen mental health awareness, education, and support across Guyana. The launch reflects a nationwide commitment to breaking the stigma

around mental health and ensuring that accessible, compassionate care is available to all citizens.

As part of the broader initiative, two key resources were also unveiled: the 915 suicide prevention hotline -- a 24-hour all week toll-free service offering immediate, confidential support to individuals in emotional distress or crisis; and a mental health website ([www.mentalhealth.gov.gy](http://www.mentalhealth.gov.gy)) -- a digital hub for information, self-help tools, access to services, and community engagement on mental

well-being.

The animated series is designed to educate children and adolescents on mental health awareness. These new tools are expected to bridge gaps in care and empower individuals to seek help without fear or judgment.

The Ministry of Health is encouraging all Guyanese to take advantage of these resources and join the national movement toward a healthier, more informed, and emotionally resilient society.



# More emphasis to be placed on preventative medicine

## - Health Minister



In a strong call to action for public health transformation, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, underscored the urgent need to prioritise preventative medicine during remarks at a Continuing Medical Education (CME) session, hosted by the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Jamaica Friendship Association over the weekend of May 3-4, at the Arthur Chung Convention Centre, Georgetown.

Dr Anthony pointed to rising lifestyle-related health concerns such as alcohol consumption, tobacco use, and poor dietary habits as key contributors to the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Guyana.

“Our young people proudly display their drinking habits, and with popular trends like happy hour, we are seeing a rise in alcohol overconsumption,” he stated. “At the same time, we are moving away from traditional, nutrient-rich diets toward fast food and ultra-processed meals, which is compounding our public health challenges.”

The Minister highlighted several proactive steps already taken by the government to shift the country’s approach toward early intervention and long-term wellness. A cornerstone of this initiative is the Comprehensive

School Health Screening Programme, launched two years ago in partnership with US-based Mount Sinai Health System and the Ministry of Education. This life-course screening targets children at nursery, primary, and secondary school levels, evaluating vision, hearing, dental, and general health. To date, over 35,000 children have been screened.

Electronic clinical records are being piloted at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), with plans for nationwide rollout by the end of the year, aiming to improve continuity and quality of care.

Addressing cancer prevention, Dr Anthony announced that Guyana will transition from the quadrivalent to the nine-valent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, following data that identified a broader spectrum of high-risk HPV strains. National vaccination coverage has increased from 17 percent to 53 percent, with some regions achieving over 90 percent. Expanded HPV screening and vaccination efforts are expected to significantly reduce cervical cancer mortality.

Additionally, new mammography equipment has been installed at four regional hospitals, with further expansion scheduled for 2025. Primary care providers are also being trained under revised clinical guidelines to

improve early detection of breast cancer.

In men’s health, over 13,000 prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests were conducted in the past year, resulting in 500 biopsies and the early diagnosis of 200 cases of prostate cancer.

Dr Anthony also announced the operationalisation of a state-of-the-art pathology laboratory, now equipped to conduct histopathology and other advanced diagnostics essential for cancer care and accurate disease identification.

“These initiatives are all part of a broader vision to create a preventative, data-driven health system in Guyana,” Dr Anthony said. “The data we are collecting today will form the foundation of better, earlier care for all Guyanese. We are investing in systems that ensure every citizen has access to essential health services and that our clinicians are empowered with the tools they need to intervene early.”

Healthcare professionals attending the CME were encouraged to visit the newly commissioned health facilities, including the national pathology lab, which stands as a testament to the government’s commitment to improving health outcomes through innovation, infrastructure, and education.



# Health Minister urges greater awareness of 'silent killer' hypertension

- even as patient coverage increases significantly in two years

In recognition of World Hypertension Day, Guyana joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and global health partners in raising awareness about hypertension -- commonly known as high blood pressure -- under the theme, "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer."

In his message to Guyanese, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, said hypertension is a global health challenge, affecting an estimated 1.13 billion people worldwide, with over two-thirds of cases found in low- and middle-income countries. Men are slightly more affected than women.

Despite its prevalence, hypertension is often called the "silent killer" because it usually presents with few or no symptoms, yet it can result in severe health complications such as chronic kidney disease, heart disease, stroke,

dementia, and even death.

In Guyana, stroke and ischemic heart disease--both closely linked to hypertension--remain among the leading causes of mortality.

Understanding blood pressure readings is crucial. Healthcare providers typically express blood pressure as two numbers, such as "130 over 80."

The top number, or systolic pressure, measures the force inside arteries when the heart contracts, while the bottom number, or diastolic pressure, reflects the pressure when the heart is relaxed. Experts define high blood pressure as a top number of 130 or above and/or a bottom number of 80 or above.

Elevated blood pressure falls between a top number of 120 and 129 with a bottom number of 79 or below, while normal blood pressure is below 119/79.

In Guyana, the 2016 STEPS Survey revealed that 18.4 percent of adults had high blood pressure but were not receiving proper medication.

In response, the Ministry of Health launched the HEARTS programme-- a comprehensive initiative designed to improve the management of elevated and high blood pressure.

HEARTS stands for Healthy lifestyle counselling, Evidence-based protocols, Access to essential medicines and technology, Risk-based cardiovascular disease management, Team-based care, and Systems for monitoring.

This evidence-based approach supports patients in managing hypertension and preventing complications. Since its inception, the HEARTS programme has expanded

from eight pilot sites in 2022 to 237 sites by February 2025, increasing patient coverage from 8,899 to 43,618 individuals.

These numbers represent significant progress in improving both individual health outcomes and community well-being. The Ministry's goal is for all health centres in Guyana to adopt the HEARTS programme by the end of 2025.

"All Guyanese are encouraged to learn how to accurately measure and consistently monitor their blood pressure. Visiting a healthcare provider to learn proper measurement techniques and ensuring blood pressure remains within a healthy range is vital. For those prescribed medication for hypertension, it is critical to take it as directed and avoid missing doses," said the Minister.

"The efforts of healthcare professionals, especially those in primary care, are commendable for their dedication to the accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and ongoing management of hypertension. By working together, Guyana can significantly reduce the burden of hypertension and promote longer, healthier lives for all its citizens," he added.



# Protecting breastfeeding means protecting maternal, child health

## -Health Minister

Guyana, on May 22, joined the international community in commemorating World Breastfeeding Protection Day 2025 under the theme: “Protect Breastfeeding: For My Rights, No Misleading Digital Marketing.”

The observance was marked by a strong message from Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, who emphasised the importance of safeguarding breastfeeding practices from the growing threat of digital misinformation and aggressive marketing of breast-milk substitutes.

In his statement, Dr Anthony reaffirmed the government’s commitment to promoting breastfeeding as a public health priority and a cornerstone of child survival, maternal well-being, and national development.

“Breastfeeding is not only a personal choice but a public health priority,” Dr Anthony declared. “The evidence is clear -- breastfed babies receive the best start in life. It is a natural intervention that supports the survival of children, strengthens maternal health, and contributes to national development.”

Despite these benefits, breastfeeding rates globally -- and in Guyana -- remain below optimal levels. Citing statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Anthony noted that only 54 percent of infants are breastfed within the first hour of birth, 43 percent are exclusively breastfed during the first six months, and only 43 percent continue to be breastfed by age two.

A significant factor contributing to these low figures is the misleading marketing of infant formula and other breast-milk substitutes, especially through digital platforms. Dr Anthony warned that these tactics not only distort public perception, but can severely undermine maternal confidence and informed decision-making during critical periods of infant care.

To combat this, Guyana remains a committed signatory to the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1991. While the code does not ban the sale or use of substitutes, it

sets firm boundaries on promotional practices that could mislead parents or discourage breastfeeding.

“As we commemorate this important day,” Dr Anthony said, “I urge all stakeholders -- health workers, parents, caregivers, policy-makers, and media personnel -- to recognise that breastfeeding is everyone’s business.”

He called on all sectors of society to support breastfeeding mothers, ensure they are protected from misleading advertising, and uphold their right to make informed choices free of commercial influence.

“Let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the rights of mothers and children by ensuring they are given the best possible start in life,” he added, “free from misleading marketing, and surrounded by the support they need to breastfeed confidently and successfully.”

World Breastfeeding Protection Day is part of broader global efforts to achieve optimal infant and young child nutrition, aligning with United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals on health, equity, and human rights.



# Diamond Regional Hospital opening...

## - Health Minister meets with orientation group

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on May 22 held intense discussions with a group of individuals currently undergoing orientation in preparation for the highly anticipated opening of the new Diamond Regional Hospital, East Bank Demerara.

The Minister provided key updates on the hospital's setup and modernisation, emphasising the extensive range of services that will be available at this state-of-the-art facility.

He noted that, while the advanced infrastructure and expanded offerings mark important achievements, it is ultimately the attitude of the staff and the quality of care delivered that will define the patient experience.

The Minister also encouraged staff to take full advantage of ongoing training and professional development opportunities, underscoring the importance of continuous learning in delivering exceptional healthcare services.



Also present at the orientation meeting were Head of Human Resources, Ms Tamica Noel; Operations Manager at the Ministry of Health, Mr Joshua Muridall; Medical Superintendent of the Diamond Regional Hospital, Mr Sheik Amir; Manager, Training and Development, Ms Valencia Wren; and Chief Personnel Officer, Ministry of Public Service, Ms Romeza Muller.

## Health Ministry advances nursing excellence with two-day training

The Ministry of Health has successfully concluded a two-day Nurses and Midwives Research Programme, aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of nurses to deliver high-quality care across Guyana.

Speaking on May 10 during the programme, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Ms Nalini Dass-Sutton, underscored the critical role of research in modern nursing practice.

She highlighted the importance of equipping nurses with the tools to conduct effective research and encouraged participants to embrace this opportunity for professional development.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, delivered the keynote address, commending the nursing and midwifery community for their dedication during this week of celebration. He urged them to make the most of opportunities for growth and advancement.

“Over the past few years, we’ve trained thousands of individuals in various healthcare fields. In nursing, we’ve launched an ambitious initiative to train 5,000 registered nurses to strengthen our health system,” Dr Anthony said.

He noted that the Ministry is committed to creating clear and accessible pathways for those interested in pursuing a career in nursing, ensuring a stronger, more resilient healthcare workforce for the future.

The Ministry of Health remains dedicated to empowering healthcare professionals through continued education, innovation, and investment in the future of nursing in Guyana.







# 31 microscopists graduate, as Region Nine advances toward malaria elimination

Thirty-one individuals from various sub-districts across Region Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo) have successfully completed a six-week microscopist training programme organised by the Ministry of Health. The initiative forms part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to combat malaria and marks a significant step toward the region's goal of becoming the first in Guyana to eliminate the disease.

The Ministry's investment in local capacity building through training and surveillance continues to play a crucial role in achieving national public health goals.

At the graduation ceremony held recently at the Training Centre in Lethem, the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, highlighted the region's substantial progress in malaria control. He noted that between 2023 and 2024, Region Nine recorded a remarkable 53 percent reduction in malaria cases -- well above the national decline of 16 percent. With a current incidence rate of just 34.6 cases per 1,000 people, the region now qualifies as a very low transmission zone.

"Region Nine is leading the way, and

we believe it can be the first to eliminate malaria; this is a remarkable achievement, and it reflects the dedication of our frontline health workers and the commitment of the people of this region," he said.

Targeted efforts have identified high-incidence areas such as the Marudi Mining Mountain and Aishalton, while active tracking of malaria cases is helping to contain the disease's spread. The Ministry has also deployed malaria kits, which allow individuals in remote and mining areas to self-diagnose and do follow-up care with healthcare workers for treatment.

Graduates of the microscopist programme were encouraged to see themselves as essential contributors to public health in the region and were assured of continued employment and training opportunities within the Ministry.

Dr Anthony also highlighted the government's substantial investments in regional health infrastructure.

Following a US\$1 million refurbishment of the Lethem Hospital in 2021, a new state-of-the-art regional hospital is under construction at the same compound. The new facility will

feature modern surgical theatres, diagnostic services including CT (computerized tomography) scans, and increased capacity to serve not just Guyanese residents but also patients from neighbouring Brazil.

"These investments demonstrate our commitment to bringing high-quality health care to every corner of Guyana," the Minister said. "What we are building in Lethem is not just a hospital, but a model for equitable healthcare access across the nation."

The Ministry reaffirmed its goal to expand malaria elimination efforts to Regions 1 (Barima-Waini), 7 (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), and 8 (Potaro-Siparuni), drawing on successful strategies piloted in Region Nine.



# Health Ministry hosts 'tobacco cessation' training for health care workers

The Ministry of Health, through its Chronic Diseases Unit, successfully hosted the Second Annual Trainer on Tobacco Cessation Workshop from April 23-24. The two-day event brought together healthcare professionals from across Region Four (Demerara-Mahaica) as

part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to combat tobacco use and reduce its related health burdens in Guyana.

The workshop aimed to equip healthcare workers with essential skills and up-to-date knowledge to effectively assist patients in quitting smoking. Participants received in-depth training in cessation counselling and the use of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), which they will now be able to offer within their respective communities.

The sessions featured interactive modules, case discussions, and practical tools to ensure participants are confident in offering cessation support.

Tobacco remains a leading cause of preventable death worldwide. According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), it is responsible for approximately one million deaths annually in the Americas alone. Tobacco use contributes significantly to the burden of non-communicable

diseases (NCDS) such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory illnesses, and diabetes.

The two-day training was facilitated by Technical Officer for Tobacco Control, Dr Shelieza Gopie; Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, Dr Cedel Fernandes; Government Medical Officer, Dr Mark Foster; and Family Medicine Resident, Dr Shonette Waterman.

The Ministry of Health continues to expand access to tobacco cessation services. Currently, NRT and support are available at 11 health centres in Region Four, namely, Industry, Enmore, Kitty, Festival City, Craig, Grove, Buxton, Eccles, Soesdyke, East La Penitence, and Lodge.

The Ministry is encouraging all tobacco users ready to quit to take advantage of these free services. Quitting smoking is a critical step toward better health, and help is just a visit away.







# Doctors from GPHC to undergo training in China

Another chapter in medical education and international collaboration has begun, as the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Jiangsu Commission of Health in China, launched a six-month Health Personnel Training Programme on May 9 at the GPHC's Research Centre.

The six-month programme will see Guyanese doctors undergoing three months of theoretical training locally, followed by three months of practical, hands-on sessions in China. The initiative is part of a bilateral effort to enhance the quality of healthcare delivery in Guyana.

Delivering remarks at the launch, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr

Frank Anthony, described the training as “high level” and essential for building capacity within the local health system.

“We are very pleased with this programme because we’ve already seen positive outcomes from the first batch of participants. The training in China is not only technically advanced, but also takes place in a modern, technology-driven environment that focuses on improving patient care,” Dr Anthony stated.

“We expect returning participants to become leaders in their respective fields and help raise the standard of care in their departments,” he said

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the

GPHC, Mr Robbie Rambarran, also welcomed the initiative, noting its significance for the nation’s health sector.

“Today marks another important milestone for our hospital and our country. We remain committed to excellence in care, education, and research. Continuous training is crucial for improving health outcomes, and this programme will empower our professionals with cutting-edge skills and a global outlook,” Mr Rambarran said.

The partnership signals ongoing efforts by the government of Guyana to expand medical expertise and strengthen healthcare infrastructure through international cooperation.

## Chinese Ambassador visits Health Minister

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on May 13 received a courtesy call from Chinese Ambassador to Guyana Ms Yang Yang.

The Minister and the new Ambassador discussed areas of mutual interest and collaboration to enhance healthcare in Guyana. They were joined by a delegation from the Chinese Embassy in Georgetown.





# Nurses vital to quality healthcare delivery

-says Health Minister at GPHC annual awards ceremony

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) proudly hosted its Annual Nursing Awards Ceremony on May 12, celebrating the invaluable contributions of nurses to the healthcare sector.

The event recognised the unwavering dedication, compassion, and professionalism of nursing staff who continue to serve on the frontlines of patient care. The ceremony brought together nurses from various departments, hospital administrators, and special guests, who all gathered to

acknowledge the outstanding service and commitment shown by these healthcare heroes.

Awards were presented to individuals who demonstrated excellence in patient care, leadership, innovation, and teamwork.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, who attended the ceremony, emphasised the vital role nurses play in delivering quality healthcare. “Without nurses and their sacrifices, we would not be able to

provide the services our people need,” he said.

The Minister also commended the GPHC for hosting events like these, which recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of nurses.

He added that the GPHC remains committed to supporting and uplifting its nursing staff, recognising that their dedication is critical to improving health outcomes and maintaining a strong and responsive healthcare system.



# Health Minister, UWI professor discuss mosquito surveillance training session

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, met with Professor Dr Simone Sandiford of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica to discuss the upcoming Adult Mosquito Training Session aimed at strengthening national mosquito surveillance efforts.

The meeting, held on May 13, served as a preparatory engagement ahead of the training, during which Dr Sandiford and fellow facilitators will engage with trainees on key topics, including the importance of

entomological surveillance and effective mosquito control strategies.

Also in attendance were key technical leads from the Ministry of Health, including Dr Reza Niles-Robin, Director, Vector Control Services; Dr Anastacia Sampson, Acting Focal Point for Neglected Infectious Diseases; Dr Olivia Valz, Acting Deputy Coordinator, Malaria Department; Dr Keisha Nelson, Acting Coordinator, Aedes-Borne Diseases Department; and Ms Tashana Bowman, Acting Head, Entomology

Department.

The training session forms part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to build capacity in vector control and support the national response to mosquito-borne diseases.



## MOH, PAHO discuss National Adaptation Plan on health, climate change

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, recently met with Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Advisor on Health Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control, Dr Rainier Escalada, and PAHO National Consultant, Ms Chelsea Frank, to discuss the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) on Health and Climate Change.

Also joining the meeting, held on May 14, was Climate Change Expert/Associate Professor in Environmental and Occupational Health at PAHO Guyana Office, Dr Lindonne Telesford, and Environmental Health Officer at the Ministry of Health, Ms Racheal Howard.

The Ministry of Health and PAHO are continuing to emphasise the importance of strengthening

surveillance, infrastructure, and early warning systems, while developing policies that promote sustainable and equitable health outcomes in the face of a changing climate.

This initiative forms part of Guyana's broader commitment under its national climate strategy to safeguard the health of its population, while meeting global climate resilience goals.



PAHO National Consultant, Ms Chelsea Frank



# Health Minister celebrates Guyana's 59th Independence Anniversary

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, joined officials, residents, and special guests on May 26 at a flag raising ceremony hosted by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) of Region Four (Demerara-Mahaica) in observance of Guyana's 59th Independence Anniversary.

The event highlighted the rich cultural heritage, national pride, and collective achievements of the Guyanese people.

The gathering served not only as a celebration of Guyana's sovereignty but also as a reaffirmation of the government's commitment to inclusive development and the

empowerment of all Guyanese.

Minister Anthony took the opportunity to engage with residents and local leaders, reiterating the Ministry of Health's ongoing plans to expand healthcare access and improve services across the region.

The Minister added that, as Guyana moves confidently into its 60th year of independence, the Ministry of Health remains dedicated to supporting national progress through resilient healthcare systems, public health education, and strategic partnerships.





# Minister Anthony joins President Ali at Independence anniversary ceremony

In a display of patriotism and unity, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, joined His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali and other senior government officials at the Albion Sports Complex in Corentyne, Berbice on May 26 for the official flag raising ceremony, marking the 59th anniversary of Guyana's Independence.

The event, which drew thousands of citizens from across the region, was a vibrant celebration of Guyana's journey since achieving independence on May 26, 1966.

The Albion Sports Complex came alive with the colours of the Golden Arrowhead, cultural performances, military precision, and heartfelt tributes to the nation's progress.

Minister Anthony stood alongside fellow Cabinet members as the national flag was hoisted at midnight, symbolizing the country's sovereignty and collective aspirations.

As Guyana looks ahead to its 60th anniversary, the government remains focused on advancing prosperity, equity, and opportunity for all, the Health Minister said.









# Health Ministry ramping up HPV response



The Ministry of Health's Maternal and Child Health Department on May 28 hosted a high-level scientific conference at the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel, bringing together health professionals, researchers, policy-makers, and key partners to strengthen the national response to Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer.

This conference comes at a crucial time, as Guyana intensifies efforts to align with the global strategy of the World Health Organisation (WHO), launched in 2020, to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem. The WHO strategy outlines three key targets: vaccinating 90 percent of girls fully against HPV by age 15, screening 70 percent of women by age 35 and again by 45, and ensuring 90 percent of women with cervical disease receive effective treatment.

Countries worldwide are making progress, and Guyana is actively positioning itself to meet these global milestones. This is a major highlight of the local response to the HPV

screening voucher programme, introduced in 2024, which allows women aged 21 to 65 to access free screening services. In her brief remarks, Director of Family and Primary Healthcare, Dr Ertenisa Hamilton, emphasised the significance of the recently launched HPV screening voucher programme.

“I don’t even think the Guyanese population truly understands how impactful it is to know your HPV status. If you know, you can act. But cervical cancer only becomes deadly when we do nothing. Every healthcare worker has a task: ensure every eligible woman is screened, every child vaccinated, and every positive case treated,” said Dr Hamilton.

She further urged participants not to let the event end with dialogue alone. “Our economy is on a racetrack, we’re in a Lewis Hamilton race, and that means we can’t take baby steps. We must take leaps and bounds to ensure our people are healthy enough to enjoy the wealth and progress of this nation,” she said.

The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening primary healthcare, boosting public awareness, and ensuring that every girl and woman in Guyana has the opportunity to live a long, healthy life.





# Health Minister meets with World Bank team

- ahead of 'One Health Project Support' mission

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on May 28 met with a team from the World Bank in preparation for the Implementation Support Mission for the Guyana's One Health Project, scheduled for May 29-30.

The mission will be led by Senior Health Specialist and Co-Task Team Leader, Ms Federica Secci, and Health Specialist and Co-Task Team Leader, Ms Behnaz Bonyadian.

Among those present were Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Mr Malcolm Watkins; Epidemiologist

and Focal Point for International Health Regulations, Dr Anand Persaud; and Director of the Health Sector Development Unit, Ms Sonia Roberts.



## Health Minister reviewing progress on health records system

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, accompanied by Chief Executive Officer of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Mr Robbie Rambarran, convened a meeting with the UK-based Rio Med Team on May 29 to assess the ongoing progress of the Emergency Health Records (EHR) system.

The system, a key component of the Ministry's efforts to modernise healthcare delivery, aims to improve patient data management and ensure quicker access to critical health information during emergencies.

The discussions were held at the Ministry's Boardroom in Brickdam, Georgetown and focused on the current implementation status, challenges, and next steps to ensure the timely roll-out of the system across the country.



# Health Ministry receives medical supplies from Chinese Medical Team



The Ministry of Health received a generous donation of critical medical supplies from the Chinese Medical Team on May 29, aimed at enhancing healthcare delivery and service provision in Guyana.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese team for their continued support. He also acknowledged the longstanding

partnership and unwavering contributions of the government of China and the Chinese Medical Brigade to Guyana's health sector over the years.

During his remarks, Minister Anthony also outlined several major ongoing projects and developments currently transforming the country's healthcare landscape. The medical supplies donated include anaesthetic respiratory circuits, blood and infusion warmers, and endotracheal incubators, among other essential medical items.

The handover ceremony was attended by Mr Lu Hongjian, Head of the Chinese Delegation; Mr Li Hanqing, Counselor at the Chinese Embassy; Mr Malcolm Watkins, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health; Mr Robbie Rambarran, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC); and Dr Navindranauth Rambaran, Director of Medical and Professional Services at GPHC, along with members of the Chinese Medical Team.

The Ministry of Health has extended sincere appreciation to the government and people of China for their continued support and commitment to advancing healthcare in Guyana.





# Tobacco sensitisation session held at Buxton Health Centre

In observance of World No Tobacco Day 2025, the Ministry of Health's Chronic Diseases Unit, in collaboration with the Buxton Health Center, East Coast Demerara, held a sensitisation event on May 30.

The activity was attended by students from the Friendship Primary School, the Bladen Hall Multilateral School,

and the Buxton Secondary School, all on the East Coast Demerara, as well as patients visiting the health center. The session was highly interactive, demonstrating strong interest in the health risks associated with tobacco use. Medical professionals from the Ministry and the health center delivered presentations on the dangers of first-hand and second-hand smoke,

the health risks of vaping, and the impact of tobacco use on the oral cavity.

This initiative reflects the Ministry's ongoing commitment to health promotion and the prevention of chronic diseases through education and community engagement.

## New \$715M polyclinic to be built at Industry

The government will soon construct a new polyclinic in Industry, East Coast of Demerara in a move that aims to provide specialised medical care to residents in the area.

The project is estimated to cost \$715 million. The new facility will replace the existing health centre, which currently serves residents of Industry, Cummings Lodge, and nearby villages. Once completed, the new polyclinic will offer advanced diagnostic services, speciality consultations, and preventative care, significantly reducing the demand on public hospitals.

To facilitate the project, the Ministry of Health, through the Georgetown Public Hospital (GPHC), is inviting eligible bidders to submit proposals for the construction of the state-of-the-art facility. Bidding will follow the National

Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures outlined in the Procurement Act of 2003 and is open to all qualified bidders.

Completed bids must be submitted to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board at the Ministry of Finance, Main and Urquhart Streets, Georgetown.

Residents across the country are also set to benefit from enhanced healthcare services, as the government continues to invest in the construction and upgrading of health facilities.

In March, the sod was turned for the construction of the \$831.1 million Campbellville Polyclinic in Georgetown. The sum of \$235 million is also being invested to upgrade the No. 1 Dispensary and the Dorothy Bailey Health Centre in Georgetown, aimed at expanding the quality of care

for city residents.

Additionally, \$294 million has been spent to modernise the Festival City Health Centre, Georgetown, while construction has commenced on a new health centre at Canal No. 2 Polder, West Bank Demerara, designed to deliver high-standard healthcare.

Over the past few years, the government has enhanced healthcare access through the construction of 25 new health centres and health posts across the country. Currently, nearly 380 health facilities are in operation, ensuring that efficient medical care is available to all Guyanese.

The construction and rehabilitation of health infrastructure form part of the government's broader agenda to decentralise and expand access to quality healthcare nationwide.



# Over 4,000 dengue test kits distributed in Region Six

The Ministry of Health has distributed more than 4,000 test kits over the last week in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) to increase its dengue fever testing capacity.

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony said on May 15 that there has been a surge of dengue fever cases in the region.

Dr Anthony provided the update during an interview on the sidelines of the recent Mental Health Initiatives launching.

He explained that the government has been working with all Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) in the region to control the mosquito population. Every NDC has been given equipment and chemicals. They have been carrying out fogging exercises and larvae sighting.

Fogging is a technique used to kill insects by using pesticide spray through a blower, while larvae sighting involves inspecting water sources for mosquito larvae to identify breeding sites early.

“We have teams now that are visiting every home and looking for containers or stagnant water and advising the people living there on what to do,” said the Minister.

Several sites for testing were also added and a team was also set up to monitor the situation daily.

“Based on where we are seeing positive cases, they are able to respond appropriately,” added Minister Anthony.

The New Amsterdam, Skeldon and Port Mourant Hospitals in Region Six have received additional resources to handle any increase in hospitalisation. The Minister is optimistic that with the increased focus, the situation will be completely stabilised.

He also revealed that a three-member team, including Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh, is currently investigating the death of a child in the region who showed dengue-related complications. A report will be compiled when the investigation is finished.

# Health Minister celebrates nurses at Woodlands Hospital

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, joined the staff of Woodlands Hospital, Georgetown, on May 12 in celebrating International

Nurses Day, paying tribute to the unwavering dedication and essential role nurses play within the healthcare system.

The event was held under the theme, “Our Nurses, Our Future: Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies.”

This year’s observance highlighted the critical importance of investing in nurses’ well-being, acknowledging not only their contributions to quality healthcare but also their impact on national development and economic resilience.

Minister Anthony commended the nursing staff for their commitment, compassion, and professionalism, emphasising that a strong and supported nursing workforce is foundational to a healthy society.



# Mental Health Month 2025

-Let's break the silence together, says Senior Clinical Psychologist

As Mental Health Awareness Month 2025 unfolded under the theme, "Turn Awareness into Action," Guyana's Ministry of Health has called on citizens to look beyond outdated misconceptions and take active steps to support mental well-being, both for themselves and others

Leading the national charge is Dr Mark Constantine, Head of Psychological Services at the Ministry's Mental Health Unit, who is urging Guyanese to confront and dismantle the stigma that continues to shroud mental health issues in secrecy and shame.

In a televised message, Dr Constantine reiterated that while public awareness has grown in recent years, the next crucial step is action -- in homes, workplaces, and communities. "When it comes to mental health or

mental illness, there is a lot of stigma that still exists," Dr Constantine said. "One of the main reasons why is because there is simply a lot of misconception."

He took aim at the long-standing myth that only "crazy" or "mad" people seek therapy or visit mental health facilities. Despite societal advancements, this harmful stereotype remains deeply rooted in many minds, preventing countless individuals from seeking the support they need.

"Mental illness has very little to do with people and their insanity," he stressed. "It does not just speak to your mental disposition; it also speaks to your physical disposition and your emotional disposition. And we have to eradicate the myth that it speaks to a person's insanity," he said.

According to Dr Constantine, mental health is a holistic concept that touches every aspect of a person's well-being, and should be treated with the same seriousness as physical health. He emphasised the importance of listening to one's body, managing stress effectively, and engaging in healthy coping strategies.

Stress, he noted, is often the root cause of many other health issues, making it essential for individuals to be proactive in identifying and addressing it. Beyond self-care, Dr Constantine

issued a compassionate call for community care, urging Guyanese to be mindful of each other's struggles and to offer words of encouragement and comfort when needed.

"Be your brother's and sister's keeper," he said. "Look out for each other in society."

Throughout the month of May, Dr Constantine and his team at the Mental Health Unit will continue working to translate awareness into meaningful action, offering resources, outreach, and support systems for those navigating mental health challenges.

By breaking the silence and challenging the myths, Guyana moves one step closer to a more empathetic, informed, and mentally resilient society.



Head of Psychological Services at the Ministry of Health's Mental Health Unit and Senior Clinical Psychologist, Dr Mark Constantine



# Amid rise in dengue cases

## -MOH says eliminate breeding sites for mosquitoes

Following a rise in dengue fever cases in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne), the Ministry of Health, through its weekly “Health Matters” programme, has recommended eliminating mosquito breeding sites to aid in containing the disease.

Dengue is spread by the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, and causes sudden high fevers, severe headaches, muscle and joint aches, rash, nausea, vomiting, and pain behind the eyes. In severe cases, it can cause bleeding and can even be lethal.

In February of this year, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) issued an epidemiological alert with regards to the increased risk of dengue outbreaks in the Americas. This was attributed to the growing circulation of the DENV-3 serotype in a number of countries in the region. Dengue has three other serotypes: DENV-1, DENV-2, and DENV4.

PAHO noted that immunity against one serotype provides lifelong protection against that specific serotype alone. This means that subsequent infections from other serotypes can increase the risk of severe forms of dengue.

Director of Vector Control Services at the Ministry of Health, Dr Reza Niles-Robin said that at present, they are seeing many severe cases of dengue.

“So, we’re advocating that persons avoid being bitten, that they take the necessary precautions, make sure that their doors are closed at a certain time,

make sure there are no mosquitoes in the home, and no mosquitoes outdoors near the home,” she said.

Dr Niles-Robin noted that with dengue, it is common to have people that are asymptomatic, meaning they have no symptoms, and as such they probably won’t know they are infected. She recommended that persons go to the doctor the minute they notice signs and symptoms of dengue.

For persons caring for someone who has been diagnosed with dengue, Dr Niles-Robin said, “Well, first of all, before you start caring for the person, I prefer that you go to your medical practitioner, just to make sure that the patient is okay; that your family member and loved one is stable.”

The preventative measures include: ensuring that there are mesh/shades in the home, on the windows and doors, sleeping under a mosquito net, wearing some long-sleeved clothing, spraying insect repellents recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) on your bodies and clothes, and reducing contact with the mosquito to reduce biting.

To prevent dengue, Dr Niles-Robin recommends that persons take a few minutes to check their yard and the environment to ensure that there are no containers that can potentially become host spaces for the mosquitos to dwell/breed.

“Go outside in your yard, in the environment, and look at what you can do. Is there any container that could

potentially hold water? Discard old tyres, flowerpots, anything that could potentially hold water is a potential breeding site for a mosquito,” said Dr Niles-Robin.

“So, what we’re trying to do by doing that, we reduce the mosquito from having a place to lay their eggs and create more mosquitoes, which would probably mean more biting. So that’s what you could do. So, if you have trash accumulated, get rid of that trash. If you have receptacles that need to be thrown away, do that. And that could take 10 minutes every week,” she added.

Further, she pointed out that water tanks are also a breeding site for mosquitos, and therefore recommended cleaning these tanks constantly, along with roof gutters, and drains.

She also spoke about the positive impact of the fogging exercises being done by the Vector Control Department’s *Aedes* Unit to kill the adult mosquitos. The fogging exercises are currently being done in all regions across Guyana. *(cont’d on next page)*



The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito that infects humans with dengue fever



Dr Niles-Robin urged members of the public to be receptive to the persons doing the fogging.

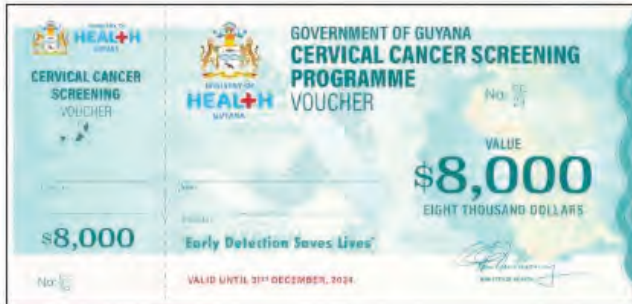
“They’re doing their job. We ask that you treat them with kindness when you see them. Because I know that some people, they do have one or two

complaints, and we’re trying to address them all. But we also ask that you collaborate with the programme so that when you see them fogging, you cheer them on. You open your windows, you prepare, you move people who may have breathing issues or disorders such as asthma, for

example. You just move them away from the area so that they don’t breathe in the smoke. Those are some of the few simple things,” she said.

Additionally, larvac source management is a method that is being used by the department to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

## Vouchers are available at all Health Centres across Guyana



### THE CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING VOUCHER



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Women 21 – 65 years  
of age.

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### THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH VOUCHER



**WHO CAN BENEFIT:**  
All Guyanese

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of service providers.

