

HEALTH Record

Government's Voucher-based Healthcare Programme Expanded

All Guyanese can now access free eye test, spectacles, other health tests

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Medical referrals to Georgetown from Region Seven down by 50%

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Over 100,000 children to benefit from lifelong digital health records

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Doctors at Lima Regional Hospital lead life-saving effort in pre-term birth case

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FREE



PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUIREMENT FOR COLLECTION OF HEALTH VOUCHERS

Members of the public are advised to present a valid form of identification (ID) when collecting any health voucher.

The following vouchers are available for collection:

- Eye Testing and Spectacles Voucher
- Universal Health Voucher
- Cervical Cancer Screening Voucher

Parents and legal guardians may collect vouchers on behalf of their child or children.

We encourage all eligible individuals to collect their vouchers at their nearest health centre.

**For further information, call 226 7400
Ext. 1283/ 1284/ 1278.**



HEALTH Record

Vol. 2 / Issue 2 / February 2026

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All Guyanese can now access free eye test, spectacles

-Health Minister

The Government's voucher-based healthcare programme will be expanded to allow all Guyanese access to eye testing and related services, as authorities move to deepen preventive health care across the country.

The announcement was made by Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 67 stakeholders at Herdmanston Lodge in Georgetown on February 25.

The eye care initiative, which initially targeted persons under 18 and older adults, was later adjusted to those 50 years and above. However, based on public feedback and demand, the programme will now be expanded to include all age groups, increasing accessibility to eye care services across the population.

“I think this has been a very successful programme for us. With the numbers that we have seen,” the Minister said. “We have been able to cover a large percentage of the population, and now we want to expand it so that everybody can benefit.”

Since the launch of the voucher programme, it has recorded significant growth and impact. In 2024, some 134,152 vouchers were utilised for services including eye testing, spectacles, laboratory testing and human papillomavirus (HPV) screening.

By 2025, that figure surged to 326,868 vouchers, representing a 144 per cent increase year-on-year.

The data reflects increased public uptake and improved



access to healthcare services, particularly through private sector partnerships.

The Health Minister reported that the programme has supported early diagnosis and treatment, with approximately 1,200 persons identified with cataracts and treated, while others received care for conditions such as glaucoma.

Expanded testing has also revealed high levels of diabetes and cholesterol among the Guyanese population, allowing for earlier medical intervention.

Authorities are also working to extend services beyond coastal areas, with stakeholders encouraged to conduct outreaches in hinterland regions, including Regions One (Barima-Waini), Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), Eight (Potaro-Siparuni), Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo) and Ten (Upper Demerara-Berbice) to ensure equitable access to care.

In addition, the Ministry of Health continues to advance its HPV programme, with the quadrivalent vaccine now offered free to boys and girls aged nine to 15, as well as women aged 16 to 45.

The initiative aims to combat cervical and penile cancers in both girls and boys, and women and men, supported by increased screening.

Voucher initiative boosts battle against chronic diseases

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony says that the data generated from the Government's voucher-based healthcare programme over the past two years has provided valuable insight into the health status of the population.

The Minister made the comment on February 25 while delivering a review of the programme. He was at the time speaking at a ceremony to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with stakeholders at Herdmanston Lodge in Georgetown to advance the health drive this year.

The Government launched the Universal Healthcare Voucher initiative and an Eye Testing and Spectacles grant last year to support Guyanese in need of specific tests and procedures.

“These vouchers are not just about testing; the data we get from them is extremely important. It allows us to understand what is happening in our population, identify diseases early, and bring people into care before their condition progresses,” Minister Anthony said.

Through the programme, more than 91,000 adults accessed laboratory testing, with findings revealing a significant number of persons living with undiagnosed conditions, including diabetes and elevated cholesterol levels.

Among those tested, over 37,000 persons completed HbA1c testing, with approximately 8,440 results showing dangerously high levels, indicating either poorly managed or previously undiagnosed diabetes.

The data also highlighted widespread cases of lipid abnormalities, including high cholesterol and triglyceride levels, placing many individuals at increased risk for cardiovascular diseases.



Dr Anthony noted that the availability of this data allows the Ministry of Health to identify trends, stratify results by region and demographics, and intervene earlier by bringing patients into care before conditions worsen.

Additionally, the programme has supported earlier detection of prostate cancer among men through prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing, enabling timely diagnosis and follow-up care.

The Minister emphasised that the initiative goes beyond providing tests, noting that the collection and analysis of data is essential to improving national health outcomes and shaping targeted interventions.





Medical referrals to Georgetown from Region Seven reduced by 50%

-President Ali

Major investments in healthcare infrastructure and services in Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) have significantly improved access to treatment, resulting in a sharp decline in medical referrals to Georgetown.

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali made the remark while speaking February 11, 2026, during the second episode of a podcast, “Tea on the Terrace,” which was recorded in Bartica in Region Seven. He said that both the expansion and modernisation of health facilities across the region are allowing residents, including those in remote mining and hinterland communities, to receive treatment closer to home.

“That means faster treatment, less disruption to families, millions saved annually in medivacs and travel costs, and you are closer to your families for that supportive care,” the President said.

Dr Ali noted that the growing capacity of the Bartica Regional Hospital, which treated more than 15,000 patients and conducted nearly 3,000 surgeries in 2025.

Additional support has also come from the Kamarang District Hospital, also in Region Seven, which served more than 3,300 patients and carried out 28,000 laboratory tests during the same period.

President Ali noted that ongoing investments, including the development of a new level-four regional hospital in Bartica, will further strengthen healthcare delivery and reduce the need for patients to travel to

Georgetown for specialised care.

He said the broader strategy is aimed at ensuring equitable access to healthcare across Guyana, particularly in hinterland regions, where transportation costs and distance have historically been major barriers.

“These are direct benefits, derived from the investment we are making in our budgets,” the President said, emphasising that improved healthcare outcomes are a key measure of national development.



Digital x-ray system commissioned at Kumaka

-strengthening diagnostic care in Region One

Diagnostic services in the Moruca Sub-District have entered a new era with the commissioning of a \$60 million state-of-the-art digital x-ray system at the Kumaka District Hospital, expanding access to advanced diagnostic testing in Region One (Barima Waini).

The advanced imaging system marks a major transformation for residents of Kumaka and surrounding communities in Region One, many of whom previously depended on outdated film-based equipment or were required to travel long distances for essential diagnostic services.

At a commissioning ceremony held recently, 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.



“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 analogue x-ray units and standardise modern digital systems across the country,” he said.

The new digital system delivers clearer, faster and more reliable imaging, significantly improving the speed and accuracy of diagnoses.

For residents, transportation can involve lengthy river travel, and having this service closer to home means fewer costly and stressful referrals outside the community.

“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,” the Minister said.

To ensure uninterrupted service, specialised electrical wiring, voltage stabilisers, backup power systems and a modern generator were installed to support the highly sensitive equipment, safeguarding operations even during power outages.

In the coming months, the Ministry of Health will also install a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS), enabling digital images to be transmitted to specialised radiologists in Georgetown for expert interpretation within minutes.

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

These upgrades are expected to enhance patient outcomes by enabling earlier detection of conditions such as fractures, infections, chest illnesses and other medical complications, reducing delays in treatment and strengthening overall healthcare delivery in the hinterland.

\$891M investment to drive healthcare transformation through Mount Sinai partnership

Government is investing \$891 million in the major transformation of the country's healthcare system through a strategic partnership with the U.S.-based Mount Sinai Health System and additional support from Hess Corporation in Guyana.

The investment forms part of a broader modernisation drive aimed at strengthening primary healthcare, expanding specialised treatment and improving hospital systems nationwide.

During the consideration of the 2026 budget estimates on February 13, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, said the collaboration is already delivering measurable improvements and will continue through to 2030.

“We have been working with Mount Sinai, and they have been working with our local doctors to ensure that we can improve the quality of healthcare that we are providing across the country,” Dr Anthony stated.

While Guyana is contributing \$891 million, the majority of the financing for the initiative will be provided by Hess Corporation. One of the most significant achievements under the programme has been a nationwide screening initiative targeting students at the nursery, primary and secondary levels.

Some 80,000 children have already been screened, strengthening early detection and intervention efforts. The partnership has also supported improvements at



the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), enhancing operational systems and productivity.

“They are also helping us to oversee the implementation of the electronic health records at the GPHC. They have been giving us technical oversight in that area,” the Minister explained.

Mount Sinai has provided technical support for the preparation and planning of Guyana's future oncology centre. It has done the groundwork for a neurological and stroke care centre. Background studies and technical assessments for these specialised facilities have already been completed.

Clinical standards are also being strengthened, with new national guidelines being developed for the management of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases. They aim to improve the country's response to major non-communicable diseases.

Further reforms involve hiring Ernst & Young to update the Materials Management Unit (MMU), working with Northwell Health, also based in the U.S., and ongoing investment in crucial electronic health systems.

“We are lifting the quality of care across the country. Through this partnership, we have several things that we are doing, from primary healthcare screening to specialised services and clinical guidelines,” said Dr Anthony.

The Mount Sinai partnership represents one of the most comprehensive healthcare reform initiatives currently underway, positioning Guyana to deliver a more efficient and specialised care to citizens nationwide.

Budget 2026 expands health and family support

-Health Minister



Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has rejected the Opposition's claims that Budget 2026 "does nothing for the people," pointing to a range of concrete measures that directly support women, children and families across Guyana.

Speaking on February 4, 2026 during the national budget debates, the Health Minister stated that the Opposition is rejecting the national budget, but is not offering reasonable alternatives, all while overlooking the results already seen in the health sector.

Dr Anthony said budget 2026 expands investments in maternal and child health, preventative care and expanded access to medical services nationwide. Enhancing the human resource pool is key to the Government's investments in the health sector.

Under the 2026 allocations, 98,500 students across Guyana will receive free health screenings, with a focus on preschool child health and early autism testing.

"When you look at this budget, these are the kinds of initiatives that are in this budget that our people across this country would benefit from. The children of Guyana would be benefitting from these initiatives," he said.

The Minister stated that, over the last two years, 175,272 children aged 18 and under, along with adults aged 50 years and older, have accessed free eye testing with a \$2,000 voucher made available by the Government. This support extended beyond just testing. Over 160,000 persons received a \$15,000 voucher to subsidise the cost of a pair of spectacles.

"This is what putting people first means," he said, questioning how such initiatives could be dismissed when Opposition members publicly declared they could not support the budget.

The Health Minister said Budget 2026 reflects the Government's commitment to evidence-based planning and inclusive development, with programmes designed to address real needs rather than political rhetoric.

From new hospitals to digital records, the health sector, he emphasised, is poised for transformation in keeping with the Government's commitment to building a world-class health sector with \$161.1 billion allocated in the budget.

Minister Anthony pointed to additional measures, including the \$100,000 Newborn Cash Grant and expansion of maternal homes, as tangible support that Guyanese families are already benefiting from and will continue to benefit from.

In the education sector, children will receive \$85,000 in Government support through the Because-We-Care grant, the new transportation allowance, and a uniform grant. Each adult Guyanese will also receive a \$100,000 cash grant.

"On this Government, we don't only talk, we deliver, and Guyanese across this country now can benefit from the \$100,000 cash grant," Minister Anthony said.

These are among the many initiatives contained in the \$1.558 trillion budget themed, "Putting People First," which was debated at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) in Georgetown.

Poached Eggs

95

Calories
per serving

Prep Time:
10 Mins
Cook Time:
5 Mins

Ingredients

2 Eggs
1 tsp Lemon Juice
1 tbsp- Olive Oil
Salt and pepper to taste.
1 tbsp. finely chopped Parsley.

Directions

1. Place one cup water into a frying pan. Add the lemon juice and place the cutters in the water.
2. Break the eggs one each into the water. Sprinkle salt and pepper and cook until set.
3. Remove from the water and garnish with parsley and shredded cheese if desired.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with crackers or toasted cassava bread. (4 -6 multi grain crackers or 2 pieces cassava bread the size of the size of one's palm.

Serving Size: Two servings of eggs

Nutrition: Rich source of protein, vitamin A and B vitamins. Moderate source of fat and calcium.

Special Equipment: Frying pan, two 3" wide biscuit cutters

From the Cook Book





Over 100,000 children to benefit from lifelong digital health records

More than 100,000 Guyanese children will now grow up with their baseline health data captured and permanently recorded under the Government's expanding digital healthcare system.

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali made the disclosure on February 27, while speaking at the commissioning ceremony of the new Outpatient Pavilion at Dr Balwant Singh's Hospital on East Street, Georgetown.

Delivering the feature address, Dr Ali outlined sweeping reforms designed to modernise and future-proof the national health sector.

The President Ali noted that the integration of electronic health records and expanded screening initiatives means that tens of thousands of children already have their baseline medical data securely stored, creating a system that will track their health

journey throughout their lives.

The initiative forms part of the Government's nationwide rollout of electronic health records and digital platforms aimed at reducing waiting times, eliminating inefficiencies and strengthening preventative care.

Dr Ali noted that by, establishing proper patient records early, the country is shifting from reactive to proactive healthcare.

"We are building a healthcare system in which waiting times are reduced, shortages are eliminated and early detection becomes standard practice," he said.

"These are the things that will make the difference long after all of us are gone," President Ali said. "That is how we take Guyana safely, better and healthier into the future."



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More screening, free HPV shots strengthen Guyana's cancer prevention programme



Expanded free cancer screening and vaccination programmes are now delivering earlier detection and lifesaving care across Guyana.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony made the announcement during the consideration of the 2026 budget estimates and expenditures on February 13.

The Minister said routine prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing is available at no cost, allowing men to be screened for prostate cancer and receive free biopsies if results are elevated.

“Prostate cancer is the number one cancer among men in Guyana, so if we catch it early, we’ll be able to treat people and prevent them from dying from prostate cancer, and that’s the objective of the Ministry of Health,” said Dr Anthony.

“Over the last year, we did close to 600 biopsies, and about 400 or so were positive. Those men were able to come into care earlier,” he said.

The cervical cancer programme has also been strengthened with the upgraded nine-valent human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, now offered free of charge to boys and girls between nine and 15 years old. An \$8,000 voucher is also available to support free cervical cancer screening and follow-up treatment.

The Minister said the expanded initiatives are aimed at ensuring cost is not a barrier to prevention, early detection and quality care.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, says a combination of preventative strategies and expanded treatment programmes has contributed to a reduction in Guyana’s human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) incidence rate.

Speaking on February 13, during the consideration of the estimates and expenditures in the National Assembly, Dr Anthony outlined the Ministry of Health’s intensified efforts to prevent new infections through widespread public education campaigns and targeted interventions.

Among the key measures mentioned is the provision of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), an antiretroviral medication offered to persons who consider themselves at risk of contracting HIV. Additionally, the Ministry has distributed five million condoms annually nationwide as part of its preventative strategy.

The Minister stressed the importance of managing persons already living with HIV. He revealed that approximately 7,800 patients are currently receiving antiretroviral therapy (ARVs), with the majority achieving viral suppression.

“If you manage people who already are infected with HIV, and you get them to be virally suppressed, it means that they cannot transmit to somebody else. So what we have been doing is working to ensure that most of our patients are virally suppressed,” he said.

To support this effort, the Ministry has procured specialised laboratory equipment to conduct viral load

testing, ensuring patients are effectively monitored.

“We have bought a piece of equipment that allows us to do viral loads, so we are monitoring our patients using viral loads consistently, and that has contributed to the reduction in cases,” said Dr Anthony.

He emphasised that HIV services are available nationwide, including in the hinterland regions. Primary healthcare physicians have been trained to manage HIV cases, with more complex cases referred to specialists when necessary.

He noted that the HIV programme also serves as an entry point for screening and treating other sexually transmitted infections, including syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia.

“Before, HIV was like a death sentence. So when people get it after a couple of years, you see they progress to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Now we don’t see that. Most of our patients are living,” Dr Anthony said.

Despite this progress, the Minister stressed the importance of remaining vigilant as the Government continues work to reduce the spread of new infections.

Health Minister Highlights Life-Changing Impact of Prosthetic Outreach Programme

by Shabana Shaw

The Ministry of Health, through its Rehabilitation and Disability Services, continues expanding national rehabilitation care as patients fitted during the recent prosthetic outreach programme share powerful testimonies of renewed independence, dignity, and hope.

Last week, an international prosthetics and rehabilitation team worked alongside local clinicians at the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre to assess, fit, and train 20 patients in the use of prosthetic limbs while simultaneously strengthening local technical capacity.

ProsthetiKa, a US-based organisation of international consultants whose mission is to provide appropriate and sustainable assistance for persons with disabilities in developing countries, has conducted several capacity-building programmes at the Centre’s J. E. Simmons Orthotic & Prosthetic Appliance Workshops since 2018.

Led by Jon Batzdorff, Certified Orthotist/Prosthetist (CPO) and ProsthetiKa founder, this year’s team also consisted of CPOs John Morales and Meghan Wright,

Q & A

QUESTION

Are the vouchers available in each region?

ANSWER

YES!
Scan the QR code to view the distribution sites in each region.

SCAN ME

GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
EYE TESTING & SPECTACLES VOUCHER PROGRAMME

HEALTH+

and Clinical Physiotherapist in vascular and amputee rehabilitation, Laura Burges, Clinical Physiotherapist, ProsthetiKa.

Minister of Health, Honourable Frank Anthony, noted that the programme represents more than clinical care; it restores livelihoods and social participation.

“These services transform lives. Our goal is not only to provide prostheses but also to ensure patients regain confidence, independence, and the ability to work and care for their families,” the Minister said.

Dr Anthony expressed appreciation for the collaboration, noting that the initiative not only restored mobility but also improved the quality of life for patients.

“Many patients cannot afford prosthetic services, yet these devices transform lives. Through partnerships like this, we are improving accessibility while building our own technical expertise to sustainably serve our population,” the Minister stated.

He further highlighted the importance of prevention, explaining that a significant number of amputations result from complications of diabetes. The Ministry is therefore strengthening multidisciplinary management to reduce future limb loss while expanding rehabilitation services for those already affected.

Batzdorff commended the Ministry’s policy direction. “Providing access to prosthetics is a powerful policy because it restores independence and dignity to people’s lives,” Batzdorff said.

He emphasised that the week’s achievements were the result of extensive teamwork and preparation.

“We assessed and fitted 20 patients. Each prosthesis requires assessment, casting, plastic moulding, assembly, and rehabilitation training; it takes a full team to make it happen.”

Batzdorff underscored the critical role of local healthcare workers and trainees who participated in every stage of the process.

“This work would not have been possible without the local team, from mixing plaster to casting and fitting.

We didn’t just ask people to watch; we asked them to try.”

A central objective of the programme was sustainability. Rather than creating reliance on visiting specialists, the initiative prioritised empowering local professionals with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to continue providing services independently. “We are not here to create dependence. We want the skills to stay here so repairs and future prostheses can be done locally, long after we leave.”

Meanwhile, Director of Rehabilitation and Disability Services, Dr Ariane Mangar, stated that the initiative represents a significant advancement in local rehabilitation services. In addition to restoring mobility and independence to 20 persons with amputations, the programme strengthened national capacity through the training of six new prosthetic technicians, an essential investment in sustainable service delivery.

She further noted that, while this milestone is being celebrated, a considerable waiting list of patients remains. The Ministry, therefore, anticipates collaboration with Jaipur Foot, which is expected to support the fitting of approximately 100 additional individuals in the coming months.

“Together, these efforts are not only restoring limbs, but also restoring dignity, productivity, and quality of life for many Guyanese,” she said.

Patients Share Their Stories

Desma Pitt, 59, lost her limb after a minor injury worsened due to diabetes complications. What began as a small wound quickly became life-threatening.

“I didn’t even feel the injury at first. Then it started turning black, and I got very sick. The doctors tried to save it, but eventually they had to amputate. I thanked my foot for the 59 years of service it gave me,” she recalled with a smile.

After receiving her prosthetic leg during the programme, she described overwhelming excitement.

“I dreamt about walking again. Now I can. I’m so thankful to the team, my children, and everyone who encouraged me. This is another phase of life, and I’m

ready for it.”

Her goal is simple but meaningful: “I want to walk around my yard and take care of my plants again.”



Another beneficiary, Ivor Fordyce, explained that his amputation followed an unnoticed injury caused by a fragment of broken glass while working around his home. “It started small but spread fast. Within hours, my foot turned black, and doctors had to amputate.”

After being fitted with a prosthetic limb, he now feels hopeful about returning to normal daily activity.



“I don’t like to sit down. Even before this, I tried helping at home. Now I feel better and encouraged. This will help me become independent again and provide for my family.”

He expressed gratitude for the opportunity: “God bless the whole institution for putting us back on track.”

The outreach programme emphasised training patients to walk safely and confidently while also equipping local therapists and students with fabrication and rehabilitation skills. The initiative ensures patients not only receive devices but also learn how to use them effectively in everyday life.

The Ministry of Health reaffirms its commitment to partnerships that improve accessibility to prosthetic services and strengthen national rehabilitation capacity, ensuring more Guyanese regain mobility and independence.

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President Ali calls for public health campaign to tackle chronic illnesses

The Ministry of Health has launched an aggressive nationwide public health campaign to address chronic health challenges confronting communities across Guyana.

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali called on the Ministry to embark on the campaign during the opening ceremony of the Guyana Technical Training College at Port Mourant, Corentyne, Berbice on February 14.

The President emphasised the need for the initiative to reach every citizen through collaboration with religious and community leaders. “We want a public health campaign with flyers and programmes, reaching every single citizen,” he urged.

Dr Ali also outlined the Government’s broader healthcare vision, highlighting the construction of a level-five teaching hospital in New Amsterdam, Berbice. The facility, he said, will serve as a regional

cardiac and research centre and represents a major leap forward in Guyana’s medical service capacity.

“This will be a teaching hospital very much different from a normal hospital, a hospital that will specialise in research and cardiac services, a cardiac centre for the whole region,” said the President.

Dr Ali appealed for urgent action to address chronic health challenges across the country and encouraged the Ministry of Health to partner with faith communities to launch a national health campaign.

“I am happy the religious leaders are here, and I want the religious community to be critically integrated in this campaign, especially in our rural areas,” he said.

The President added that Guyanese are set to benefit from health initiatives that are intended to improve lives and ultimately lead to a better standard of living nationwide.

Countries looking to Guyana as telemedicine model

-Dr Mahadeo

Member of Parliament (MP) and Deputy Speaker, Honourable Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, has pointed out that Guyana's telemedicine programme has advanced to the point where other countries and international organisations are now studying the model.

Dr Mahadeo made the comment while speaking during the national budget debates on February 5, held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) in Georgetown, as he defended the health sector's performance.

"Today, our telemedicine hub in the Ministry of Health is a place that persons come to from international organisations and other countries to see how telemedicine can and should be managed," Dr Mahadeo said.

He explained that the initiative, introduced in 2022, has expanded rapidly and is improving access to care, particularly in hinterland and riverain communities.

"We have increased the number of telemedicine sites from four to 130 by the end of February, and Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has assured us it will be about 150 by the end of the year," he said.

Dr Mahadeo noted that thousands of patients have already benefited from the service, including mothers, babies, chronic disease patients and persons requiring mental health support. Telemedicine sites, he said, are equipped with internet connectivity, video links and, in some cases, diagnostic tools, allowing specialists to assess patients remotely.

"When you go to a telemedicine site, the specialist could see the patient, then communicate with the patient and advise," Dr Mahadeo explained.

Responding to criticisms by the Opposition on the health system, Dr Mahadeo said the Ministry of Health maintains daily oversight of operations across hospitals.

"We have a meeting every day with all the regional hospitals. We receive all the information, whether it be on drugs, laboratory tests, the number of in-patients, the number of out-patients, whatever it is, and we are kept up to date, and the subject Minister gets a copy of that every single day," he said.

While acknowledging that "every death is sad and every death is regrettable," Dr Mahadeo said investigations are conducted and systems strengthened after each incident, noting that maternal deaths have been declining.

The Deputy Speaker also pointed to major improvements in dental care, noting that clinics have increased from 42 to 59 nationwide and annual procedures have risen sharply. "There is really a tenfold increase in annual dental procedures in just four years. Each number represents a patient treated, pain alleviated, and health restored," he said.

Dr Mahadeo estimated that free dental procedures and related services saved citizens more than \$1 billion in out-of-pocket expenses.

He noted that blood storage facilities have expanded from 11 to 34 across the country and that training programmes, including hybrid and online initiatives, have increased the number of healthcare workers entering the system.

"We have added over 4,300 persons who are trained, graduated and employed by the Ministry of Health," said Dr Mahadeo. He gave his full support to Budget 2026, describing it as part of a continuing programme of investment in people and services.

"This budget actually does what the Government is supposed to do -- govern for the people, invest in the people, and deliver results for the people," he added.

Health Minister calls for reporting of misconduct at public health facilities

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has emphatically declared that all citizens are entitled to treatment in the public healthcare system, while at the same time, warning health officials not to re-direct patients in the public system to private services.

In the same vein, the Minister called on the persons to report incidents, if they arise or become aware of any such cases.

Dr Anthony made the statement on February 13, during the consideration of the 2026 budget estimates for the health sector, where concerns were raised about access to care at Government facilities.

Some Opposition parliamentarians claimed that they have received reports from patients who claimed they were advised to seek treatment at private clinics, rather than being treated at public institutions. They also questioned whether some medical practitioners were spending limited hours at public hospitals before attending to private practices, potentially affecting service delivery.

In response, Dr Anthony stressed that the Government has made significant investments in the public health sector in recent years, expanding infrastructure, acquiring modern equipment, and strengthening staffing levels to improve access to care nationwide.

He said these investments are intended to ensure that citizens receive quality services without incurring private medical expenses.

The Minister pointed out that any cases of patients

being turned away or improperly referred to private care facilities should be formally reported so that action can be taken. At the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), patients can lodge complaints through the help desk or directly with the Chief Executive Officer's office, where reports are documented and investigated.

Dr Anthony added that accountability within the system is being strengthened through the introduction of electronic health records, which can allow administrators to monitor attendance, patient care and overall performance across facilities.

For issues arising at other institutions, Dr Anthony encouraged citizens to contact the Ministry of Health using its hotline for complaints and feedback, at 227-4357. He noted that contact numbers are also displayed at health centres, allowing patients to report problems such as facilities opening late or being closed when they should be open.

The Minister said public feedback plays a vital role in improving services, as timely reports enable authorities to identify shortcomings and ensure corrective measures are taken to protect access to care by patients.

Q & A

GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME
VOUCHER
No. 05
VALUE
\$8,000
EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS
"Early Detection Saves Lives"
Ministry of Health
GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA, 1997-2020 (REVISED, 2016)

QUESTION

Who is eligible to receive the cervical cancer screening voucher?

ANSWER

This initiative caters for all women, 21 to 65 years of age.

GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME

GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

800 students to graduate from hybrid nursing programme

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has announced that Guyana's health sector is set for a major workforce boost with the rollout of a new hybrid nursing programme developed in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) through the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO).

The Minister was at the time speaking during the consideration of the national budget estimates on February 13. The initiative is supported by WHO through PAHO to the tune of US\$1 million, and is being implemented with technical collaboration from the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Professors from the university worked with Guyanese teams, while 30 local tutors were trained in Brazil to strengthen the delivery of the new curriculum.

“We have developed a new programme. It's called the hybrid programme, and this actually was developed in partnership with the WHO,” the Health Minister said. Under the previous system, Guyana trained about 200 nurses annually across its three nursing schools.

The new hybrid model delivers theoretical instruction online through the Coursera platform, while practical training is conducted in newly established simulation centres across the country, followed by hospital exposure.

“We'll have by June of this year, the first batch of close to 800 registered nurses who will be graduating,” the Minister said. The programme is part of a broader training initiative expected to see 5,000 individuals graduating this year across various health disciplines.

The hybrid nursing model has also attracted interest from several Caribbean countries facing similar shortages, with agreements expected to allow regional

participation.

Additionally, the expansion of 130 telemedicine sites across Guyana is enabling residents in remote communities to access online nursing education without leaving their villages, significantly expanding access to professional training and strengthening the national health system.

President Ali calls on faith groups to lead national drive for healthier communities

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali has announced plans to partner with religious organisations to improve primary healthcare in communities across the country.

The President made the remark on February 15, while speaking to hundreds of citizens at the opening of the National Ramadan Village 2026, which was hosted by the Muslim Youth Organization (MYO), Woolford Avenue, Georgetown.

Dr Ali said the initiative will focus on regular health checks, counselling, corrective care and encouraging healthier living habits.

Using a recent health outreach at Eccles Masjid, East Bank Demerara as an example, the President said the exercise went beyond basic screenings to include public health education, and also included a community clean-up programme.

He said this is the kind of awareness and action the country needs across all faith-based institutions. Whether it be temples, mosques or churches, he urged religious bodies to help shape healthier lifestyle choices and stronger neighbourhoods.

“We have a duty towards each other in the family of humanity, not only in the context of Islam, but we also have a duty towards each other as members of the family. I want us to be each other’s keeper,” said Dr Ali.

The President was candid about the growing health challenges facing the nation, particularly the rise in diabetes and the increasing number of persons requiring dialysis. While acknowledging that Government support has made treatment more accessible, he stressed that prevention must be the priority.



His Excellency the President and participants at the National Ramadan Village



Works commence on \$4.6B Moruca Regional Hospital

Excavation has begun on the \$4.6 billion Moruca Regional Hospital in Region One (Barima-Waini), a landmark project that will transform healthcare for hinterland communities that have to travel miles to access critical medical services.

The 50-bed facility promises comprehensive care, bringing quality services closer to residents and reaffirming the government’s commitment to providing healthcare to all Guyanese.

During a recent visit to the site, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, underscored the magnitude of the project and the comprehensive services the hospital will be providing upon completion.

“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,” Dr Anthony said.

The new facility will feature a fully equipped Accident and Emergency Department, a modern laboratory, pharmacy, and advanced diagnostic imaging, including x-ray and computed tomography (CT) scan capabilities that were previously non-existent in the region.

Operating theatres will facilitate both routine and complex surgical procedures, significantly reducing the financial strain families face when seeking care outside their communities.

Intensive Care Units (ICUs) for both adults and children will ensure that critical cases can be stabilised and managed close to home. This means faster diagnoses, quicker treatment and fewer emergency transfers to Georgetown or other urban health centres.

The maternal healthcare will also see significant improvements with a specialised delivery suite that will provide safer, more supportive conditions for expectant mothers. In-patient rooms will accommodate no more than five beds and will include private toilet and bath facilities.

Dr Anthony said specialised departments in ophthalmology, audiology and dental services will expand access to essential yet often overlooked care, ensuring residents receive timely treatment. The facility will also include an on-site oxygen plant, enabling the production and dispensing of oxygen to reduce reliance on imports and secure a reliable supply during medical emergencies.

For the people of Moruca and nearby areas, this investment highlights the Government's ongoing effort to provide the same quality of healthcare in Region One that residents along the coast have access to.



Health Minister pushes reform in preparing region for future health emergencies

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has underscored the importance of strengthening the regulatory framework for healthcare in the Caribbean, improving access to medicines, and preparing the region for future health emergencies.

The Minister made the comments while addressing a workshop, conducted under the theme, “Marketing Authorization, Registration of Medicines and Regulatory Reliance,” organised by the European Union (EU)-funded Support to Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks in the Caribbean. The event was held on February 2 at the office of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), Regent Street, Georgetown.

Welcoming regional partners, including delegations from Barbados and Europe, Dr Anthony noted that the initiative was born out of lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed serious global inequities in access to vaccines, medical supplies and essential medicines.

“Post-COVID showed us that there were lots of

challenges. Even if you had resources, even if you had money, it was a challenge to access vaccines, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and reagents. As small countries, we were placed at a severe disadvantage,” the Minister said.

He noted that future pandemics are inevitable and stressed that the region must be better prepared through decentralised systems, regional manufacturing and strong regulatory oversight.

“One way of being better prepared is that we have to start thinking more strategically about how we decentralise access to medicines so that people in different regions can get what they need, when they need it,” said Dr Anthony.

He highlighted Guyana’s ongoing collaboration with the EU, PAHO and regional partners to modernise legislation, improve pharmacovigilance (PV), and address critical issues such as counterfeit medicines, antimicrobial resistance, and misuse of antibiotics in both human and agricultural sectors. PV is the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other medicine or vaccine related problem.

“Many of our laws date back to 1974. The world has moved on, and we must upgrade our legislation and institutions to meet global standards,” said the Minister.

He pointed out that Guyana has drafted new pharmaceutical legislation along with accompanying regulations, which are expected to be laid in Parliament following the budget debates. These reforms will strengthen oversight of medicines, vaccines, clinical trials and manufacturing.

“From the time medicine enters the system to the time it is dispensed to a patient, regardless of where they live in Guyana, we must be able to track it,” stressed Dr Anthony.

The Minister also outlined major investments in health system modernisation, including the construction of a new Food and Drug Department headquarters; laboratories at the University of Guyana (UG) Turkeyen Campus; expanded regional distribution centres; and the digitalisation of medicine registration, supply chain management and patient records.

100 persons to be trained as Medical Extension Officers

-Every region represented

One hundred persons from across Guyana have completed an orientation exercise to begin a four-year Medical Extension Officer (Medex) training programme, marking the start of their training to strengthen the country’s healthcare services.

A simple launching ceremony was held at the Health Science Education Building in Kingston, Georgetown on February 27. The Medex programme brings together trainees from all across Guyana, representing every region. The trainees who complete the programme will receive an Associate Degree.

A student from Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice), Mr Nikhil Cummings, said he chose the programme because it would benefit him and enhance the Guyana Prison Service Medical Department.



Mr Nikhil Cummings

Another participant highlighted her commitment to serving her community. Ms Iniki Bartolomeu, from Region Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo), said she admires her grandfather, who is a medical worker and wants to follow in his footsteps. The 16-year-old aspires to further her studies to become a doctor or surgeon.

50 more telemedicine sites slated to be developed in 2026



Ms Iniki Bartolomeu

Similarly, Ms Kimberly Jonas of Region Ten (Upper Demerara-Berbice), said she applied after recognising the need for more health professionals in her community.

Ms Jonas added that she hopes after four years she will be “able and efficient to do the job and to make a contribution to the healthcare system in Guyana.”



Ms Kimberly Jonas

During the orientation, Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, emphasised that mentorship is key to helping trainees overcome challenges and graduate. He stated that, over the last few years, 5,000 young people have been brought into the Ministry of Health through training initiatives.

The Minister encouraged the entire cohort of students to remain disciplined, stressing that education requires sacrifice. “We want to see some of you moving from being Medexes to becoming doctors. We want some of you to move from becoming doctors to become specialists”, Minister Anthony said.

Medexes continue to play a vital role in expanding healthcare access and bridging service gaps in remote communities across Guyana.

The Ministry of Health will develop 50 additional telemedicine sites in 2026 as part of the Government’s continued investment in modernising and strengthening healthcare delivery across Guyana.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, made the announcement on February 27, while addressing students who are now starting their journey in the public health sector to becoming Medical Extension Officers (Medexes).

Outlining the expansion of digital health services to support hinterland and riverain communities, the Minister said the continued expansion will ensure more areas benefit from real-time consultations with doctors at regional hospitals and in Georgetown.

Through the telemedicine platform, health workers at their posts can connect virtually with doctors for guidance on diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Anthony said the system will strengthen primary healthcare services and equip Medexes with the support they need.

“In the past, when we sent out the Medexes to various communities, they were very isolated; they had to do everything by themselves,” he noted, explaining that he wants ease the burden on the new trainees.

Beyond patient care, the telemedicine sites are also being integrated into the Ministry of Health’s training programmes. Trainees will be able to access online modules, instructional videos and course materials from health centres equipped with telemedicine infrastructure.

“At any of these telemedicine sites, you can go to the health centre in your village, connect and be able to access your training material,” Dr Anthony said.

The Minister also emphasised that the Government’s investment in telemedicine aligns with ongoing upgrades to health centres, district hospitals, and new regional hospitals to ensure that communities across Guyana can receive healthcare services.



One of the Community Health Workers at the Imbotero Health Post in Region One (Barima-Waini) shows Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, the telemedicine procedure.



Government advances national emergency response system

The Government is moving to fundamentally reshape how emergency medical care is delivered in Guyana, with the establishment of the Guyana Emergency Medical Authority (GEMA), a national system designed to provide faster, standardised and life-saving response across the country.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony highlighted this initiative during the recent consideration of estimates and expenditure for Budget 2026, noting that funding has already been allocated to operationalise the new system. This will bring all public sector ambulances under a single administrative and technical structure.

“Our intention is to replicate an emergency service as they have in North America, where response time would be defined, and within a certain amount of time, you can get to the patient,” the Minister said.

Dr Anthony explained that, under GEMA, emergency response will overhaul the current emergency medical system. He said ambulances will operate through a central command centre with defined response times.

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The Minister noted that the ambulances will be strategically pre-positioned along the coast in the first phase, ensuring that when an emergency call is made, help can reach patients within a targeted timeframe.

Meanwhile, the second phase will extend those services into interior regions, expanding access for remote communities and further linking them all to the command centre. This will ensure improved coordination between ambulances and hospitals and allowing emergency departments to be prepared before a patient arrives.

The Health Minister noted that the most significant changes will be the standardisation of ambulances, replacing them with purpose-built emergency units designed for active medical intervention.

“From the time they pick you up, they can start working with the patient. So we’ll be training the EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) to respond like that, which means the ambulance has got to have headroom for you to stand up and work on the patient,” he said.

The new ambulances will be equipped with sufficient headroom and space to allow EMTs to stand and begin treatment immediately upon reaching a patient, transforming ambulances from simple transport vehicles into mobile treatment units.

With this significant advancement, the Minister pointed out that EMTs will also receive enhanced training to respond to three major emergency categories: trauma, heart attacks and strokes, conditions where minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

“From the time they get to the site, they should be able to start working with that patient, and as we bring them in, the emergency system would also be realigned to make sure that we can deal with these types of patients,” said Dr Anthony.

The establishment of GEMA signals a major step toward modernising Guyana’s emergency medical framework, reinforcing the Government’s commitment to building a more resilient, responsive and well-structured healthcare system.

From 35 days to 24 hours: GPHC’s Pathology Laboratory transformed in two years

-raising the standard for public diagnostics in Guyana

Two years is a short span in the life of a public institution, but long enough to reveal whether ambition has translated into action.

Since its commissioning in February 2024, the Pathology Laboratory of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has quietly crossed that threshold, shifting from a long-awaited facility to a dependable pillar within Guyana’s public healthcare system, where precision is not optional and delays can carry life-altering consequences.

Today, the laboratory stands marked by more than new walls and modern equipment. It has earned national certification under Guyana’s GYS 170:2021 standard and, more recently, secured ISO 15189 Plus accreditation from Accreditation Canada Diagnostics -- an international endorsement of quality, competence and consistency in medical laboratory services.

These recognitions are not symbolic. They signal systems that work, processes that withstand scrutiny, and a culture committed to getting results right, even when the work unfolds far from public view.

To appreciate the weight of these milestones, one must look back. In 2021, pathology services at GPHC were identified as a critical priority.



responsible chemical recycling have collectively redefined what public pathology services can deliver in Guyana.

Yet international accreditation, formally received on December 17, 2025, often carries a misconception. From the outside, it can appear as a single defining moment -- a finish line. Inside the laboratory, it reflects something far less polished: sustained effort, repeated audits, corrective actions, and the discipline to maintain standards under constant operational pressure.

This is where the story turns from systems to people.

Standards do not enforce themselves. Certificates do not guarantee quality. Behind every validated process and successful audit is a team navigating uncertainty, troubleshooting gaps, documenting relentlessly, and holding the line on consistency even when the work is demanding and largely invisible.

Laboratory leadership has been candid about the long hours, repeated checks, and persistence required to maintain momentum -- acknowledging that it is this dedication, more than any plaque on the wall, that underpins the laboratory's growing reputation for reliability and excellence.

That commitment matters because service is at the heart of the laboratory's mission. For many patients, GPHC's Pathology Laboratory is not a fallback option -- it is the only point of access to diagnostic testing.

When private services are financially out of reach, the accuracy and timeliness of public pathology results become critical, shaping clinical management and influencing the possibility of earlier intervention.

In that context, certification and accreditation take on deeper meaning. They are pursued not for prestige, but because a patient waiting on pathology results is waiting on answers that determine what happens next. The seamless appearance of the laboratory is built on coordination, accountability and a shared understanding that every result carries weight.

As the GPHC's Pathology Laboratory marks its second anniversary -- coinciding with the observance of World Cancer Day -- its impact on cancer diagnosis

The laboratory operated out of an ageing, cramped facility, ill-suited to modern diagnostics. Equipment was limited, workflows strained, and turnaround times averaged 35 days -- an eternity for patients waiting on answers that guide treatment decisions.

Initial efforts focused on stabilisation: essential repairs, targeted equipment purchases and protocol reviews. But it soon became evident that incremental fixes would not deliver the transformation required.

What followed was a decisive shift -- expanded staffing, upgraded systems, and the construction of a purpose-built pathology laboratory, supported by a Government of Guyana investment exceeding \$474 million.

The results have been measurable and profound. Turnaround times steadily declined -- from 35 days to 21, then 14, then 10 -- and now sit within seven days, with urgent cases completed within 24 hours. For patients and clinicians alike, this reduction represents more than efficiency. It means earlier diagnoses, faster treatment decisions and improved outcomes.

The transformation was further strengthened through strategic partnerships and forward-looking investments.

Modern diagnostic equipment, overseas training for medical staff, the introduction of telepathology for expert consultations, frozen section services for rapid intraoperative diagnosis, and environmentally

is unmistakable. Through precise histopathology services, it supports earlier detection and informs treatment decisions that can change lives.

The milestones matter. The standards matter. But it is the team behind the results -- their persistence, professionalism, and quiet commitment to doing the work well -- that gives those achievements their true meaning.

Health Ministry encourages parents to allow children's participation in School Health Programme

The Ministry of Health in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the U.S.-based Mount Sinai Health System, has launched the School Health Programme, which aims to ensure that children receive a comprehensive health checkup at least once at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels.

The initiative continues to be rolled out in several schools and allows students to benefit from free dental and vision screenings, physical examination, ear examinations, and growth and development monitoring, by qualified doctors, with the permission of their parents or guardians.

The Health Ministry is encouraging parents and guardians to complete and return the consent forms issued to allow healthcare providers to conduct the necessary health screenings. The process is described as



quick and simple and is designed with the comfort and well-being of children in mind.

Early screenings give the health system an opportunity to provide effective treatment by catching any potential health problems at an early stage. This ensures children start life healthy.

Dental Nurse at the Ministry of Health, Ms Orrinthia Bishop, one of the many professionals who are involved in the programme said early detection, through prevention, can stop the risk of them developing dental caries (cavities). She was at the time urging parents to come on board and allow their children to be checked through the School Health Programme.

Meanwhile, Optometrist Ms Francine Indarsingh said, "I would like to encourage parents to have their kids involved in the School Health Screening Programme. In my section, to be specific, we focus on the eyes. In terms of the eyes, a lot of persons are not aware that they have problems with their eyes until they are tested for eye problems."

She explained that they usually screen children, checking their vision to see if they have any issues with their eyes. If it is found that a child's vision is not at the standard expected, Ms Indarsingh said they go deeper by conducting tests to see what underlying issues the child may have and if spectacles are needed.

To learn more about the School Health Programme, persons can contact the Health Ministry on 227-4357 or visit the various social media platforms.



Doctors at Lima Regional Hospital lead life-saving effort in pre-term birth case

What began as a high-risk pregnancy at just 22 weeks and six days turned into a powerful story of medical dedication, resilience and hope, thanks to the swift and coordinated intervention of the doctors and nurses at Lima Regional Hospital, Essequibo Coast.

Ms Joanna Henry, 42, of Pomona, Essequibo Coast, was admitted to the hospital on November 11, 2025, after experiencing signs of preterm labour and dangerously uncontrolled blood pressure. At such an early stage of pregnancy, both mother and baby were at extreme risk.

The obstetrics and gynaecology teams acted immediately, stabilising her blood pressure and closely monitoring both patients. Despite their intensive efforts, complications escalated and the baby began

showing signs of distress. Faced with a critical situation, the doctors made the urgent but necessary decision to proceed with a premature delivery in order to save both lives.

The baby, Ms Kiara Henry, was born weighing just 900 grammes on New Year's Day 2026. Survival at this stage is never guaranteed, and the delivery required precision, experience and calm under immense pressure.

Immediately after birth, the neonatal team sprang into action. Under the leadership of Head of Paediatrics, Dr Kalesh Latchminarine, and with Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) oversight by Paediatrician, Dr Finola Permansingh, the newborn was transferred to the NICU.

There, a highly trained team of paediatricians and nurses provided 24-hour specialised care.

Baby Kiara required ventilator support, feeding tubes and constant monitoring -- interventions that demanded skill, vigilance and unwavering commitment from the medical staff.

The Maternity Department, headed by Dr Latesha Fordyce, ensured that Ms Henry also received comprehensive postpartum care. She remained hospitalised for 96 days, completing her full 42 days of postpartum care under medical supervision to ensure her safe recovery.

Throughout this period, the doctors worked tirelessly, not only managing complex medical conditions, but also providing reassurance, guidance, and emotional support to a mother facing one of the most difficult experiences of her life.

Baby Kiara spent 43 days in the NICU, where steady progress became a testament to the expertise of the Paediatric team.

Every gramme gained, every stable reading and every milestone achieved reflected the careful treatment plans and round-the-clock monitoring by the doctors and nurses.

By the time of discharge on February 13, baby Kiara weighed 1.245 kilogrammes -- a remarkable improvement from her birth weight. Mother and baby were discharged together, a moment that marked the success of months of specialised care.

Ms Henry has expressed her deepest gratitude to the doctors and nurses at Lima Regional Hospital. She credits their professionalism, dedication and compassion.

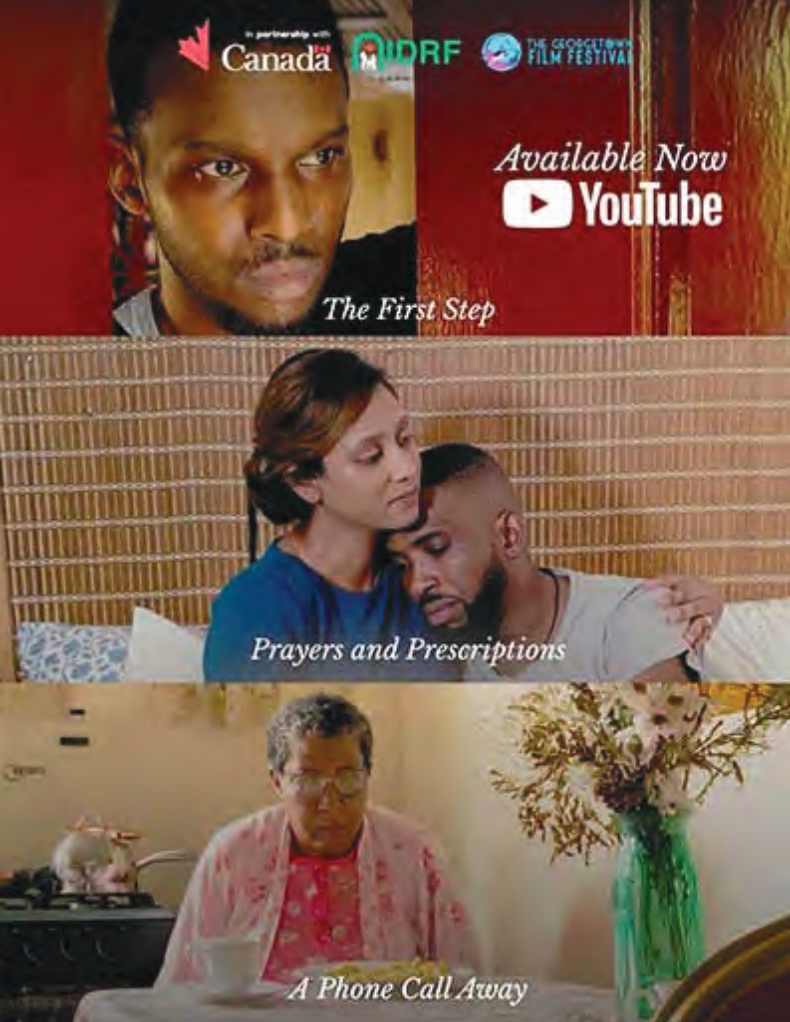
This journey stands as a powerful reminder of the critical role of skilled medical professionals in maternal and neonatal care.

Through expertise, teamwork and unwavering commitment, the doctors and nurses at Lima Regional Hospital transformed a life-threatening emergency into a story of survival and hope.



Ms Joanna Henry and baby, Ms Kiara Henry.





Three local films launched to raise mental health awareness in Guyana

Three short films highlighting mental health challenges in Guyanese communities have been released as part of a public awareness campaign aimed at encouraging open discussion and reducing stigma surrounding mental illness.

The films were produced through a collaboration between the Georgetown Film Festival, the Government of Canada, and the International

Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF) Guyana. According to organisers, the project uses storytelling to address sensitive issues such as depression, addiction, grief and suicide, while promoting the importance of support systems and early intervention.

The initiative forms part of a broader campaign to increase public understanding of mental health and encourage persons experiencing difficulties to seek help.

The three films -- Prayers and Prescriptions, The First Step, and A Phone Call Away -- explore different personal struggles faced by individuals and families. Themes include the tension between faith and professional treatment for depression, the impact of alcohol addiction, and the effects of grief and isolation. "Prayers and Prescriptions" portrays a family confronting depression within a household where spiritual responses are often prioritised over medical care.

"The First Step" follows a young man forced to confront alcohol misuse after concerns are raised in his workplace.

"A Phone Call Away" tells the story of a grieving widow whose life takes an unexpected turn following timely intervention.

Organisers said the films were developed not only as creative works, but also as tools to stimulate national conversations about mental health and to challenge long-standing stigma that often prevents people from seeking assistance.

The productions are available for public viewing online through IDRF Guyana's social media platforms and YouTube channel.

Officials are also encouraging anyone experiencing emotional distress, or those supporting someone who may be struggling, to reach out to trusted individuals, healthcare providers, faith leaders or local support services.

Mental health assistance in Guyana is available through the national crisis hotline by calling 915 or through resources provided by the Ministry of Health's Mental Health Services.



improvements since Dr Mahadeo's previous visit in 2021. Pharmacy reports indicated that drug supplies are currently 99 per cent stocked, with only a single non-essential medication unavailable.

During engagements at the Linden Hospital Complex, the Director General reviewed diagnostic services, including ultrasound operations. Officials reported that approximately 1,000 ultrasounds were conducted over the past year, with daily patient numbers ranging between 40 and 80 persons, including both admitted patients and walk-in clients.

The hospital currently operates four ultrasound machines, including one stationed in the Accident and Emergency Unit to support urgent cases, and services have reportedly continued without interruption for the past five years.

Dr Mahadeo also visited the hospital's Mammography Unit, commissioned in February 2025, where 100 screening mammograms have been completed to date. Medical staff reported that 20 screenings detected early signs of breast cancer, allowing patients to begin treatment at an early stage. During the visit, he emphasised the role of frontline healthcare workers, stating that claims suggesting services are unavailable overlook the daily efforts of nurses, technicians and doctors who continue to provide care to patients.

The final stop of the assessment was the Charles Roza School of Nursing, where discussions were held with Principal Tutor, Ms Sabina Gullin, on training programmes and institutional operations. Approximately 200 students are currently enrolled through a combination of online and in-person learning.

The school offers programmes in Single-Trained Midwifery, Registered Nursing and Registered Nursing Assistant training, all aimed at strengthening the region's healthcare workforce. Officials confirmed that the institution has remained continuously operational since its establishment.

Dr Mahadeo explained that the visit forms part of broader efforts to strengthen healthcare systems in Region Ten while expanding diagnostic services and supporting the training of future medical professionals.

Healthcare services, training capacity assessed during Linden visit

Director General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, has completed a comprehensive assessment of healthcare services and training institutions in Linden, highlighting improvements in diagnostic capacity, drug availability and workforce development across Region Ten (Upper Demerara-Berbice).

The visit on February 17 included inspections of the Upper Demerara Hospital, the Linden Hospital Complex and the Charles Roza School of Nursing, as part of ongoing efforts by the Ministry to evaluate healthcare delivery and institutional progress.

At the Upper Demerara Hospital, Dr Mahadeo toured the X-ray Department and received updates on ultrasound services while interacting with patients awaiting radiology care. He met with nurses in the Emergency Department and held discussions with heads of key units, including Pharmacy, Laboratory, Chest Clinic and Social Work, focusing on operational challenges and future development plans.

Hospital officials confirmed that the facility has seen



Patient Advocates Programme set to transform healthcare across Guyana

The Ministry of Health is rolling out its Patient Advocates Programme nationwide, aiming to improve communication and overall patient experience in public hospitals.

The initiative, which began at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), has already been implemented in Regions Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), Four (Demerara-Mahaica), Five (Mahaica-Berbice) and Six (East Berbice-Corentyne), and is now expanding into hinterland regions.

The programme was first introduced at GPHC, led by Emergency Medicine Specialist, Dr Zulfikar Bux, in collaboration with the U.S.-based Northwell Health. It is designed to bridge communication gaps between patients and clinical staff, particularly in busy emergency departments where misunderstandings often lead to anxiety and complaints.

Director General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, explained the structure and accountability mechanisms built into the initiative.

“They will be required to report on how many clients or patients they have assisted, how many interviews they have conducted, and how many complaints they have received. These reports will be evaluated, and

decisions will then be made on how to improve the system based on patient experience, not only the experience of patients, but also that of caregivers and relatives when they interact with the hospital system,” he said.

“It covers how to speak to people, how to greet them, and how to communicate effectively between patients and healthcare staff. They are also trained in how to deal with aggressive individuals, including patients, and how to coordinate across different departments, including security, clinical departments, and non-clinical departments,” added Dr Mahadeo.

The basic qualifications include literacy, a pleasant personality, and the ability to work flexible hours,” said Dr Bux during an interview. “Very often, patients receive the appropriate clinical care, but leave feeling anxious or uncertain because no one clearly explained what was happening. This programme ensures that someone is there to greet them, guide them, answer their questions and alleviate unnecessary anxiety,” he said. Patient Advocates will be outfitted in clearly identifiable uniforms so members of the public can easily recognise who to approach for assistance.

The Ministry of Health also plans to expand the programme in phases to eventually provide broader coverage, including longer operational hours.

GPHC Psychiatry Department receives toolkit to strengthen autism diagnosis

The Ministry of Health has equipped the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) with the internationally-recognised Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS-2) toolkit, a move aimed at enhancing diagnostic services for children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The handover took place on February 17 at the hospital's Psychiatry Department, and was attended by Consultant Psychiatrist and Head of the GPHC Psychiatry Department, Dr Bhiro Harry; Director of the Mental Health Unit at the Ministry of Health, Dr Timothy Morgan; and other members of the Psychiatry Department.

The ADOS-2 is a standardised, evidence-based instrument widely used worldwide for definitive autism diagnosis. Its introduction at GPHC marks a significant advancement in the hospital's specialised child and adolescent mental health services, providing clinicians with improved capacity for comprehensive assessments. The toolkit will enable earlier identification and timely intervention for children with autism, allowing families to access the support and therapeutic services necessary to improve developmental outcomes.

The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to expanding access to quality mental health services, strengthening support systems, and enhancing care for children and families across Guyana.



Over 12,000 units of blood collected annually

-as national transfusion network grows

The Ministry of Health has significantly expanded Guyana's blood banking capacity, improving storage, collection, and support for life-saving surgeries across the country.

Addressing the National Assembly during his parliamentary presentation on Budget 2026, Director-General of the Ministry of Health and Deputy Speaker, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, said: "Before 2019, we were storing blood at only 11 health facilities across the country; now we are storing blood at 34 health facilities across the country."

He added that prior to 2019, blood collection efforts were limited to just four regions, but significant progress has been made since then.

"Currently, we have sensitised people in all the regions. We have voluntary donors in all 10 regions of Guyana. We have increased blood collection to over 12,000 units per year," Dr. Mahadeo said.

The expansion has strengthened Guyana's ability to support complex medical procedures, particularly cardiac surgeries. Before 2019, the country supported approximately 20 heart surgeries per year, with at least six units of blood on standby for each. By 2025,

over 100 heart surgeries were performed, taking six units of blood each.

The National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) is responsible for collecting, storing and distributing blood across all regions of Guyana, ensuring that hospitals and health facilities have a reliable supply for emergencies and surgical procedures.

The delivery of blood, blood products and other medical supplies is expected to be significantly accelerated once the drone system, which has already undergone successful testing, becomes fully operational.

These improvements, including infrastructure upgrades, enhanced training, increased staffing and the procurement of modern equipment, are all part of Government's vision to deliver world-class healthcare to every citizen across Guyana.



Drones to deliver critical medical supplies, as Government advances world-class healthcare

Director General of the Ministry of Health and Deputy Speaker, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, has stated that Government is committed to modernising healthcare delivery through the deployment of drone technology to serve remote and hinterland communities.

“We have already tested drones to provide an upgrade in services in Guyana,” Dr Mahadeo said, during his recent address to the National Assembly on Budget 2026. He said the Ministry of Health has partnered with 19Labs and IDB Lab to deploy the Gale Force drone system, designed specifically for long-range medical logistics.

The drones are capable of transporting up to 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of cargo across distances of approximately 150 kilometers, allowing for two-way delivery of critical supplies and medical samples.

“Once again, we will be leading the way; we will be promoting better services, and we will be providing more timely services,” said Dr Mahadeo.

Donate Blood Today!



National Blood Transfusion Service
East & Lamaha Street, GPHC Compound
Regional Collection Sites

- Public Hospital Suddie
- Lima Regional Hospital
- De Kinderen Regional Hospital
- West Demerara Regional Hospital
- Diamond Regional Hospital
- Enmore Regional Hospital
- Bath Regional Hospital
- New Amsterdam Public Hospital
- No. 75 Village Regional Hospital
- Lethem Regional Hospital
- Linden Hospital Complex



223-7182

National Blood Transfusion Service



The drone network is being integrated with Guyana's expanding telemedicine platform to strengthen healthcare access in isolated regions such as Region One (Barima-Waini) and communities in Region Ten (Upper Demerara-Berbice), including Wiruni, Ituni and Malali.

“Think about blood and blood products, medicines, and artificial supplies that need to be delivered to remote communities in a timely manner,” said Dr Mahadeo, adding that a world-class healthcare for the whole of Guyana is in the making.

Recent operational tests conducted in early 2026 have confirmed the system's readiness, with a phased national rollout, particularly for urgent blood delivery, expected in the coming months.

5 WAYS TO 5 GRAMS

WHEN SHOPPING



Choose natural foods. If buying processed food, choose those with less salt

Reduce Your Salt Intake for Better Health



Health Ministry supports GPHC's Tobacco Cessation Programme with NRT Handover



The Ministry of Health's Chronic Diseases Unit on February 2 handed over Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) to support ongoing efforts to strengthen tobacco cessation services.

This initiative will enhance the Psychiatry Department's ability to deliver comprehensive tobacco cessation care by integrating structured counselling with pharmacological support. Evidence shows that this combined approach significantly increases quit success rates, particularly among patients with mental health needs.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to supporting GPHC in advancing effective tobacco cessation interventions, improving patient outcomes, and reducing the long-term impact of tobacco-related illnesses.



Courtesy Calls, Engagements, and Ministerial Meetings

EU-HealthNext

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony has met with representatives from the European Union (EU)-HealthNext programme, implemented by Expertise France, to discuss initiatives aimed at strengthening Guyana's health workforce.

The meeting took place at the Ministry's Brickdam offices in Georgetown on February 16.

The visiting delegation included Ambassador of the EU, Mr Luca Pierantoni; EU Programme Officer, Mr Mário Machado; Project Director, Mr Timothée Pocard-Kieny; and Head of Unit at Expertise France, Mr Antoine Petibon.

Discussions focused on enhancing training and capacity building for doctors, nurses and hospital administrators across the country.

The EU-HealthNext partnership aims to consolidate clinical training pathways, strengthen public health and research capacity, and support the overall resilience of Guyana's national health system. Officials also discussed broader EU support for improving the accessibility, quality, and sustainability of healthcare services nationwide.

Also attending the meeting were Director General in Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo; Advisor to the Minister of Health, Dr Bheri Ramsaran; Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh; Chief Executive Officer of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Mr. Robbie Rambarran; and other senior health officials.

The engagement underscores Guyana's commitment to developing a skilled, well-trained health workforce capable of meeting the country's evolving healthcare needs, while reinforcing international collaboration to advance public health initiatives.

Argentina

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on February 18 met with Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Argentine Republic, Mr Rolando Hugo Pocovi, at his Brickdam office, Georgetown.

The engagement allowed both parties to become acquainted and exchange ideas on areas of mutual interest, particularly opportunities for collaboration and strengthened bilateral cooperation within the health sector.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to building strategic international partnerships that support improved healthcare delivery and expanded opportunities for the people of Guyana.

UN Foundation, US Congress

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, along with directors and senior officials of the Ministry, met with a delegation from the United Nations (UN) Foundation and members of the U.S. Congress, who were visiting Guyana.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the longstanding contributions of UN agencies and the U.S. Embassy in Guyana to the public health sector.

The Government of the U.S. has been a longstanding partner in strengthening Guyana's healthcare system.

Notable contributions include the provision of vaccines and ventilators during the COVID-19 pandemic, among other forms of critical support.



Courtesy Calls, Engagements, and Ministerial Meetings

Paolo Chiesi Foundation

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, along with Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh, met with representatives from the Paolo Chiesi Foundation (formerly Chiesi Foundation), to discuss a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and outline a strategic work plan for the next two years.

The meeting was held on February 26 at the Ministry's head office on Brickdam, Georgetown.

The Paolo Chiesi Foundation, established in 2005 as the independent philanthropic arm of the Chiesi Group, based in Italy, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving healthcare in low- and middle-income countries.

The visiting delegation included Respiratory Health Programme Manager, Ms Alessandra Folcio; Neonatal Health Program Manager, Ms Federica Cassera; Technical Consultant, Dr Mario Scuri; and Programme Coordinator for the Global Access to Sustainable Pulmonology in Guyana, supported by the Foundation, Dr Waleema Bacchus.

Royal Mining Group

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on February 16, met with representatives of the Royal Mining Group at his Brickdam office, Georgetown to explore potential investment and partnership opportunities within Guyana's rapidly advancing health sector.

Minister Anthony was joined by senior officials of the Ministry of Health and affiliated agencies, including Director General, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo; Advisor to the Minister, Dr Bheri Ramsaran; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Narine Singh; Director of the Government Analyst-Food and Drugs Department (GA-FDD), Ms Andeka Barton; and Chief Executive Officer of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Mr Robbie Rambarran; along with other technical officers.

The Royal Mining Group delegation comprised Chief Operating Officer, Dr Otmar Irshied; Chief of Business and Administrative Operations, Ms Rana Jabbour; Chief Geologist, Mr William Levene; and Head of Medical Operations, Dr Ali Amer.

The Royal Mining Group, which operates in more than 30 countries, is currently exploring investment opportunities in Guyana across several sectors, including mining, energy and healthcare. Discussions with the Ministry of Health focused on healthcare policy frameworks, public-private partnership (PPP) models, regulatory standards and licensing requirements governing medical and health services. The company also signaled its interest in engaging the GPHC to examine potential collaboration in infrastructure development, medical equipment enhancement and service expansion.

Additionally, further consultations are anticipated with the GA-FDD to address regulatory processes related to the licensing, registration, importation and compliance of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and diagnostic products.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to fostering strategic partnerships that align with national health priorities and strengthen the delivery of high-quality, accessible healthcare services for all Guyanese.

VK Group

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on February 12, engaged in discussions with representatives from the VK Group of Investments, based in Atlanta in the U.S., focusing on healthcare development and ongoing initiatives.

The delegation included Chairman of the VK Group, Dr Amardeep Singh Makkar; Managing Director, Guyana Branch, Ms. Anjali Sharma; and Operations



Courtesy Calls, Engagements, and Ministerial Meetings

Manager, also attached to the Guyana Branch, Mr Gautam Gujral.

The Minister was accompanied by Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh, as they explored opportunities to strengthen collaboration and advance key areas within the health sector. The meeting centered on supporting continued growth and innovation within the national health system.

Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on February 11 met with representatives from the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) at his Brickdam headquarters, Georgetown.

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration and advancing standards in medical education and accreditation.

Among those present were Professor Roy Phitayakorn, Professor Brian Lawlor, Professor Gozie Offiah, Dr Maria del Carmen Garcia, Dr Tomáš Petras, and M. Michèle Wera.

The engagement reflects continued efforts to ensure that medical education systems align with international best practices and accreditation standards.

Faith-based Community Leaders

The Ministry of Health hosted a productive stakeholder engagement with faith-based community leaders on February 19 at its boardroom in Brickdam, Georgetown, led by Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, and senior health officials.

Representatives from faith-based organisations across Guyana met with Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, to begin collaborative discussions aimed at addressing the growing burden of chronic diseases and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Key focus areas included expanding public education and awareness initiatives, improving access to early screening services, supporting the rollout and uptake of Government of Guyana voucher programmes, and developing community-appropriate outreach activities such as health fairs, screening drives and referral support systems.

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening preventative programmes in 2026 and recognised the critical role religious leaders and faith-based organisations play in building healthier communities nationwide.





Health Ministry participates run/walk to support healthier lifestyles

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, participated in the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo five-kilometre run/walk on February 15 in support of efforts to promote healthier lifestyles across the country.

During his remarks, the Minister made a public appeal for the adoption of healthy habits, emphasising the importance of regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, and routine medical check-ups to prevent the onset of non-communicable diseases.

The activity was geared toward raising awareness about diabetes and heart disease, reinforcing the Ministry's ongoing commitment to prevention, education, and community engagement.

Health Ministry welcomes delegation from Northwell Health

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, on February 9, welcomed a delegation from the U.S.-based Northwell Center for Global Health and Guyana's cardiology team during a meeting at his Brickdam office, Georgetown.

The visiting delegation engaged the Minister in discussions on the progress of ongoing cardiology initiatives and explored plans for upcoming collaborative projects aimed at strengthening cardiac care services in Guyana.

The delegation includes: Vice President, Center for Global Health, Northwell Health, Dr. Eric Cioè-Peña; Vice Chair, Cardiology, Northwell Health, Dr. Rajiv Jauhar; Attending Cardiologist, Northwell Health, Dr Thara Ali; Echocardiogram Sonographer, Northwell Health, Ms Helon Threfall; Program Manager, Center for Global Health, Northwell Health, Ms Zaire Couloute; and Head of Department, Cardiology, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Dr Michael Chin.

The visiting team is in Guyana to provide support to the Cardiology Department at GPHC through the management of complex cardiac cases, the conduct of echocardiograms, and the delivery of clinical training to local healthcare professionals.





UNICEF, Gov't of Canada hand over second batch of anthropometric equipment to Health Ministry

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of Canada handed over a second batch of anthropometric and maternal health equipment to the Ministry of Health during a simple ceremony on February 18 at the Ministry's Headquarters on Brickdam, Georgetown.

The equipment was donated through UNICEF (Guyana and Suriname), with funding through the Canadian High Commission in Guyana. This second batch of equipment was valued at approximately CAD\$170,000, bringing the overall investment from Canada through UNICEF to approximately CAD\$230,000.

Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, accepted the donation on behalf of the Government of Guyana, and expressed gratitude for the continued partnership.

The Minister noted that this was the second set of equipment received, following an earlier hand-over at the Kingston Bond, Georgetown, and emphasised that the initiative supports the Government's ongoing efforts to improve child health outcomes, particularly reducing infant and under-five mortality.

Dr Anthony noted that ensuring children attend clinics regularly and are assessed, using the correct parameters, is essential to improving health outcomes. He explained that the newly received equipment will help healthcare professionals better monitor maternal and child health, particularly in hard-to-reach regions such as Regions One (Barima- Waini), Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), Eight (Potaro-Siparuni) and Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo).

"Over the past few years, the Ministry has worked to improve access to healthcare in these regions by rehabilitating health posts and health centres, expanding solar power systems, introducing telemedicine services, and training community members to serve as community health workers, with at least two trained community health workers now present at many facilities," said the Minister.

He pointed out that equipping these centres with modern tools is a critical next step. The equipment received included weighing and measurement scales, portable ultrasound machines, and fetal dopplers, which will support antenatal care and help healthcare workers monitor babies during pregnancy.

The Maternal and Child Health Department will ensure healthcare workers receive the necessary training to use the equipment effectively.

The Ministry of Health expressed sincere appreciation to UNICEF and the Government of Canada for their continued support and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening maternal and child health services across Guyana.

Among those present at the ceremony were Officer-in-Charge of UNICEF Guyana and Suriname Representative, Mr Gabriel Vockel; Deputy Director and Head of Cooperation and Development at the Canadian High Commission, Mr Adam Loyer; and Director of Family and Primary Health Care in the Ministry of Health, Dr Ertenisa Hamilton; along with other health officials.

NBTS encourages eligible Guyanese to donate **blood**

Voluntarily donating blood is a small act that makes a big difference in the lives of persons who are in need of blood transfusion and components, as well as in the lives of persons donating.

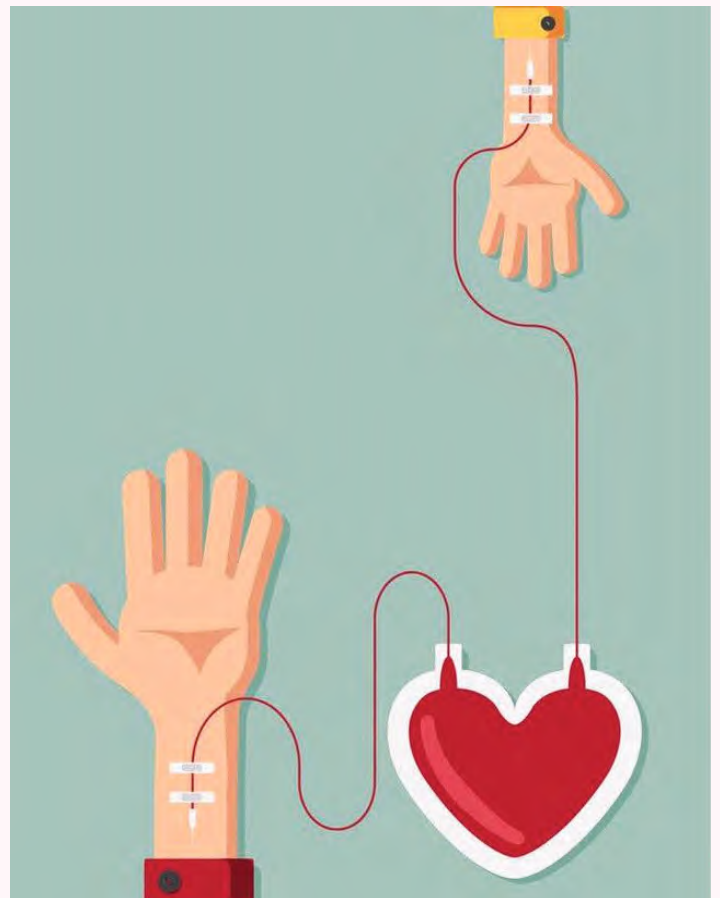
It is an important task that comes with several benefits. This includes reduced stress, improved emotional well-being, and benefits to the physical health of donors. Donating blood regularly may lower iron stores, reducing the risk of heart attack, stimulating new blood cell production, and detecting hidden health issues.

Promoting blood donations to the blood bank, Director of the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS), Dr Pedro Lewis, on a recent broadcast of “Health Matters,” said that donating blood guarantees that blood is in the blood bank and that it is safe for those who need it.

“For the individual of course, it helps to take out cholesterol. At this point of time, we’re eating a lot of fast food and so on,” said Dr Lewis.

“It helps to remove those bad fats out your system, takes triglycerides and cholesterol out of your bloodstream, makes persons healthier, prevents cardiac arrest and other heart complications, and regulates blood pressure,” he said.

Dr Lewis explained that blood donations are needed for recipients who might suffer from haemorrhaging, or those who need orthopaedic surgery, cardiac surgery, maternity patients and occasionally those patients who are diagnosed with dengue and may need platelets.







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