



The Eastern *Vibes*

Monthly Newsletter 2023

October 2023, Issue #111

Let's Move Our Wellness Journey Together



Participants at the start of the 5K Walk /Run

Hundreds of people from the Eastern Region and beyond attended the Wellness in the East 5k Walk/Run and Health Festival on October 28, 2023 hosted by the Eastern Regional Health Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Health under the TTMoves theme **"Let's Move Our Wellness Journey Together"**. The national campaign focused on reducing Non-

Communicable Diseases risk factors, encourages changes in behaviour in respect to healthier eating and exercise choices.

275 health-conscious enthusiasts, representing various age groups joined in prayer at 6.30 a.m. to begin the activities with the 5k Walk/Run which commenced and ended at Bliss Car Park, Eastern Main Road, Sangre Grande.

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Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

Let's Move Our Wellness Journey Together

Mr. Shaquille Pierre winner of the event crossed the finish line at 20:20 while Ms. Claire De Bourg was the first female to complete the circuit. The oldest participant was Mr. Bertrand Patrick, 84 years-old and Jahmai Sanchez age 5 was the youngest participant.

The activities continued with a cool-down aerobic session and a short programme. Dr. Christopher Bristo, Primary Care Physician II, welcomed those in attendance and encouraged everyone to keep moving their wellness journey forward by making small changes to their diet and exercise regime. He reminded persons that we are all stronger when we support each other and by doing this we can all create a healthier community. In her brief statement Ms. Indardaye Maharaj, General Manager-Nursing, urged persons to participate in adequate physical activities as it is the core pillar to reducing our risk of developing Non-Communicable Diseases and keeping them under control.

Mr. Michael Reid, Deputy Permanent Secretary, brought special remarks on behalf of the Minister of Health. Deputy Permanent Secretary Reid appealed to everyone to join the journey toward better physical and mental wellness. He also asked persons to take pre-emptive action against the onset of various illnesses due to unhealthy practices and modifiable risk factors such as smoking, sedentary lifestyle, poor diet, harmful use of alcohol, substance abuse and the consumption of sugar-loaded drinks. He indicated that these items are all invariably linked to chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension and respiratory illnesses. Also present was Ms. Esme Rawlins-Charles, Chairman of the Board of Directors, members of the Board, Mr. Ronald Tsoi-a-Fatt, Chief Executive Officer and senior representatives from the Ministry of the Health.

At the Health Festival persons were provided with a wide range of primary health care services focused on increasing their knowledge on Non-Communicable Diseases and the risk factors. It also aimed to improve attitudes towards a healthier lifestyle by encouraging people to do regular health checks and physical activities.

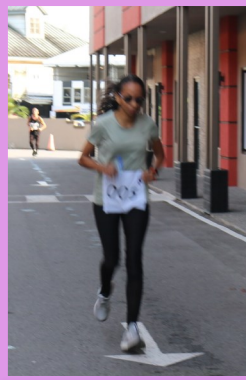
Attendees were provided with a wide range of primary healthcare services which included Blood Pressure Testing; Blood Glucose Testing; Body Mass Index (BMI); Prostate Specific Antigen; Pap Smear; Breast Examination; Vaccination; Medical Consultation; HIV & Eye Testing; Mental Health; Dental Counselling; Pharmacy; Oncology and Palliative; Smoking Cessation; Health Education; Chronic Disease Food Display; Nutrition; Disaster Preparedness and a Career booth showcasing employment opportunities in the Authority. Other stakeholders included Ministry of Health; Mindwise; Police Service; Fire Service; Lions Club; Scotia Bank; Guardian General; Ministry of Agriculture; the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO); HydraStation; Agricultural Development Bank (ADB); National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP); National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) and Massage Therapy.

Persons were entertained while they visited the various booths by the Big Blood Riddim Section, Kelly Matthews, Eric Taylor (Pink Panther), Joseph Vautor La Placeliere (Lingo) and Sherwin Jeremiah (M1).

Children were not left out as they engaged in face painting and various physical activities such as obstacle course, hula hoop, jump rope and bouncy castle.

The ERHA continues to partner with stakeholders to deliver quality healthcare to persons in the communities we serve.

Highlights of 5K Walk and Health Festival



Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Mr. Ronald Tsoi-a-Fatt, Chief Executive Officer with staff members of the Sangre Grande Hospital



Nutrition staff educate members of the public



Doctor screens patient



Medical Worker interact with clients

According to the World Health Organization cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide and accounts for nearly one in six deaths. The risk factors include tobacco use, alcohol consumption unhealthy diet and lack of physical activities. Cancer mortality can be reduced when cases are detected and treated early.

In commemoration of Cancer Awareness month staff at the Sangre Grande Health Centre held a Cancer Awareness Programme on October 15, 2023 at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre.

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Priya Gopie, Medical Doctor/Consultant followed by Mr. Ronald Tsoi-a-Fatt, Chief Executive Officer, who commended the staff and encouraged them

to work assiduously to bring persons to a level of good health.

Lectures were conducted by House Officer Dr. Stefan Garcia, Dr. Khaleel Sinanan and Dr. Venkateswarlu Malinani on topics such as Breast, Prostate and Colon Cancer.

Members of the public were able to access services such as basic screening, breast examinations, medical screening and blood tests including Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). Staff members of the Nutrition, Palliative Care and Medical Social Work Departments also provided guidance on a range of health related topics. Persons were also treated to body massages and were entertained by Ms. Elisabeth Campbell on piano, Dr. Ayers who interpreted a song in sign language and the Hislop siblings performed as instrumental piece.

We Testing Thursday

Trinidad and Tobago has one of the highest rates globally for Non-Communicable Diseases. They account for 60% of deaths annually with heart disease being the number one cause of death (25%), followed by diabetes (14%). (Source: Non-Communicable Disease Strategic Plan)

The Health Education Department Nariva/ Mayaro conducted a W.E. Testing Thursday – **Know Your Numbers** on October 26 2023, at the MCTV Superstore Carpark, Mayaro.

The Wellness Initiative promoted regular health screening, increased water intake, consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as physical activity in the prevention and management of Non-Communicable Diseases.

Over 62 persons participated in activities and welcomed to opportunity to receive screening and information on NCD's. The services provided included:

- Know Your Numbers (Blood pressure, Blood sugar testing & Body Mass Index)
- HIV Testing and Counselling
- Influenza Vaccine
- Fruit and Healthy Snack Distribution
- Nutrition & Health Education Counselling



Infection Prevention Control Feud

The Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Department hosted a Family Feud style game to increase awareness of Infection Prevention Control Week which was observed from (16-20 October, 2023) on Friday 20th October, 2023 at the Sangre Grande Hospital for members of staff to test their knowledge on Infection Control.

The main objective was to increase awareness amongst staff on Infection Control and to remind them on proper practices to prevent the spread of infections.

Supporters of the teams also had the opportunity to take part in a question and answer game to win attractive prizes.



1st Place - Ward 3

2nd Place - Ward 2

3rd Place - Nariva/Marayo

World Hand Washing Day

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hand washing with soap could potentially save 1 out of 3 young children from infectious illnesses. Educating and promoting hand hygiene are important factors in preventing infectious illnesses.

Recognizing the importance of education the School Health Unit held hand washing activity sessions to commemorate World Hand Washing Day which is celebrated annually on October 15.

Over 98 children from the Sangre Grande SDMS Hindu ECCE; Sangre Grande Government ECCE; Servol St Andrews ECCE; Precious Gems (George Karim) and Kids Care ECCE (Good Hope Street).

The children learnt about the importance of hand washing and also had the opportunity to practice fun handwashing.



Health Lecture by Diabetic Educator



Mr. James Harper, Diabetic Educator engages clients on diabetes

Over **35** clients of the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre Wellness Centre participated in a comprehensive wellness programme designed to monitor and assess their health progress during their health journey.

Mr. James Harper, a Diabetic Educator, provided valuable insights on various health-related topics such as insulin resistance, the benefits of a healthy diet and the importance of **"lowering your numbers to improve your lifestyle."** He offered attendees a path way to support their

well-being and manage their health effectively.

The presentation was followed by an interactive session which fostered a dynamic learning environment, allowing clients to clarify their doubts and gain a deeper understanding of the health topics discussed.

Tokens were presented to these clients to reward them for their success and to encourage others to continue on their journey to a healthier lifestyle.

Coalmine Seventh Day Adventist Church Health Fair



Staff interact with client

The Eastern Regional Health Authority in collaboration with the Coal Mine, Seventh Day Church located at Cunapo Southern Road Coal Mine, Sangre Grande hosted an Awareness Walk and Health Fair on October 22, 2023.

The awareness walk commenced from Loversville to the Church compound.

Clients were able to access services such as Blood Pressure, Blood Glucose Testing and Influenza Vaccine.

Clients were also able to access booths from the Health Education Department and Medical Social Work Department.

Sangre Grande Hospital Celebrates Pharmacy Week



Pharmacy Staff at Sangre Grande Hospital

In the picturesque town of Sangre Grande, nestled in the heart of Trinidad and Tobago, the healthcare community recently came together to celebrate a week of immense significance - **Pharmacy Week at Sangre Grande Hospital.**

This annual event is a testament to the unwavering dedication of pharmacy professionals and their pivotal role in providing exceptional healthcare services.

A Week of Gratitude

From the hospital corridors to the tranquil pharmacy units, the air was filled with a sense of appreciation and celebration. Pharmacy Week offered the perfect occasion for patients, colleagues and management to express their gratitude to the dedicated team of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, working tirelessly behind the scenes.

The Pillars of Patient Care

Pharmacy professionals are the unsung heroes of healthcare. They are the medication experts, ensuring that patients receive the right medications, at the right time and in the right way. They contribute significantly to patient safety and well-being by preventing drug interactions, providing medication counseling and maintaining meticulous medication records.



Pharmacist of Sangre Grande Hospital with patients during Pharmacy Week 2023

Sangre Grande Hospital Celebrates Pharmacy Week Cont'd



Pharmacy Staff of the Sangre Grande Hospital attending a Drug Update sponsored by Roche

Pharmacy professionals from the Sangre Grande Hospital reached out within the various clinics, to engage with clients. They offered health screenings, medication disposal services and educational programs which promoted wellness and safety. This community engagement is a testament

to the hospital's commitment to the well-being of persons in the Eastern region.

Of course, the celebration would not be complete without a bit of recognition and applause. Pharmacy Week provided an opportunity to honor the pharmacy team for their hard work, dedication and compassion. Awards and tokens of appreciation were distributed to celebrate their contributions.

In conclusion, Sangre Grande Hospital's celebration of Pharmacy Week is a tribute to the unwavering commitment of its pharmacy professionals. It emphasises expertise, education, patient-centered care and community engagement. It also reflects the Authority's dedication to excellence in healthcare and a reminder that its pharmacists are indeed healthcare heroes. - **by Sean S Maharaj**

Celebrating Pharmacy Week

Educational Empowerment

Pharmacy Week was not just about festivities; it was a time for education. The Pharmacist III organized a series of workshops and seminars to update the pharmacy staff on the latest developments in the pharmaceutical field. This emphasis on continuous learning is crucial for enhancing patient care.

Patient-Centered Approach

The hallmark of Sangre Grande Hospital's Pharmacy Week was its patient-centered approach. Pharmacists offered individualized counselling sessions in Medical Outpatient, Dialysis Unit, Oncology & Haematology Clinics. Empowering patients to take control of their health by understanding and managing their medications effectively. This patient engagement leads to improved adherence and better health outcomes.

Medication Safety First

Preventing medication errors is paramount in healthcare. Pharmacy Week saw the hospital reiterate its commitment to medication safety. Staff members emphasised the importance of double-checking, proper labeling and effective communication within the healthcare team which ensured that patients received the right medications.

Operations Staff Retreat

Recognising that you cannot pour from an empty cup, staff of the Operations Department attended a staff retreat at Queen's Beach Salybia Resort Spa and Conference Centre on September 21, 2023. The main purpose of the retreat was to provide the required support for staff to replenish and equip themselves to be able to address the social issues and challenges they faced at that time.

PEAPSL Consultancy Limited, the EAP provider for the Authority conducted an in-person group session to address the areas of concern to staff. The importance of self-care was highlighted and the Operations team was encouraged to utilise

the four counselling sessions per year, per issue for each staff and their immediate family member.

The 54 members of staff who attended also had the opportunity to prioritise their health by accessing the primary care screening services to know their numbers and to access follow-up care if required.

The activities on the programme were designed to create an environment to boost morale, strengthen professionalism and relationships in the workplace, support work life balance, creativity and innovation and improve cultural realignment.

Operations Department Retreat





"Those who value their sight, get their eyes tested."



Happy World Sight Day!

World Sight Day is celebrated on October 12, 2023 and the focus is on the importance of eye care in the workplace. We encourage everyone to prioritize your own eye health and we invite you to pledge to #Love Your Eyes. Some ways to do so include getting regular eye examinations, wearing corrective lenses, safety glasses and maintaining healthy habits.

The Eastern Regional Health Authority remains passionate about providing accessible eyecare to our citizens. With our primary eyecare

services, we ensure that eye care is available and accessible to all. Our SCOPE program (shared-community ophthalmic primary eyecare) involves regular vision screening services at our chronic disease clinics in our health centres. Here, we provide patient education, eye examinations and necessary referrals to our ophthalmologists for continued management.

Take advantage of these services, we are dedicated to helping you achieve and preserve healthy eyes!

Ms. S. Gangadeen

Optometrist

SAFETY WARDEN TRAINING



Highlights of the Safety Warden Training Programme

At the Eastern Regional Health Authority workplace safety is of paramount importance as it preserves a safe working environment and helps to guarantee the safety and health of all employees. It is for this reason the ERHA established a system of Safety Wardens to assist in the evacuation of staff during an emergency.

Over 87 members of staff throughout the Authority benefited from the Occupational Safety & Health Department annual Safety Warden training at the BPTT Mayaro Resource Centre on October 20, 2023.

The topics covered during the training were:

- ◆ **Roles and Responsibilities of the Safety Wardens**
- ◆ **Legislation**

- ◆ **Safety Warden Roles & Responsibilities**
(As outlined in the Safety Warden Manual)
- ◆ **First Aid**
- ◆ **Evacuation Drills (egress)**
- ◆ **Safety Warden Checklist**

The department also partnered with OSHA to provide more information on the OSH Act and its applicability to the Healthcare Industry. Also present at the training were Fire Officers from the Mayaro Fire Station who briefed the participants on different types of Fire Extinguishers as well as Fire Safety and proper egress in case of an emergency. Staff members also participated in a practical exercise at the Mayaro Fire Station where they were trained in the use of the fire services water hose and different types of fire extinguishers.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Poster Competition Winners



2

**Chelsea
Mohammed**

Customer Service Representative

**Sangre Grande Enhanced
Health Centre**



1

**Shane
Affonso**

On the Job Trainee

**County Health Administrative
Officer, NAMA**



3

**Leighana
Sookram**

Clark I

**New Administration
Building, Head Office**

Congratulations

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

The following is a collection of reflections that regale the experiences of various departments as the COVID-19 pandemic ground global activity to a halt. While the world was locked in because of masks and mandates healthcare workers across the globe were tossed into the waves of uncertainty being tasked with clinical responsibility for a deftly undefined disease with publicly devastating outcomes. As we consider the period 2019 to 2021, we all remember friends and family lost, the psychological impact of the experience and the character building experiences that were forced upon us. ***This is an ode to the staff, at all levels, who went beyond the call of duty in uncertain circumstances, to provide care for the sickest patients.*** While many healthcare workers remain with the indelible etching of residual distress, we remain hopeful for the future. At the Eastern Regional Health Authority, the pandemic demonstrated the need for multidisciplinary care and we are proud that this became our reality as we move into a new era for the Sangre Grande Hospital (SGH). A new building with the hope that our successes and strongly minted bonds continue to grow in the service of the patients from the Eastern Region.

From the SGH COVID-19 Medical Team:

My name is **Kareema Ali** and from May 2020 to present I have been a Senior Medical Officer working alongside my team dedicated in service to our community's Sars Cov2 positive patients. Together we, the "Covid Medical" team as we were called, saw the daunting task that lay ahead of us and forged ahead with no other thought than the preservation of life. **It was an experience that has forever changed our lives.**

Working in these "hot" zone areas was not easy for us with so much uncertainty and stress becoming more and more prevalent as the pandemic raged on before our very eyes. One has to keep in mind that we knew this was a deadly virus, especially the Delta variant so walking into these "hot" zones of sick patients with COVID-19, I must say we experienced the very human emotions of vulnerability, fear of bringing the virus home to our families, and guilt of not being able to save all patients. Although the culture of service was one that led us day after day, a positive attribute that existed in all our team members, it can obscure the human need for support, which in its eventuality led to burnout and misplaced emotions that we all carry still to this day.

During these times of fatigue and fear, I must say we had each other, our small team merged from all areas of the hospital, primarily made up of house staff having this be their first posting and forever shaping their personal and professional paths ahead. We had now become family, we cared and looked out for each other and needed no reminder

of why we were here in the first place. We came to help our patients and fight for life and though far out of reach at that time we knew there would be a light at the end of this tunnel but more importantly we knew we would get there together. Our bonds forged with members of the Accident and Emergency Department, Critical care, Paediatric and Ophthalmology teams in essence created our Sangre Grande Hospital's COVID-19 "hot" zone warriors.

We note and appreciate our ERHA Frontline healthcare workers being labelled as "heroes" for their efforts during the pandemic. However, you may indeed be surprised that most of us who worked in these "hot" zone areas do struggle with the compliment because it implies in some way that we possessed superhuman strength. What I would say is I was surrounded by people who indeed had superhuman hearts, a selfless nature with a passion for service, fearlessness because our patients were in need of an inner strength that was unmatched and unparalleled. To each one of you I say, though our lives have been forever changed I would not have been able to get through this without your support, strength and dedication. You stood behind our hospital, our community and our patients battling daily for life and that can never be forgotten. Thank you all for taking the time to read and appreciate each and every "hot" zone worker from our small family listed below who has fought tirelessly for life at all costs for over two years.

Kareema Ali, Senior Medical Officer Internal Medicine

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

From the SGH Accident and Emergency Team:

My name is **Darren Dookeeram** and I served in both Accident and Emergency and on the COVID-19 teams. While others ran away and never saw the inside of the hot zone, I am distinctly proud of every single House Officer and Registrar in in our department for accepting the challenge head on and leading the fight against the surge. When we were told that there was nothing more that could be done to improve the infrastructure and the space, when officers were moved into the COVID-19 team and the department provided capacitance for officers with little to no experience and the surge overwhelmed the hospital to the point that forced a relocation... the brave officers stood tall and delivered when it mattered the most. Life was not business as usual, there were no cancelled services in the Accident and Emergency, peeping at patients through the door on a ward round was not in keeping with our practice and very often the staff would be moving and rotating patients to ensure best use of the limited space we had available. There would eventually be many opinions on how the response unfolded and the ramifications it had

on personal and systemic levels, but for the people who withstood the onslaught, the truth is that naysayer opinion is irrelevant and that the true spirit of teamwork was the defining factor in the hospital's ability to return to normal function. I restate my pride in the staff that I had the opportunity to work alongside during the pandemic, the wall of division was broken down between department in the service of patients and everyone who was present and active had an integral part to play.

In sincere conclusion, as providers, this was not an expectation of our training and it emphasizes the need for health systems to be responsive to the challenges we face. As we face a world filled with emerging infectious diseases, natural disasters and man-made calamities it is important to remember that the multidisciplinary model, teamwork is what saw us through when all else faltered. As we move forward, we all sincerely hope that this will be another defining characteristic of the ERHA.

Darren Dookeeram, Head of Department (Accident and Emergency)

Staff designated to the COVID-19 Ward Level Care at SGH

Medical

Rajiv Bhagaloo; Darren Dookeeram; Kareema Ali; Davin Powdhar; Felicia Matthews; Kyle Mooteeram; Prashant Mathura; Saeed Ibrahim; Damion Basdeo; Lorenzo Gonzales; Ria Ramnarine; Teneisha Daniel; Leo Danlag; Jayson Danlag; Nesha Sookar; Anjali Singh; Sean Pascall; Latoya Baptiste; Saskah Thompson; Monifa Armstrong; Ricaldo Emmanuel; Nikeisha Paul; Nichelle Ramdial; Karishma Ragoo; Kapher Wilson; Nadita Chillar; Roy Ann Mitchell; Susan Harduar; Candice Sampath; Trishana Ramlal; Sumatee Gerald; Charlene Noel Baisden; Michelle Parmassar; Sumantha Mohammed; Christianne Rampersad; Neshana Maharaj; Annisa Cooper; Stacey Jackman; Shereen Bart; Ian Forde; Julian Marshall; Abeena Kellar; Kurise Alfred; Reeva Singh; Danielle Sandy; Shalina Singh; Elnisha Thanoo; Nkosi Myers; Mitchell Gill; Samara St John; Nkelia Jones; Melissa Kendall; Candice Ash; Michelyn Gerrick; Anna Ramtahal; Govindra Indoi; Tameika Augustine; Nicholas Boodhai; Robyn Beckles; Anuradha Sankar; Kimberly Alexander; Elijah Parks; Anthony Charles; Ashley Lewis and Christian Mark.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

Nursing (ECU)

Jillian Lalsingh; Darcelle Siberan; Sita Cooper; Josanne Dollaway; Abigail Holder; Kedella Williams; Renae Gopaul; Sanna Ali; Lavaughn Mitchell; Jankie Tulsie; Sheryl Samuel-George; Ayesha Flanders; Nkechi Jones; Salisha Samsodeen; Jade Nicome; Andrea Jones; Natasha Headley; Ruth Daniel; Sabita Persad; Christine Jupiter; Jemima Wallace; Andres Patterson; Melissa Martinez; Jonica Thompson-Nizedinma; Lyneille Figaro; Alicia C. Prince; Anesia Antoine; Aliyah Khan-Fonrose; Amelia Khan; Jenelle Daniel; Hema Beharry; Susan Thomas; Nicole Hunte; Mikella Vanderpool; Ruth Daniel; Moesha Pierre; Zena Pardassie; Abigail Holder; Josanne Dollaway; Diana Soo Woo; Ardelle Owen; Shantel Richards; Alvin Mahabir; Gail Ann Chung; Adena Lopez; Moesha Pierre; Hazel Tenia; K. Sobers; Camille Dubin; Suzet Sutherland; Anisa Ghany; Deon Henry; Kristy Orosco; Shirlan Gomez Forteau; Elizabeth Timothy; Anna Brereton; Blosson Wallace; Jarmoon Joseph; Kerrel Alexis; Sherry Dass; Mary Williams; Tricia Roberts; Rhonda Baptiste; Carlene Campbell; Racquel Dominique; Alisa Joseph Ngene; Avalon Williams; Josephine Miller; Wendy Hayde; Amelia Khan; Carla Sedeno; Lisa Gobin and Maxine Jacob.

Casualty Nursing Staff

Patricia Martinez; Lindel Antoine; Jassodra Samaroo; Portia Reyes; Gilone Mendoza; Denise Villaruel; Allison Henry; Krystal Mitchell; Rohani Moteelal; Savion Douglas; Simone Ramdeen; Kurn Carrington; Tricia Francios; Selitha Archibald; Zuwena Rulow; Sorice Gonzales; Christa Kerr; Natasha L George; Cherryann Samuel; Roy Jose; Ginell Adams; Yurlesky Lopez; Nikkita Telfer; Simone Leblanc; Ketisha Rechais; Jamie Brown; Nichola Noel; Fazeena Mohammed; Ayanna Husbands; Quedia Hanooman; Alicia C Prince; Makeba Edwards; Kimberly Timothy; Carla Wilson; Samihah Ali; Shara Stanton; Tamara Llegendre; Nila Toppin; Devika Harewood; Kimberly Stephens; Verdell Hanibal; Kia Harris; Amilia Khan; Arnyka Lewis; Amelia King; Crystal Ramroop; Asha Batson; Adelle Owen; Farada Jan; Jewel Figaro; Rayann Mazalie; Antonio Gerez; Shena Joseph; Jamie Brown; Andrea Jones; Ginell Adams; Simone Ramdeen; Gilliam Thomas; Anita Bocage; Ayanna Antoine; Sherine Gonzales; Shantel Richards; Afiya Byanile-Jones; Nkechi Jones; Chisty Orosco; Chris Richards; Uma Sadoo; Natisha Barker; Salisha Samoodeen; Aliyah Fonrose; Victoria Williams; Alicia Prince; Makeba Edwards; Okeba Sharma; Ishmael Thompson; Kimberly Timothy; Carla Wilson; Cherry Ann Samuel; Jiselle Orosco; Ann Marie Edwards; Tricia Arkless; Nicola Noel; Andrea Jones; Gineil Adams; Sharon Edwards; Anita Bocage; Ayesha Flanders; Alicia Wilson- Forde; Cindy Harripaul; Michelle Marshall; Stacey Blackman; Zena Roberts; Dana Lou Mc Ewen; Shima Guerra; Nadine Suepaul Ali; Leandra Solomon; Vanessa Walrond; Sharon Greaux; Sharadon Alexander; Merlene James; Mikella Vanderpool; Shakira Thomas; Hazel Ann Tenia; Jill James; Annetta Gooding; Margaret Hernandez; Candice Paul; Alicia Sandiford and Lisa Ramoutarsingh.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

Wards Maids

Mahalia Luces; Sharon Lakhan; Dara Cox; Joanne Jordan; Emily Ramdath; Eastlyn Ann James; Paulette Luces Baptiste; Pearly Henry; Teneisha Mc Kie; Marlene Lara; AnnMarie Springer; Milita Lewis; Kumarie Rampersad; Felicia G Glassgow; Shenelle Persad – (Reliever); Alicia Lashley; Alanda McClatchie; Ruffina D Balgobin; Tenicia George; Tricia Charles; Petalann Thomasos; Kristyann Cyrus; Natasha Noel; Mirlin Benito; Kayanna Ollivierre; Malissa Alvarez; Juliet Guy; Michelle Ali; Dinique Pran; Ria Pierre Persad; Chevon Gray; Deotie Kalicharan; Jamila Marshall; Patsy Thomas – (Deceased); Nancy Bobb – (Deceased); Eleanor Cox – (Deceased); Lucille Jeremiah – (Retired); Dawn Alexander – (Retired); Fardiah Ali – (Retired) and Seema Bissessar – (Reliever).

Attendants

Sherry – Ann Dufeal - Mohammed Curtis Le Andre; Shirla Paul; Kathy- Ann Serrette; Raakesh Ragoobir; Christopher Joseph; Terry- Ann Serrette; Andrew Phillip; Francisca.O. Thomas; Perry Arthur; Lester David; Noel Rochford; Preston Williams; Tara Ragbir- Noel; David Sambury; Lencus Goerge; Rasheed Mohammed; Noel Campo; Kevin Thomas; Denise Andrews – Francis; Edwin De Luge; Sherril Charles – Nicholson; Peter Mahadeo; Brandon Marcano; Susan Abraham – Jones; Steve Rodriguez; Osaso Baptiste; Kerron John; Verne Mitchell; Arron Charles; Lutas D' Andrade; Jacey Halls; Nicholas Samuel; Elton Subah; Justin Daisley; Carlon Wight; Anderson Ragbir; Ricky Ragbir; Reagan Dildar; Ronell Rampersad; Wendell Cruickshank; Shamil Shaddy; Akiel Moses; Wesley Sam; Hakeem Emmauel; Bradley Baptiste; Lyndy -Ann Phillip -York; Richard Dickson; Stephan Phillip; Kegan Singh; Kamani Scott; Ian Ganessee; Qessa Thomas; Ria Cupido; Qese Brown and Denzil Lewis.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

From the Critical Care Team:

My name is **Salma Mohammed** and I was a Senior Medical Officer caring for the critically ill COVID-19 patients at the ERHA. As COVID-19 wreaked havoc amongst the world's population, with mass casualties accumulating and resources dwindling, we stood in anticipation and trepidation of what was about to unfold at the Sangre Grande Hospital (SGH). In May 2020, as COVID-19 patients inundated SGH, we soon learnt to saddle in and get to the job. With no real weapons of defense in the form of vaccines and antidotes, we relied heavily on the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided and prayers to the Almighty God. Months before, as the first wave of the pandemic crippled the world, we were receiving updated guidance from the Royal College of Anaesthetists and doing simulation training in the department preparing us for combat. This training encompassed the selection of the appropriate protective masks, the donning and doffing of the protective wear, airway management and ventilation strategies. We were as prepared as we could be physically. What we were not prepared for though, were the patients. The masses and their sense of desperation, their willingness to try anything be it proning, steroids or whatever we could offer. This "**make shift**" ward would soon become home to many patients who were just grateful for another day of life. We would dart past the medical COVID-19 team daily, discuss management plans and what we as the team would implement. Soon, a SGH COVID-19 Guideline would be established to help in our day-to-day activities and management. Establishment of High Flow Nasal Oxygen, proning and steroids would soon become the norm.

As the difficult COVID-19 patients emerged during the delta surge, and the establishment of tocilizumab as a treatment strategy became an option, we would look at the patient's data, then decide as a team (COVID-19 medicine and ICU) whether to institute this as a management strategy. Together, as comrades in battle, we would work hard and tirelessly. Together, we learnt NEW medicine. However, as the masses amounted, exhaustion, despair and depression filled

us. Very often we went without lunch or dinner trying to get the patients sorted either for the ward or for transfer. Some days, we would be so overwhelmed, we would have back-to-back transfers to designated facilities for COVID-19 patients, while more admissions would emerge either to the regular ICU or COVID-19 ICU. We would have to sort and carry on like normal, often filled with memories of our patients, those who fell and those who begged for another day. We would learn to multitask as doctors, hand feed patients, perform chest physiotherapy, counsel patients and also their relatives which would have to be done virtually. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment of hypoxia and the emergent need for ventilation as patients quickly deteriorated and required Critical Care, we would have to manually push patients to the intensive care area as fast as possible, sometimes just us with the nurses.

If I had to say what was the best lesson learnt, it would be camaraderie amongst our team. Overnight, Dr. Leopold would set out patient management sheets, blood results charts, we would learn to delegate tasks, some team members going to AE, some to ECU, some typing up the national templates and others assigned to the general ICU. Dr. Vedavid Manick, Dr. Kareema Ali and their COVID-19 officers were like our team mates in a relay match, passing the baton on from one to another. While this hot zone was by no means perfect, we tried and we tried to the best of our ability to make patient care the best as was humanly possible at SGH. To our staff at the ICU who fearlessly risked their lives and tackled the hot zone, your immeasurable sacrifice is appreciated not just by the ERHA but also by the populace of Trinidad and Tobago who came to the Eastern Region.

We salute you our staff.

I always felt, if I ever had severe COVID-19, that SGH is where I wanted to be. Our teamwork, our genuine empathy and selflessness made us one of the best COVID-19 teams in the world!

Salma Mohammed Consultant Anaesthetist, SGH

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

Staff, ICU Level (Hot zone)

Amy Baboolal; Laeshelle Basanoo; Nekisha Dattoo; Camille Wilson; Kristy Sewlal; Kimberly Thannoo; Jarred Brewster; Vikash Mungroo; Anesh Lalram; Cheyne Matthew; Krystyn Frenche-Vincent; Leanna La Borde; Karishma Bhagaloo; Samara Hassranah; Marika Mohammed; Rao Chandragiri; Renee St. Hill; Christine Leopold; Stefan Ramsewak; Kavita Lacaille and Salma Mohammed.

Nursing staff:

Mary Williams; Rhoda Francis; Natasha Charles; Sparkle Marquis; Natasha Baptiste; Camille Ettienne; Allyson Auguste; Melissa Marin; Joseanne Thomas; Melissa Baksh; Jackie Tulsie; Renae Gopaul; LaToya Joseph; Giselle McMillan; Candice Campo; Claire Fortune; Shelly Bobb; Lauren Boatswain; Kerrel Alexis; Marissa Gooding; Dionne Ovid; Lutchmi Pamcham; Abigail Garner; Fay Richardson and Mailer Dorado.

From the Tacarigua Facility Team:

My name is **Vedavid Manick** and I was responsible for the daily activity of the Tacarigua facility. The ancient Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita speaks about the performance of duty for the welfare of the world, without expectation of any reward or fruit. This was the spirit embodied by the staff of the Tacarigua Extended Care (Stepdown) facility, Commission in April 2021 to meet the national need off increase bed space for persons diagnosed with COVID-19.

Initially set up to reduce the bed space demand of the parallel health system, the facility was retrofitted to accommodate stable, ambulant persons who would be diagnosed with COVID-19. However, within two weeks of the surge of COVID-19 cases from April to June 2021, it was quickly realized that there was a greater need for another group of patients. These were the very elderly and those with multiple comorbidities and end-of-life diagnoses, who because of the multiple outbreaks of COVID-19 at senior citizens care homes and other facilities needed extensive support and rehabilitation before being fit to return to their previous residences.

The care needs of these patients were vastly different from the initial intention. Already battling

anxiety with treating clients with an infectious and potentially deadly variant, the diligent staff got down to the task at hand. They became everything to our patients. Mostly confined to bed, staff diligently ensured that our senior citizens, many of whom suffered from advanced dementia and did not know why they were in a confined and strange environment, got out of bed every day, took their meals and dignity, and received equitable medical care. Ensuring daily communication and updates between patients and their relatives became a priority along with medical parameters and oxygen requirements. This continued well throughout the facility's lifespan until it was closed one year later.

Hard work despite difficult circumstances never goes without reward. Despite treating the most vulnerable population with COVID-19 (elderly with multiple comorbidities), the Tacarigua Facility had a mortality rate below the national average. Among those who did not survive this difficult disease, no efforts were spared to ensure that persons received adequate end-of-life care free of pain, and emotional distress. I salute all members of staff (doctors, nurses and nursing support, attendants, cleaning and Emergency Medical Technicians) for their inspirational dedication to duty and service.

*Vedavid Manick, Senior Medical Officer (Ag.)
Internal Medicine*

SPECIAL FEATURE

Memoirs of COVID-19 Hot Zones: Dedication to the Healthcare Warriors of the ERHA

Staff at the Tacarigua Facility

Vedavid Manick; Chelsie Ramsingh; Saffiyah Hosein; Andell Jaggarnath; Joanna Ballah; Renelle Ramlogan; Sparcle Kirton; Kelly Ann Murray; Penelope Paltoo; Kasmira Khan; Sasha Gajadhar; Christopher Toussaint; Karissa Joseph-Ryan; Ahishaky Carrington; Candice Bharath; Sheramie Fisher; Travis Polisher; Josanne Pitt; Jewelle Figarro; Tamar Roberts; Donnah-Marie Dowden; Akila Lazare; Kimberly Stephens; Tamara Sylvester; Rayann Marzelle; Sherese Johnson; Whitney Murray; Lisa Gobin; Arnyka Lewis; Aliyah Fonrose; Keiosha Punter; Amelia King; Candic Campo; Lauren Superville; Alice Singh; Annmarie Ali; Savion Douglas; Kimberly Clarke; Desma Amos; Josanne Edwards; Crystal Ramroop; Daniella Kerr; Josiah Ramroop; Racheal Steadman; Charmaine Gomez; Christine Jupiter; Ana Nancoo; Jamaal Calliste; Kristen Blackman; Carla Seden; Lyndon Subratee; Camile Dublin; Carla Seden; Kadjah Lewis; Lousie Forestine; Alisha Huston; Janicq Lashely; Mahalia Orosco; Claire De Montrichard; Suzette Sutherland; Micheal Guealtu; Kegan Singh; Ronell Francis; Stephan Phillip; Akiel Moses; Kamani Scott; Richard Dixon; Micheal Guealtu and Ronell Francis.





October 2023

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Fax: 668-4368

Mayaro District Health Facility

Pierreville, Mayaro
Tel: 226-1575/630-1258/9
Tel/Fax: 630-1257

Biche Outreach Centre

Canque Village
Biche
Tel: 280-9781/668-9053

Brothers Road Outreach Centre

Brothers Road
Tabaquite
Tel: 656-2547/340-6895

Coryal Outreach Centre

Balata Hill Road and Cumuto Main Road
Coryal
Tel: 484-1368/668-8066

Cumana Outreach Centre

Toco Main Road
Cumana Village, Cumana
Tel: 226-1134/670-8250

Cumuto Outreach Centre

Main Road
Cumuto
Tel: 226-1106/643-9075

Grande Riviere Outreach Centre

Hosang Street
Grand Riviere
Tel: 670-8264/385-5421

Guayaguayare Outreach Centre

Guayaguayare Road,
Guayaguayare
Tel: 226-4090/630-8777

Manzanilla Outreach Centre

Eastern Main Road
Manzanilla
Tel: 226-1111/668-2063

Matelot Outreach Centre

Main Road
Matelot
Tel: 670-2428/354-0052

Matura Outreach Centre

Toco Main Road
Matura
Tel: 226-1261/668-6276

Rio Claro Health Centre

De Verteuil and Dougdeen Street,
Rio Claro
Tel: 226-1104/644-2236/644-0181

Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre

Ojoe Road
Sangre Grande
Tel: 226-1102/668-2509

Sans Souci Outreach Centre

Main Road
San Souci
Tel: 670-2382/280-8694

Toco Health Centre

Paria Main Road, Toco
Tel: 226-1576/670-8277

Valencia Outreach Centre

Alexander Street
Valencia
Tel: 226-1260/667-8197

Satellite Dialysis Unit,
Narine Ramrattan Building
Naparima/Mayaro Road,
Rio Claro
Tel: 226-9353

**Submit Articles / Pictures for the ERHA's Newsletter by the 20th of each month to
corpcomm@erha.co.tt**

