

# HEALTH Record

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# HEALTH Record

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# Health Ministry launches Guyana's first influenza vaccine campaign

The Ministry of Health, through the Maternal and Child Health Department, has officially launched GC-Flu, Guyana's first national influenza vaccination programme under the theme, "Strengthening Systems, Guiding Growth, Protecting Lives through Influenza Vaccination," at the Eccles Health Centre, East Bank Demerara.

Delivering the feature address on September 19, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, described the initiative as a historic milestone for Guyana's healthcare system. He noted that this is the first time the country has implemented a structured approach to combat influenza.

"Influenza is not as harmless as we sometimes believe. Globally, it affects around one billion people each year, resulting in up to 650,000 deaths. With vaccination, we can protect our vulnerable populations, children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with chronic illnesses while also safeguarding our frontline health workers," Dr Anthony stated.

He further highlighted that Guyana has recently strengthened its influenza surveillance systems by joining the

FluNet and FluID platforms of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). Through these platforms, Guyana now contributes vital data and virus samples to help inform global vaccine development.

The newly introduced vaccine, GC-Flu, is a trivalent influenza vaccine that provides protection against H1N1, H3N2 and Influenza B (Victoria Lineage) strains. The Minister reassured the public that GC-Flu is safe, cannot cause influenza, and that any side effects are generally mild and short-lived.

The Ministry of Health is urging all eligible persons, particularly vulnerable groups and healthcare workers, to access GC-Flu, which will be available free of cost at health facilities nationwide.

Also in attendance at the launch were Director of Primary Health Care Services, Dr Ertenisa Hamilton; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Dr Nicholas Elliot; and representative of PAHO/WHO Dr Garoma Dembele.

# Guyana showcases legislative leadership at UNGA meeting on NCDs, mental health

Guyana's health leadership joined global partners at a high-level meeting on September 24 on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to launch a toolkit for parliamentarians.

The toolkit is designed to strengthen advocacy and mobilise sustainable funding for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the promotion of mental health.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, delivered Guyana's remarks, underscoring how strong laws and policies, backed by political will, are essential for building healthier societies.

In outlining Guyana's progress, Dr. Anthony highlighted a number of areas, including:

- **HEARTS for Cardiovascular Diseases:** rolled out nationwide to strengthen prevention, detection and management of hypertension and related conditions.
- **Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative:** launched to screen, vaccinate and treat women across regions.
- **Legislation on Tobacco Control, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention:** enacted to protect public health, curb risks and provide support systems.
- **School Health Programme:** screening of children before nursery, primary and secondary entry to detect health issues early on.



“These initiatives show that legislative leadership can save lives,” the Minister said.

The newly launched parliamentarian toolkit provides lawmakers with evidence, strategies and practical guidance to advocate for resources and craft legislation that directly supports the fight against NCDs and the promotion of mental health.

Guyana's participation in the UNGA meeting, alongside its record of legislative and programmatic achievements, reflects the nation's ongoing commitment to advancing health through law, policy and investment in people.



Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, delivering remarks on the control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the promotion of mental health.

# Guyana launches first Electroconvulsive Therapy clinic at GPHC

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), in partnership with the Centre for Global Health at the New York, U.S.-based Northwell Health, formally inaugurated the country's first Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) Clinic on September 19 -- a major milestone in advancing mental health care services.

ECT is a medical treatment used for severe mental health conditions such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and catatonia, particularly when other interventions have not been effective.

The ceremony brought together Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, several health professionals, GPHC administrators, and representatives from Northwell Health, who played a central role in establishing the programme.

In his remarks, GPHC's Director of Medical and Professional Services, Dr Navindranauth Rambaran, highlighted the impact of the partnership.

"Through this collaboration, ten physicians and anaesthesiologists have received training and certification in

ECT, ensuring we have the expertise to deliver this highly specialised service locally," he said. "Additionally, Northwell has generously donated two ECT machines to support the establishment of Guyana's first ECT clinic."

The first ECT procedure was performed in September 2024, and since then, 28 patients with complex psychiatric conditions have been successfully treated. According to GPHC, the treatments have helped reduce suicide risk, shorten hospital stays and offer renewed hope for families who had exhausted other treatment options.

Officials described the launch as both a clinical achievement and a significant step in strengthening Guyana's mental health system. "This demonstrates what is possible when international collaboration, local leadership, and institutional commitment come together in service of our patients," said Dr Rambaran.

The clinic is expected to transform access to advanced mental health care in Guyana, reduce stigma surrounding psychiatric treatment and position the country as a regional leader in innovative mental health services.



# Top U.S. med schools, AI companies ready to set up shop in Guyana

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali has announced that top medical schools and Artificial Intelligence (AI) companies have already expressed interest in “establishing their footprint” in Guyana.

The President made the remark on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which took place in New York in the U.S. from September 23-27.

He was at the time delivering the keynote address at a meet-and-greet reception for members of the Guyanese Diaspora held on September 23, also in New York.

With the world increasingly turning its gaze towards Guyana’s impressive progress, President Ali told the gathering that the country’s transformation is now drawing keen interest from elite global players in innovation, technology and education.

“We have had a series of meetings with the top ten medical schools and one of the best AI companies and data centres. They’re all ready to make that journey in establishing their footprint in Guyana,” he said.

To kickstart this type of investment, the Government of Guyana is already constructing a modern nursing school in New Amsterdam, Berbice in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI). Construction of this facility commenced approximately two years ago.



## President Ali announces major healthcare upgrades

- focus on service delivery, technology, accessibility

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali outlined reforms and investments aimed at modernising Guyana’s healthcare system, with a strong emphasis on improving service delivery, reliability and accessibility for every citizen.

President Ali, at a recent news conference, explained that while massive investments have already been made in infrastructure, training, and modernisation, the next step is ensuring Guyanese receive the highest standard of care.

“We have invested heavily in infrastructure, in the modernisation of the healthcare system, in the building out of our human capital. The focus now must be on service delivery, on reliability, on ensuring that our citizens receive the type of care that we’ve invested in,” he said.

A key part of the reform is the upgrading of the Ministry of Health’s Material Management Unit (MMU) and regional bonds.

The Government has engaged global firm Ernst & Young to help develop a modern supply chain policy and practice, in keeping with leading international standards. By the first quarter of 2026, the MMU system is expected to go live, and by the second and third quarters, it will be fully integrated into a national distribution network.

The system will include visible alerts for low stock levels and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help manage and distribute medical supplies across every region, reducing spoilage and ensuring timely delivery.

Construction of new regional bonds is already underway in Regions One (Barima-Waini), Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Six (East Berbice-Corentyne), Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo) and Ten (Upper Demerara-Upper Berbice) to support this digitised system.

The President also announced that an electronic patient health record system has started at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). Patient records are being digitised and are expected to go live by mid-2026 before the

programme is expanded nationwide.

Additionally, a pilot online appointment system has been launched at the Festival City Polyclinic in Georgetown to reduce long waiting times. The initiative will be fully implemented at GPHC by the first quarter of 2026 and rolled out to other hospitals and clinics soon after.

The Government is also advancing the US\$15 million One Health Project, which will enhance disease surveillance, upgrade Guyana’s laboratory system to level three and build human resource capacity for pandemic preparedness.

“We are not waiting; we are already investing in this system,” President Ali said.

Over the past three years, 25 new health centres and posts have been built, with 10 more under construction this year. Each facility will deliver at least 116 types of health interventions, particularly for non-communicable diseases, like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Special attention is being given to preventative medicine, early screening and school health programmes, ensuring every child at the nursery, primary and secondary levels is screened.

Women’s health is also a priority, with expanded breast and cervical cancer screening now available in multiple regions, supported by human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination and testing.





# More learning spaces opening up for medicine, engineering students

## - medicine at forefront of expansion plans

The Government's decision to make tertiary education free has triggered an unprecedented surge in demand at the University of Guyana (UG), with applications more than doubling and immediate steps being taken to expand programmes in critical areas.

At a news conference on September 16, His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali said the highest interest has been in medicine and engineering, prompting swift Government action to ensure qualified applicants are not turned away.

"We now have 130 qualified applicants and 140 seats ready, so no qualified student will be left behind in medicine this year," the President said.

### Medicine Studies

Medicine is at the forefront of the expansion, with the New Amsterdam Regional Hospital in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) set to host a new programme offering 30 seats, supported by UG's Berbice Campus.

Additional facilities in Regions Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam) and Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo) are also being prepared to extend medical education beyond the crowded UG Turkeyen campus.

This year alone, 418 students applied to study medicine, with over 130 meeting the entry requirements. The Government's investment increased the intake from 60 to 110, and with the Region Six programme, the total climbs to 140.

"Free university is not just about removing cost, it is about ensuring equity in access while building the skilled workforce our country requires to sustain growth," President Ali said.



# 15 new public dialysis units to be established before year-end

Fifteen new public dialysis units are set to become operational in Regions Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), Four (Demerara-Mahaica), Five (Mahaica-Berbice), Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) and Ten (Upper Demerara-Upper Berbice) before the end of this year.

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali made the announcement on September 16, emphasising the Government's commitment to improving access and reducing the financial burden on patients requiring life-saving treatment.

Currently, the Government provides a \$600,000 annual grant to hundreds of dialysis patients. However, President Ali

explained that more public facilities are needed, since the increased grant has resulted in some private providers raising the cost per session.

"We have added dialysis stations in every one of the six new hospitals. In addition to that, before the end of this year, we will have 15 additional dialysis units operational. I think that is also a tremendous improvement that we are advancing in the early days of our Government," he said.

The expansion will bring treatment closer to patients in multiple regions, as well as strengthen the overall public health system by ensuring the affordability and reliability of services.

## Health, Education Ministries discuss advancing tertiary education reform with UG



Representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the University of Guyana (UG) convened on September 20 to discuss ideas on advancing tertiary education reform and academic collaboration.

The high-level meeting was attended by UG's Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr Emanuel Cummings, and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Engagement,

Professor Rajini Kurup, who also serves as Professor of Molecular Medicine and Genetics. Also, present were Director of Medical Education at the Institute of Health Science Education, Dr Alexandra Harvey, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Dr Kofi Dalrymple.

Dr Dalrymple, who was recently appointed Advisor in the Ministry of Education with responsibility for tertiary

education reform, played a key role in the dialogue.

The meeting served as a platform for strengthening partnerships between UG and the two ministries, with a

focus on aligning educational programmes with national development priorities, while also ensuring the next generation of professionals are equipped to meet the country's evolving needs.

# Electronic patient record to be fully operational by mid-2026

Guyana's healthcare sector is undergoing a major digital transformation, with the Government rolling out electronic patient health records and online appointment systems to improve efficiency and reduce long waiting times at hospitals and health centres.

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali made the announcement during a recent press conference, stressing the importance of improving service delivery as part of building a world-class health system.

At the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), the first phase of the electronic patient record system began in March 2025. It is expected to conclude by mid-2026. Records are expected to go live at GPHC by the end of 2026 before being expanded nationwide.

To complement this, a pilot online appointment system has already been launched at the Festival City Polyclinic in Georgetown. The system allows patients to book visits digitally, eliminating the need to spend hours waiting at health facilities.

"We don't want the lines that you see in the hospitals and clinics. We want to move the system into an app-based system where you have appointments so you don't have to waste your time or sit at these clinics for hours," President Ali said.

Phase two of the initiative will see the system connected to the six new regional hospitals currently under development. The President added that these technological upgrades will transform how patients experience healthcare, ensuring timely access, efficiency and improved service delivery across Guyana.

**REMINDER**

The general public is encouraged to take advantage of all available health vouchers, including the Universal Health Voucher, Eye Testing and Spectacles Voucher, and the Cervical Cancer Screening Voucher.

Don't wait, make your health a priority and use them today!

MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
GUYANA



# Health Minister visits proposed sites for new health facilities on East Coast Demerara

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, along with a team from the Ministry, on September 20 conducted a site visit on the East Coast Demerara (ECD) to examine several plots of land earmarked for the construction of key health facilities.

These include a neurological centre, a modern supply chain warehouse, a biomedical repair centre and staff quarters.

The visit was aimed at finalising the placement of these facilities and gaining on-site appreciation of their proximity to other supporting infrastructure.



# UG's Medical Studies expansion, decentralisation underway



Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health officials in talks with University of Guyana (UG) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paloma Mohamed; and Presidential Advisor on Education, Dr Kofi Dalrymple; as decisions on the rollout of medical studies expansion got underway at the Ministry of Health's Headquarters in Brickdam, Georgetown.

The Ministry of Education has confirmed that the expansion and decentralisation of the Medical Studies programme at the University of Guyana (UG) are already underway, with Regions Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), and Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) identified for the first phase rollout.

The Ministry noted that the initiative seeks to realise a previous commitment by His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali to address the influx of persons who are eligible for these studies, but cannot be facilitated due to space constraints at UG's Turkeyen campus.

"This has been especially pressing ever since the University of Guyana became free of cost," a statement from the Education Ministry said.

Discussions held on September 20 brought together Minister

of Education, Honourable Ms Sonia Parag; Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony; Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Paloma Mohamed; and a team from the University to finalise the first steps in the process.

Presidential Advisor on Education, Dr Kofi Dalrymple, also attended the meeting, which was hosted at the Ministry of Health's Headquarters in Brickdam, Georgetown.

The Education Ministry explained that, in the first phase, based on the current influx of students, efforts are being made to expand medical studies to Regions Two, Three and Six. It added that the move will also lend to bridging the labour gaps within the health sector which now boasts of six new state-of-the-art hospitals, and soon, specialty facilities.

The statement further pointed out that the fruitful engagement culminated with several decisions being taken. Last month, President Ali had announced that Regions Two and Three were earmarked as new hubs for UG's College of Medical Sciences programmes.

With Region Six now added, the Government's efforts are geared towards bringing these critical courses closer to students while strengthening Guyana's healthcare workforce.