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The \$60 million General Electric (GE) digital x-ray system which has been commissioned at the Kumaka District Hospital, in Region One (Barima-Waini)

\$60M digital x-ray system commissioned at Kumaka District Hospital

By Shabana Shaw

Diagnostic services in Region One (Barima-Waini) have been significantly enhanced with the commissioning of a state-of-the-art \$60 million General Electric (GE) digital x-ray system at the Kumaka District Hospital.

During the commissioning ceremony held on December 6, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, underscored the Government's commitment to modernising healthcare infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to world-class medical services across Guyana.

Dr Anthony explained that the installation of the digital X-ray machine marks a major leap forward from the outdated analogy, film-based systems that had been in use for decades.

“For many years, we struggled with old x-ray equipment, some as old as 25 to 30 years, which relied on films and darkroom processing. We therefore made a deliberate decision to phase out all analogy x-ray units and standardise modern digital systems across the country,” he said.

To support this national upgrade, the Ministry has adopted three

internationally recognised imaging brands (Siemens, Philips and GE), as the national standard for digital radiography, citing their reliability and exemplary imaging quality. The new GE digital x-ray system installed at Kumaka is considered among the best in the country.

Substantial infrastructural and electrical works were completed to facilitate the new unit.

“These systems are extremely sensitive and require stable power. We installed specialised electrical wiring, voltage stabilizers, backup power systems and a modern generator, ensuring that the

x-ray service remains operational even during power outages,” Dr Anthony said.

The Minister noted that staff are undergoing training to ensure efficient use and management of the advanced equipment.

“We are training the team here to fully operate and manage the system. Once the unit is fully operational, patients will no longer need to leave the sub-region for x-rays. The images produced will be of the highest quality,” he stated.

As part of additional upgrades, the Ministry will soon install a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS). This system will allow digital images to be transmitted to specialist radiologists in Georgetown for expert interpretation, often within minutes.

“This capability ensures that doctors here can access specialist support whenever needed. It significantly improves diagnostic accuracy and patient care,” the Minister added.

Dr Anthony also revealed that the Ministry is currently piloting an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system for automated x-ray interpretation at the Enmore Regional Hospital, East Coast Demerara.

“There are AI systems today that can interpret x-rays with up to 99 per cent accuracy. If our pilot proves successful, we intend to expand this technology to other hospitals, including Kumaka, allowing AI to assist in reading x-rays and other imaging studies,” he said.

He reaffirmed that these investments form part of the Government’s wider modernisation agenda aimed at strengthening regional health services

and ensuring that all Guyanese, regardless of location, have access to timely, high-quality diagnostic care.

Meanwhile, Regional Vice Chairman in Region One, Mr Paul Pierre, also commended the Ministry of Health for their continued investments in strengthening healthcare delivery across the region.

He emphasised that the commissioning of the digital x-ray system at Kumaka District Hospital reflects a broader commitment to improving health services even in the most remote communities.

“I can tell you that the number of health facilities built in some of our most remote areas tells a powerful story. We continue to see meaningful development and it shows that the Guyana of Government is serious about making healthcare accessible to all the people of Region One,” Mr Pierre said.

He noted that the regional health system has progressed considerably compared to five or ten years ago.

“We recognise that health services have improved significantly over the years, and I can assure you that they will continue to improve,” he added.

“As a member of the Regional Democratic Council, and in our recent budget discussions, I can say that a substantial portion of our proposed budget is being directed toward the health sector, toward training more health workers, nurses, doctors, and strengthening our services. That alone demonstrates that we have a bright future in healthcare,” said Mr Pierre.

He expressed gratitude to the Minister of Health and all regional health-sector partners for their

continued efforts, saying that, “Health is important. Without good health, there isn’t much to look forward to.”

Mr Pierre added: “We are seeing real progress, and under this government, we can look forward to a stronger, more resilient health system and a more resilient country.”

Toshao of Santa Rosa Village, Mr Rawle Hendricks, also commended the Government for its continued efforts to upgrade the health system and provide quality healthcare to the people of the Moruca Sub-District.

Mr Hendricks noted that he, along with the residents of Moruca, is eagerly anticipating the commissioning of the Moruca Regional Hospital, scheduled for 2027.

Also present at the commissioning ceremony were Regional Health Officer for Region One, Dr Steven Cheefoon; Senior Operations Manager, Regional Health Services, Mr Michael Gouveia; Hospital Administrator, Ms Elaine LaRose; and other doctors and medical professionals of the Kumaka District Hospital.



From virtual classrooms to hospital wards

-508 newly graduated nursing assistants to serve public health sector

Across all regions in Guyana, 508 aspiring healthcare workers have turned determination into achievement, graduating from the Ministry of Health's Hybrid Nursing Assistant Training Programme, an initiative aimed at reshaping how healthcare professionals are trained in Guyana.

For many graduates, the journey began, not in traditional lecture halls, but behind computer screens in homes and community spaces, where theory was delivered virtually. This flexible learning model opened doors for students from diverse and often remote communities, making professional healthcare education more accessible than ever before.

But the programme did not end online. In-person tutorial sessions provided vital guidance, connection, and reinforcement, ensuring students were supported every step of the way. The transition from learning to practice came alive in state-of-the-art simulation laboratories established across multiple regions, where students trained in realistic clinical environments designed to mirror real hospital settings.

Within these labs, theory met



practicals. Graduates practised essential nursing skills, patient-care techniques, and built the confidence required to step into healthcare facilities prepared, capable, and compassionate.

The Hybrid Nursing Assistant Training Programme is one of several innovative initiatives under the Ministry of Health's Hybrid Approach to Health Education. Beyond producing qualified graduates, the programme strengthens regional healthcare capacity by allowing students to train within their own communities which serves as a key step toward decentralised education and a more resilient national health system.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, described the programme as a strategic investment in human resources and service quality within the health sector. He reminded graduates that this milestone is only the beginning, encouraging them to gain experience and continue their professional development.

“We want you to think of this as your first step on your journey of professional development. Over the next two years, we will open specialised

programme in various areas of nursing,” Dr Anthony said.

The Minister urged graduands to imagine their lives in healthcare five years from now, pointing to opportunities in registered nursing, midwifery, and other specialised areas of practice. He emphasised that specialised training plays a critical role in delivering high-quality patient care and strengthening the overall health system.

Also addressing the gathering, Director of Training and Education, Dr Chandrountie Persaud, reinforced the importance of lifelong learning, discipline, and service as the new nursing assistants prepare to enter the workforce.

“Advance your education beyond this level to refine your skills and provide even better care to your patients,” Dr Persaud urged the graduands.

As the graduates step forward into clinics, hospitals and community health centres across Guyana, they carry more than certificates. They carry new skills, renewed purpose, and the responsibility of care ready to serve, ready to grow and ready to help shape the future of healthcare, one

patient at a time.

Mr Paul Alfred of Lethem, Region Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo), described his experience in the Nursing Assistant Hybrid Training Programme as bittersweet yet deeply rewarding, made possible through the support of his family.

One of his greatest challenges was being separated from his family for three months with little to no internet access, which made studying difficult. Limited computer literacy also posed early challenges. However, with the support of his wife, he was able to overcome them.

In addition, traveling by motorcycle from Karasabai to Lethem every weekend to complete online quizzes, while balancing full-time work and missing some Zoom tutorials, proved mentally and physically demanding.

Despite these obstacles, Mr Alfred found the practical lab sessions to be

the most fulfilling aspect of the programme, as they allowed for collaboration and knowledge sharing among students. His perseverance resulted in graduating with distinction, which he considers his greatest achievement.

Looking ahead, he plans to continue serving the people of the Rupununi and hopes to further his training as a certified Operating Room Technician, building on his four to five years of experience in the field.

Similarly, Ms Bibi Juman of Region Four (Demerara-Mahaica), described the programme as both challenging and rewarding, providing her with essential theoretical knowledge and practical skills in a supportive learning environment.

Balancing academic demands with caring for her two children who have disabilities was one of her greatest challenges, often leaving her sleep deprived. Nevertheless, through prayer,

determination and effective time management, she successfully completed the programme.

Ms Juman highlighted completing her practical training as her most rewarding moment, as it strengthened her confidence and reaffirmed her decision to pursue the profession. Her key takeaway from the experience was the importance of commitment, perseverance, teamwork and compassion values she intends to carry forward as she continues to develop professionally and contribute to her community.

The training of 1,800 nursing assistants between 2021 and 2025 has greatly improved service delivery across health posts, district hospitals and regional facilities. This programme continues to play a critical role in building a skilled, compassionate, and resilient workforce to meet the growing healthcare needs of communities nationwide.



GPHC successfully performs first-ever chain kidney transplant in the Caribbean

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has achieved a historic medical milestone with the successful completion of the first ever paired-chain kidney transplants ever performed in Guyana and the Caribbean.

The announcement was made during a new conference on December 4 at the GPHC. The procedures, conducted between September 29 and October 2, involved eight surgeries four kidney removals and four transplants.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, and Chief Executive Officer of the GPHC, Mr Robbie Rambaran highlighted the significance

of this groundbreaking achievement.

Dr Anthony, reaffirmed the Government's full support for expanding and strengthening transplant services at the GPHC. He announced that Guyana will soon begin conducting Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) testing locally, an essential component in determining transplant compatibility.

"We have bought all the equipment we need, and we are sending one of our doctors to India early next year to be trained, so that we can start HLA testing right here in Guyana," said the Minister.

Mr Rambaran highlighted the rising burden of kidney disease globally and locally. He noted that GPHC registered over 2,200 new nephrology patients between 2023 and 2025. Currently, 360 patients are undergoing dialysis, including 246 who began treatment this year.

This historic achievement positions Guyana as a regional leader in organ transplantation and reinforces the country's commitment to delivering world-class healthcare to its citizens.

Also part of the news conference was Lead Transplant Surgeon, Dr Kishore Persaud.



Q & A

QUESTION

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ANSWER

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QUESTION

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Health Ministry, Mount Sinai launch National Digital Health Training Institute



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Also part of the news conference was Lead Transplant Surgeon, Dr Kishore Persaud.



Executive Director of Mount Sinai, Dr Rachel Vreeman, speaking at the launch of the Digital Health Training Institute.

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Residents welcome new digital x-ray machine at Leonora Hospital



Residents of Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara) are breathing a sigh of relief after His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali commissioned a modern, digital x-ray system at the Leonora Hospital, West Coast Demerara.

As part of a two-day outreach in the region, President Ali, accompanied by Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, visited the facility on December 19 to formally unveil the more than \$130 million digital x-ray system at the hospital.

Several patients who were at the hospital gave their feedback on the impact the machine will have on their livelihoods.

Mr Merl Parkinson, a pensioner, stated that, because he is visually impaired, to move from his home to go to Georgetown is “going to be fatiguing.” For this reason, he said the new system is an asset that will provide great help to people, like himself, his family members and the wider Region Three community.

“I think this is a great move that President Ali and the Government of

this country have made to enhance the operations of this institution, which, over the years, I have been advocating for,” said Mr Parkinson.

Another patient (Ms Lynette, only name given) noted that she normally has to pay \$2,500 in taxi fare to visit the West Demerara Regional Hospital to access its x-ray services. Now, she will no longer have to pay this fee, since the services are being offered at the Leonora Hospital. She commended the Government for stepping in to resolve the issue.

Doctor-in-Charge at the Leonora Hospital, Dr Zelda Luke Blyden, explained that the new machine is replacing the analogue system, which was decommissioned in August 2024, meaning that x-ray services have been restored for thousands of residents living in the region.

“With this service, patients will now have comprehensive care, in terms of having radiology care or x-ray services readily available to them,” said Dr Blyden. She explained that, with the new digital system, patients will benefit from faster diagnoses and better treatment.



Mr Merl Parkinson



Ms Lynette (only name given)



\$47M Maternal Waiting Home commissioned in Kumaka

By **Shabana Shaw**

The Ministry of Health on December 6 officially commissioned a newly completed \$47 million, 12-bed Maternal Waiting Home within the compound of the Kumaka District Hospital in Region One (Barima-Waini).

This investment is aimed at ensuring safer pregnancies and reducing maternal mortality in the Moruca Sub-District and, by extension, the hinterland region.

The facility is purpose-built to provide expectant mothers from remote communities with a safe and comfortable environment to stay both before and after delivery. It features consultation and examination rooms, as well as a fully equipped laundry area and kitchen, ensuring both medical

care and day-to-day convenience are readily available.

During the commissioning ceremony, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, reaffirmed the Government's commitment to reducing maternal deaths nationwide, particularly in hinterland regions including Regions One, Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), Eight (Potaro-Siparuni) and Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo).

He noted that, historically, pregnant women from remote villages often embarked on long and challenging journeys to hospitals only after labour had begun, sometimes resulting in deliveries en route and preventable complications.

“Most maternal deaths are preventable, and we must take

deliberate actions to avoid them,” Dr Anthony stated, emphasising the importance of early access to care.

To address this challenge, the Ministry has been constructing Maternal Waiting Homes at interior hospitals. These facilities allow pregnant women, particularly those at risk or residing in remote areas, to travel to hospital early, stay nearby, and access professional care when labour begins.

The Minister noted that maternal mortality has decreased in all hospitals where such waiting homes have been established.

The Kumaka Maternal Waiting Home will provide mothers with a secure and comfortable environment before and after delivery. Following childbirth at the adjacent hospital, mothers can return to the facility until they are

ready to reunite with their families and travel back to their communities.

Minister Anthony pointed out that the facility was intentionally designed with maternal comfort in mind, reflecting the significant investment made.

The commissioning of this facility is part of the Government's broader strategy to strengthen maternal and child health services, particularly in hinterland regions where geographic barriers limit access to care.

The Minister expressed his satisfaction at returning to the Moruca sub-region and observing the ongoing transformation of health facilities and services.



“Over the past few years, there has been significant improvements, not only with new equipment and infrastructure but also with increased staffing so we can deliver better service,” he said.

Dr Anthony noted that these improvements extend beyond Kumaka, with enhancements implemented across several health centres in the sub-region. He

commended the local health team for their technical leadership and dedication in driving these positive changes.

Regional Health Officer for Region One, Dr Steven Cheefoon, expressed deep appreciation for healthcare workers who have witnessed the region's transformation. He recalled the challenges faced during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic,

when Moruca lacked x-ray services and a functional laboratory.

“Today, we are commissioning digital x-rays and a maternal waiting home where mothers can relax in comfort, be closely monitored, and deliver healthy babies. A healthy baby is the first step to a successful future,” Dr Cheefoon said.

He reaffirmed the region's commitment to eliminating maternal deaths, stillbirths, and preventable complications, goals that are now within reach. “Let us all share in this joy today. This is a milestone for Moruca and a proud moment for Region One,” he added.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to expanding similar initiatives across Guyana, ensuring that every mother can deliver safely and every child has a healthy start to life.

Currently, eight Maternal Waiting Homes are operational across Guyana, providing a combined capacity of approximately 169 beds.

New digital x-ray system to deliver faster, improved diagnostics on Essequibo Coast

Residents of Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam) will now benefit from faster and more accurate diagnostic services, following the commissioning of a new digital x-ray machine at the Oscar Joseph Public Hospital in Charity, Essequibo Coast.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, officially commissioned the machine on December 30, marking a significant step in the upgrade of the hospital's diagnostic capabilities.

The new system replaces the facility's former analogue equipment and produces clearer, modern, high-resolution images almost instantly, allowing doctors to make quicker and more precise diagnoses.

This advancement is expected to significantly reduce waiting time for patients, improving early detection of medical conditions and enhancing overall patient care.

The Health Minister expressed the need for this equipment in the area and highlighted that the upgrade is part of the Government's continued investments in strengthening healthcare in every region.

"The Government does not believe that any region should be left behind, so we should have these facilities across every region," said Dr Anthony.

He noted that improved diagnostic services are critical to reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for healthcare services, highlighting the addition of ultrasound machines, digital x-rays and, for the first time, the installation of Computed Tomography (CT) scans at the new Lima Regional Hospital, also on the Essequibo Coast.

In an effort to further digitalise healthcare, Dr Anthony announced the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into diagnostic services, enhancing image accuracy and supporting clinical

decision-making within seconds.

"At one of our hospitals, we have put in an AI system, so when the x-ray is generated, it goes seamlessly to this system," he said. "And think about this, in 17 seconds, it decides whether this x-ray is normal or abnormal. If it is abnormal, it would be able to give you a tentative diagnosis."

The Minister said this technology will support healthcare workers by providing rapid preliminary assessments, ultimately leading to quicker clinical decisions and improved patient outcomes.

The commissioning of the digital x-ray machine is a major boost for healthcare services on the Essequibo coast, serving thousands of residents from Charity and surrounding communities, underscoring the Government's commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare across Guyana.



\$35M Karaburi Health Post commissioned in Region One

-as Gov't pushes for modern,
accessible healthcare for all



By **Shabana Shaw**

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has officially commissioned the newly upgraded \$35 million Karaburi Health Post, marking a significant advancement in the delivery of healthcare services to residents of Moruca and surrounding communities in Region One (Barima-Waini).

During his address on December 10, Dr Anthony reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring that all Guyanese, regardless of geographic location, can access high-quality, modern healthcare.

He said national advancements in the sector, including the installation of a Lithotripsy Machine at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). This new technology now enables patients with kidney stones to receive non-invasive shockwave therapy, eliminating the need for painful surgical procedures.

Dr Anthony noted the success of Guyana's expanding kidney transplant programme. Four patients recently received life-saving transplants locally,

procedures that would cost approximately US\$500,000 each overseas. These surgeries were provided free of cost, demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to equitable access to advanced medical care.

The Minister pointed to significant investments in Region One, including expanded maternal care services, improved emergency facilities, and the introduction of digital X-ray technology. These upgrades ensure that families across the region, particularly expectant mothers, can receive essential medical services close to home.

He also encouraged young people in the community to take advantage of Government scholarships and training initiatives, stressing the importance of preparing the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Regional Health Officer for Region One, Dr Steven Cheefoon, commended the rapid transformation of the region's health sector over the past four years.

He noted that improvements in

infrastructure, equipment and staffing were all strategically implemented to enhance the delivery of patient care.

Dr Cheefoon recalled several key advancements, including the commissioning of the first x-ray service in Moruca in 2020, the introduction of ultrasound services in 2021, the first-ever surgeries performed at the facility in 2022 with 36 operations completed, the establishment of the Maternal Ward in 2023, and the recent completion of the Maternal Child Health building in 2024.

He emphasised that these developments reflect the efforts of a caring Government, dedicated ministerial leadership, and a committed health team working to ensure that patients receive timely, safe and modern care.

Dr Cheefoon highlighted the importance of the new Moruca Regional Hospital, currently under construction. Once completed, the facility will bring coastal-level medical standards to hinterland residents, offering advanced diagnostic and treatment services previously unavailable in the region.

He recounted the harsh conditions during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the region lacked even basic diagnostic tools. By December 2020, however, Moruca had already established a fully functional laboratory, demonstrating the resilience and dedication of local healthcare workers.

He concluded by thanking healthcare workers for their unwavering commitment and inviting the community to celebrate the accomplishments achieved through sustained collaboration and dedication.



GPHC Pathology Lab receives ISO 15189 Plus accreditation

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, recently attended a ceremony marking the attainment of ISO 15189 Plus accreditation by the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) Pathology Laboratory.

The milestone represents the culmination of years of sustained effort, institutional commitment, and collective teamwork. It underscores that the achievement is not a single event, but the result of long-term planning, consistency, as well as an intentional focus on quality, standards and continuous improvement within the public healthcare system.

Delivering remarks at the ceremony, Dr Anthony congratulated the Pathology Department and described the accreditation as a significant achievement not only for GPHC, but for Guyana's entire public healthcare system.

He reminded attendees that five years ago, the Government of Guyana committed to building a world-class healthcare system, a vision that was initially met with scepticism.

However, the Minister noted that steady, deliberate progress across hospital infrastructure, imaging services, human resources, and laboratory services has transformed the sector.

Dr Anthony emphasised the introduction of digital pathology, allowing high-resolution images to be shared electronically for second opinions, eliminating the need to send samples overseas physically. He noted that very few laboratories in the Caribbean possess this capability.

A major improvement highlighted was the dramatic reduction in turnaround time for pathology results -- from as long as 90 days to approximately six days -- significantly easing anxiety for patients, particularly those awaiting cancer diagnoses.

He concluded by reaffirming the Government's commitment to expanding accreditation across laboratory services nationwide and commended the Pathology Laboratory team for setting a new standard of excellence in public healthcare.

Chief Executive Officer of the GPHC, Mr Robbie Rambarran, reflected on the transformation of the Pathology Laboratory from a once dilapidated facility into a modern, internationally accredited diagnostic centre.

He pointed to substantial improvements in infrastructure, technology, and operational systems, emphasising that the progress achieved was the result of deliberate planning and long-term investment rather than quick fixes.



50 technicians graduate from Health Ministry's training programme

Guyana's health sector has received a significant boost, with the addition of 20 new medical laboratory technicians (MLTs) and 30 x-ray technicians, who graduated on December 10 from the Ministry of Health's Health Sciences Education Clinical and Technician Training Programme.

The 50 graduates hail from nine regions across the country. Both courses began in February 2025 and included theoretical and practical training. The graduates will be given job placements across the public health sector in every region.

These include the National Blood Transfusion Service, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), West Demerara Regional Hospital, De Kinderen Hospital, Leonora Cottage Hospital, Diamond Regional Hospital, Eureka Medical Laboratory and Woodlands Hospital.

This diverse representation demonstrates the Health Ministry's commitment to providing a wide range of opportunities for capacity building

for all Guyanese, regardless of their geographical location.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, held at the Pegasus Suite and Corporate Centre in Kingston, Georgetown, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, urged the graduates to view this moment as the first step in their long professional journey.

"I wish you well, but I want to emphasise that this is not the end of your journey. This is just the beginning. Continue striving for success. We want you to work hard and have the ambition of being the best," he said. "Once you do that, I am sure you will be extremely successful. So, congratulations."

Dr Anthony noted that the Ministry of Health has been expanding both laboratory and imaging services across the country in recent years. He said the public health system has now transitioned fully to digital x-ray technology, abandoning the older analogue film-based method.

"With the new digital systems, we can take the image, enhance it, and look for different things so we can make better diagnoses. I am extremely happy that the students were able to train at some of the new facilities so they could gain that experience," he said.

The Minister pointed out that laboratory services have also grown significantly, with fully equipped labs in each of the six newly opened regional hospitals and more planned as new facilities open up.

"While we are training people and getting them into these facilities, we also want them to think about a career in laboratory science,"

Minister Anthony explained. He said these types of training programmes are meant to strengthen the country's healthcare workforce, adding, "You might start as a technician, but there are opportunities to advance into different specialisations."

Construction preparations underway for \$4.6B Moruca Regional Hospital

Excavation works have commenced at the site of the Moruca Regional Hospital in Region One (Barima-Waini), marking another major expansion of healthcare services for hinterland communities.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, during a tour to the site on December 6, highlighted the advanced facilities and comprehensive services that the hospital will provide upon completion. The projected total investment for the project is \$4.6 billion.

The new 50-bed hospital will offer a wide range of modern healthcare services. It will feature an Accident and Emergency Department, equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, a fully operational pharmacy, and a modern laboratory.

An advanced imaging suite, including x-ray and Computed Tomography (CT) scan facilities, will significantly

enhance diagnostic capacity in the region.

The hospital will include operational theatres capable of performing both routine and complex surgical procedures, as well as intensive care units for adults and children.

Maternal health will be strengthened through a specialised delivery suite, while inpatient rooms will be designed for comfort, accommodating no more than five beds per room, each with a private toilet and bath.

In addition, the hospital will house specialised departments, including ophthalmology for eye care services, audiology for hearing assessments, and a fully equipped dental department.

To address challenges highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility will also feature an on-site oxygen plant, enabling local production and dispensing of oxygen.

This development will reduce reliance on imported oxygen and ensure timely access for patients in the region.

Minister Anthony emphasised that the Moruca Regional Hospital represents a substantial upgrade from existing facilities, both in terms of infrastructure and the quality of care provided.

“This facility will transform healthcare delivery in the region. From advanced diagnostics and surgical capabilities to comfortable inpatient accommodations, the Moruca Regional Hospital will set a new standard for healthcare services in hinterland communities,” he said.

Dr Anthony added that the Ministry of Health remains committed to improving access to high-quality healthcare across Guyana, ensuring that residents in hinterland regions receive the same standard of care available in urban centres.

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IAEA Mammography Project successfully completed in Guyana

The Ministry of Health recently hosted a comprehensive training closing session to mark the ending of a three-year International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mammography Project, an initiative designed to reduce the burden of breast cancer across Guyana.

The event brought together radiologists, surgeons, physicians, medical imaging technologists, x-ray technicians, regional health officers, medical superintendents and chief executive officers from a number of hospitals countrywide. These include Lethem, Suddie on the Essequibo Coast, Linden, and the host site, New Amsterdam Hospital in Berbice, which is the only facility equipped with tomosynthesis.

Staff from the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), the national referral centre, also participated to ensure that radiologists, referring physicians and mammography technologists across all major sites are fully trained to utilize mammography and tomosynthesis to improve early detection and reduce breast cancer prevalence.

The closing exercise provided detailed orientation in the use of mammography and tomosynthesis for breast cancer screening and diagnosis. It represented the culmination of a multi-phase journey that began with the establishment of Guyana's Radiation Safety and Security Act of 2023, an eight-year effort that laid the regulatory foundation for national radiation safety.

Following installation, one-week applications training was conducted by German technology equipment manufacturer, the Siemens, at each site, with both Allied Health and Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits awarded. A recent Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS) evaluation was completed to support integration with

the national project, enabling remote radiologist access and strengthening national diagnostic connectivity.

Coordinator for Cancer Care, Dr Haaniques Greaves, highlighted the significance of Guyana's achievements in strengthening radiation safety and diagnostic capacity.

"Guyana is now the only country in the Caribbean to install four mammography units under a single project at the same time, and the only country in the region with comprehensive radiation legislation that allows all regulatory entities to maintain their authority, while adding an oversight structure through the Radiation Board," said Dr Greaves.

"This model is now being referenced by Belize, Grenada, Trinidad and Barbados, as they work to develop their own regulatory frameworks," she added.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer of the New Amsterdam Hospital, Dr Bob Ramnauth, emphasised the systematic approach taken to advance radiology services nationwide.

"We recognized that improving healthcare, especially in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne), required a structured, not haphazard, approach. We focused on upgrading infrastructure, equipment, personnel and training, and this is the phase we are now consolidating," said Dr Ramnauth.

He said the next step will be improving efficiency and establishing a strengthened code of conduct.

"To appreciate our progress, consider this: so far this year, the New Amsterdam Hospital has completed over 20,000 x-rays. We have transitioned from an old analog system to a new digital X-ray platform, which has also been expanded to other regions," said Dr Ramnauth.

Together, these advancements mark a transformative step forward for breast cancer screening in Guyana. The IAEA Mammography Project has not only expanded access to high-quality imaging services, but also strengthened the national regulatory framework, enhanced workforce capacity, and improved diagnostic connectivity across regions.

With the project now formally closed, the Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining these gains and continuing to strengthen early detection, diagnosis and cancer care all Guyanese.



CAD\$183,000 in equipment donation to enhance maternal, newborn care in hinterland

By **Shekola Anderson**

The Ministry of Health on December 5 received a significant batch of medical equipment under the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada, and implemented in partnership with that country's McMaster University and Giving Help to Kids, a Canadian charity organization.

The handing over ceremony was held at the Ministry's Kingston Bond, Georgetown, where Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, officially accepted the equipment.

The donation, valued at CAD\$183,000 (\$27.5 million), includes critical items such as HbA1c analysers, hepatitis B test kits, haemoglobin analysers, portable steam sterilisers and urine test strips, all of which will directly strengthen maternal and newborn services in Regions One (Barima - Waini), Seven (Cuyuni - Mazaruni), Eight (Potaro - Siparuni) and Nine (Upper Takutu - Upper Essequibo).

In his remarks, Minister Anthony highlighted the long standing partnership between Guyana and Canada, noting the significant progress the collaboration has brought to maternal and child health.

"Just this week we had the close-out of another project supported by Canada in the area of mental health, and now we are here with this initiative that has been contributing tremendously to maternal and child health," he said. "We have a number of exceptional partners in Canada, including Giving Help to Kids and McMaster University, who have worked with us for many years."

Dr Anthony also announced ongoing training opportunities through McMaster University. "Over the next few years, we intend to have at least 35 Guyanese doctors trained at McMaster. We also have strong partnerships with other Canadian

institutions in Calgary and York, all helping us advance our health system,” he said.

The Minister emphasised that the new equipment will support early detection of complications, especially diabetes in pregnancy, improve antenatal screening, and enhance the management of high-risk mothers.

He noted that the equipment will directly support the Ministry’s successful initiatives in remote regions, including maternal waiting homes that have contributed to achieving zero maternal deaths in several hinterland regions.

The Minister expressed appreciation to the Government of Canada, Giving Help to Kids, and McMaster University for their sustained collaboration and commitment to improving maternal and newborn health in Guyana. “This partnership continues to strengthen health systems, improve access, and save lives especially in remote hinterland communities,” he said.

Also attending the handing over ceremony was Director of Primary Health Care, Dr Ertenisa Hamilton, who noted that the donation comes at a crucial time, as the Ministry continues expanding access and improving the quality of MNCH services, particularly in Hinterland regions where geographic and cultural barriers pose unique challenges.

“This donation is a major boost for our hinterland regions, where early testing and timely interventions can save lives. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that every mother and newborn receives the highest quality of care, and we are now seeing the results of these efforts,” said Dr Hamilton.

She pointed out that the equipment provided will help sustain the gains the Ministry has made and ensure that women, regardless of their location or cultural barriers, receive the services they deserve. “We thank our partners for recognising the importance of mothers and children to the Government of Guyana,” she added.

Speaking on behalf of Giving Health to Kids, Senior Manager of Administration and Projects, Ms Aruna Faria, highlighted the substantial progress made under the MNCH Project and reiterated the organisation’s long-standing partnership with Guyana.

“Today’s donation, valued at CAD\$183,000, is part of our shared commitment to reducing preventable maternal and neonatal deaths and strengthening clinical readiness across Guyana’s most remote areas,” she said.

Ms Faria explained that, for over a decade, Giving Health to Kids has worked with the Ministry of Health to improve neonatal and paediatric care, train specialists, and expand critical services.

“We are grateful to Global Affairs Canada, McMaster University, and the Ministry of Health for their strong partnership, and to our donors for believing in this mission. Together, we continue to give health and hope to the children of Guyana,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Canadian High Commissioner, Mr Sébastien Sigouin, reaffirmed Canada’s unwavering commitment to improving maternal, newborn and child health globally and in Guyana.

“MNCH has long been a priority for the Government of Canada because

we have seen, all over the world, how investing in health is a gift that keeps on giving. By investing in MNCH, we are investing in the people and the future of Guyana,” he said.

Mr Sigouin also commended the Ministry of Health and frontline workers for their dedication. “It is not about Canada it is about you. You are the ones making a difference in a mother’s or a child’s life every day,” he said.

The MNCH Project (2023-2028) aims to reduce preventable maternal and newborn deaths through strengthened clinical readiness and referral systems, capacity building for health workers, gender-responsive and adolescent-friendly health services, community engagement, expanded outreach services, and improved neonatal emergency care.

List of equipment procured through the donation:

Urine Test Strips (URS 10-in-1)
45 boxes

Portable Pressure Steam Sterilisers (18L, YX-LM)
20

Hemocue 301 Hb Analysers
20

Hemocue Cuvettes
45 boxes

Hepatitis B Surface Antigen Rapid Test Kits
45 boxes

HbA1c Analysers
10

HbA1c Reagent Kits
15

Historic kidney chain transplants showcase Guyana's growing specialist care capacity

Guyana's four recent kidney transplant recipients are now recovering, bringing hope to their families and marking an important moment for the country's health sector. The procedures involved kidney removals and transplants.

The historic procedures, the Caribbean's first, were completed entirely by Guyanese specialists at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), as the Government accelerates its investment in building local capacity and expanding access to advanced medical care.

Ms Samantha Ault, Mr David Singh and Mr Kiran Hardyal described the surgeries as a miracle after years of dialysis, financial strain and declining health.

For Ms Ault and Mr Singh, the transplant represents their first chance at a normal life in years, and for Mr Hardyal, who is a second-time

recipient, it is pure gratitude.

Mr Hardyal had a kidney transplant in 2025, but after nine years, his kidney failed.

He said he was grateful to be afforded yet another lease on life.

"I was the first transplant patient here at the GPHC, done by Dr Kishore Persaud (Lead Transplant Surgeon) in 2015. I went through this already, and I know what life is as a kidney transplant recipient, how way better it is. I feel like any ordinary person in this room right now," he said.

"Being on dialysis is not something easy, it drains you a lot, and I can tell you proudly that I am happy to be a kidney transplant recipient, because my life has improved a whole lot better," added Mr Hardyal.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony said the success of the surgeries reflects a deliberate national strategy to develop a modern, self-sustaining health system designed to serve every Guyanese, regardless of their location, income, or background.

"We have had many firsts of this programme, and it seems like every year they are exceeding the expectations," said the Minister. "We want to see in every department that we have, that we can push the boundaries to ensure that our patients get better service."

To further strengthen this capacity, the Dr Anthony announced that Guyana has already procured Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) testing equipment, a critical component for matching transplant patients with their donors.

Currently, HLA samples must be sent to the U.S. a process that costs

approximately U.S.\$3,000 per person.

The Government will send a Guyanese doctor to India's Apollo Hospitals, a famous transplant training centre, to receive certification in HLA testing and transplant immunology.

"Once this doctor returns, all HLA testing will be done right here in Guyana," Minister Anthony explained. "This means faster results, lower costs, and the ability to perform even more transplants for our people."

Guyana now leads the Caribbean with 13 kidney transplants completed in 2025, surpassing similar surgeries in countries with larger populations.

The Ministry of Health is also preparing for the introduction of a deceased-donor program, expected to save hundreds of lives and significantly reduce the burden on the national dialysis system.

More than 316 patients are currently on dialysis at GPHC, with 2,200 new nephrology patients registered since 2023.

As the transplant recipients continue to recover, the Ministry says the journey is far from over. With each successful transplant, Guyana is not only saving lives, but also proving that national development is strongest when people are at the centre.



Health Ministry hosts regional conference to strengthen collaboration, enhance health service delivery

The Ministry of Health, through its Regional Health Services Programme, recently hosted a two-day conference aimed at strengthening collaboration and improving the delivery of health services across Guyana's ten administrative regions.

The sessions, held in the Ministry's Boardroom on Brickdam, Georgetown, brought together Regional Health Officers (RHOs) and Programme Directors for strategic discussions and capacity building.

The forum focused on key objectives, including fostering a unified and collaborative approach to health-care delivery and equipping RHOs to more effectively oversee and coordinate regional health activities in partnership with key stakeholders.

Delivering the feature address, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, reflected on the substantial progress made in the health

sector over the past five years and outlined the Ministry's vision for continued transformation.

"Over the last five years, we focused a lot on developing the infrastructure across the health-care system, so I thought I would recap some of the things that we have done to set the tone for where we want to go over the next couple of years," Dr Anthony stated.

The Minister highlighted major accomplishments, including the construction of 25 new health centres and health posts, the completion of six regional hospitals, upgrades to district hospitals, and extensive rehabilitation works throughout the public health sector.

He underscored significant advances in human resource development, driven by expanded training opportunities.

The hybrid nursing programme is soon projected to graduate more than 800

nurses -- an increase from the previous annual output of 200-250. Training programmes for nursing assistants, patient care assistants (PCAs), pharmacy assistants, laboratory and x-ray personnel, and community health workers (CHWs) have ensured that every health post now has at least two CHWs, marking an unprecedented milestone.

Dr Anthony encouraged RHOs to remain proactive and engaged as they execute their responsibilities in service to the people of Guyana. "You have to pay attention to what is being built in your region and give support where it is needed," he urged.

The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering equitable, high-quality health care for all Guyanese. The engagement underscored the shared dedication of RHOs and stakeholders as Guyana continues to advance and strengthen its national health system.



First Lady visits Christmas babies at GPHC



Five babies were born at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) on Christmas Day and First Lady Her Excellency Arya Ali spent the holiday morning bringing comfort, compassion and cheer to the babies, their patients and healthcare workers.

The newborns: two girls and three boys, were delivered earlier in the day, with hospital officials noting that more births were possible later in the day, as essential services continued uninterrupted.

During her visit to the Maternity and Paediatric Wards, the First Lady distributed care packages and hampers and announced that toys would also be provided for the children receiving care. She said her visit reflects the true spirit of the season, sharing love and hope.

“Christmas is a time for family, but today we are extending our love to our extended family, spreading compassion, hope and joy,” said Ms Ali.

The First Lady expressed gratitude to corporate partners for supporting the initiative and giving back to the

community. She also extended Christmas greetings to patients, healthcare workers and their loved ones.

Chief Executive Officer of the GPHC, Mr Robbie Rambarran, who met the First Lady on her arrival at the hospital, said that Christmas Day remains a busy and emotionally demanding period for the hospital, as staff continue to serve patients during this time.

“While we would all prefer to be home with our families, it is a true honour

and privilege to be here serving people when they need us most,” Mr Rambarran said. He reported that several infants were also receiving care in the Neonatal and Postnatal Wards, while patients continued to be treated in the Paediatric Ward.

