



The Eastern *Vibes*

Monthly Newsletter 2025

April 2025, Issue #129

Empowering Communities to Respond to Emergencies



Participant demonstrate First Aid and CPR Techniques

Many lives have been saved due to the timely provision of first aid and CPR in critical and life-threatening accidents, injuries or health complications.

The Health Education Department Nariva/Mayaro launched a First Aid and CPR training programme to provide valuable and lifelong skills to person in the communities we serve.

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Empowering Communities to Respond to Emergencies Cont'd

The first session was conducted at the Brothers Road Outreach Centre on April 24, 2025. Clinicians from the Rio Claro and Mayaro Accident and Emergency Departments conducted sessions on First Aid and CPR. The Pharmacy Department delivered an informative lecture on poisonous animals as well as the do's and don'ts.

Twelve residents from the community participated in the practical session and

engaged the trainers with their questions to ensure that they understood what to do to render assistance in medical emergencies such as fainting, choking, heart attack etc. The intervention of these residents who are strategically located throughout their communities can preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening or promote recovery until medical services arrive.



Wellness on the Move

The Wellness on the Move Caravan rolled into Valencia Recreation Ground and Pavillon in April to introduce persons in the community to the programme.

The Wellness Club Caravan was designed to eliminate common barriers to exercise such as cost, time and accessibility. It also serves as a **"call to action"** for persons to engage in physical activity.

Over **25** persons from the community came out to participate in the energetic fitness sessions which were conducted from 4:30 p.m. to

7:00 p.m. Qualified instructors were present to demonstrate the aerobics, zumba and strength training. Basic health screening and health information were provided by the Health Education team from St. Andrew/St. David. Sessions will continue for the month of May at this venue.

The ERHA encourages persons to adopt a healthy lifestyle that can be sustained independently by incorporating simple physical activity with minimal equipment, eating fruits and vegetables and drinking more water.



Partnering with Stakeholders to Increase Awareness



Ms. Zalina Khan, Health Education Aide interacts with clients.

Recognising that several persons may be challenged to visit primary healthcare facilities during regular working hours, the Health Education and Nutrition Departments Nariva/Mayaro participated in a health fair hosted by the Mafeking Community Council. The outreach initiative was conducted on April 5, 2025, at Mafeking Community Centre. The team provided basic screening, information on Non-Communicable Diseases, stress and living a healthier lifestyle. They also conducted lectures on healthy eating.

On April 10, 2025, they conducted a session at the Rio Claro Public Library under the “**Healthy Heroes Programme**” to inform the public about healthy eating and exercise.

The ERHA participates in World Health Organization Training Programme



Dr. Everold Hosein, Senior Communication Advisor/Consultant at the WHO with staff of the Ministry of Health, Eastern Regional Health Authority and Health Educators from Suriname.

A multidisciplinary team from the Eastern Regional Health Authority participated in the Social and Behaviour Change: Integrated Marketing Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) in Health and Social Development Programme. The programme was hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and was conducted during the period April 22, 2025 - May 5, 2025, at the Radisson Hotel Trinidad.

The programme focused on equipping health professionals with skills to plan and implement

communication strategies that go beyond informing and educating persons and would lead to the adoption of healthy behaviours.

18 members of staff from various departments participated and were trained on multiple ways to achieve sustainable behavioral results within the health sector.

Certificates of participation were presented to individuals upon the completion of the programme.

Enhancing Leadership Skills

34 senior nurses have successfully completed the Management Essential Training Programme and have enhanced their leadership and management capabilities.

The programme which was designed specifically for Nursing Supervisors, Head Nurses and District Health Visitors was conducted during the period 22-23 April, 2025, at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus. Presentations were made by Dr. Oscar Ocho, Director of UWI School of Nursing; Mr. Abraham Bremnor, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator at COSTAATT; Ms. Narisha Baksh-Mohammed, Acting Manager -Industrial Relations, Compensation and Benefits Administration and Ms. Shalini Jattan, Manager-Organisational and Employee Development.

The first day of the programme focused on foundational leadership and operational management skills. The core elements included leadership in practice; conflict resolution; effective ward/unit management and time management. On day two, emphasis was placed on highlighting the key competencies in performance appraisals; managing underperformance and understanding the disciplinary process and the role of the Industrial Relations Department. This training has equipped senior nurses with tools to increase efficiency, decision making and strengthen staff engagement, thereby translating into improved patient outcomes and experiences.



Celebrating Medical Laboratory Professionals Week

In recognition of Medical Laboratory professionals Week 2025, the Paraclinical Team wishes to extend thanks and appreciation to our Laboratory professionals aka the “Mystery Machine of Diagnostics” for their hard work and commitment to the care of the ERHA clients.



Happy Administrative Professionals Day



Encouraging our Youth to Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle



Ms. Sherifa Ali, Health Education Aide engages with the public at SERVOL.

Over **75** students and teachers from the St. Andrew's Regional Life Centre (SERVOL) were encouraged by members of the Health Education St. Andrew/St. David team to adopt a healthy lifestyle to reduce their risk of chronic diseases and lead a fulfilling life. The advice was given during the institution's annual Easter programme on April 10, 2025.

A mixed approach incorporating lectures, quizzes and health models was used to capture attention and transfer information. The main topics focused on were Non-Communicable Diseases; Dangers of Smoking; Vaping; Alcohol Use; Men's Health; Women's Health and Hydration.

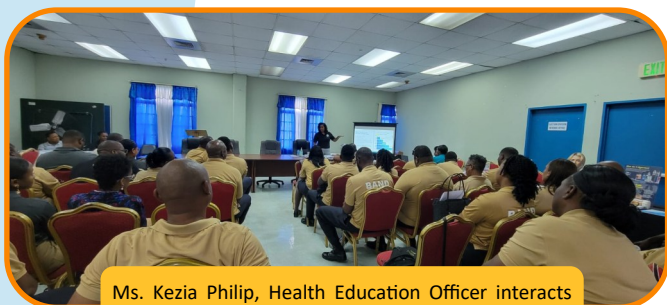
Increasing Awareness on the Dangers of Tobacco

Tobacco use harms nearly every organ in your body including the liver, kidneys and bladder.

In an effort to educate persons about the dangers of smoking, the Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David delivered a lecture on Healthy Lifestyle and the Dangers of Tobacco use to students at MIC Institute of Technology, Sangre Grande.

30 students were present at the Outreach which was conducted on April 15, 2025. They participated in the interactive discussion which focused on topics such as Non-Communicable Diseases; Smoking; Vaping and Alcohol use. Smoking cessation models were also used for the participants to have a clearer understanding of the effects of tobacco use.

Increasing Awareness on Health



Ms. Kezia Philip, Health Education Officer interacts with members of the TTPS Police Band.

Information facilitates understanding, learning, communication and can assist in decision making.

Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Band were provided with information on various health related topics during an outreach programme to empower them to make informed

decisions to maintain and improve their health. The session was conducted by Health Education; Nutrition and the Medical Social Work Departments from St. Andrew/St. David on April 16, 2025, at the Sangre Grande Police Station Conference Room. The team provided basic health screening, vaccination and HIV testing. A presentation giving useful advice on how to prevent chronic diseases was also delivered.

Lecture sessions were also conducted during April for chronic disease clients at the Sangre Grande, Manzanilla and Valencia health facilities. Over **110** persons were informed of the importance to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Congratulations to the Medical Laboratory Team for Achieving ISO Accreditation



Congratulations

Congratulations to you our Medical Laboratory team for achieving ISO 15189:2022 Biochemistry Scope Accreditation and for also becoming the first Medical Laboratory in Trinidad and Tobago to be accredited by TT LABS.

Quality assurance is crucial in healthcare delivery as it assists to ensure safe, effective, patient centered care by minimizing errors and adverse events.

This globally recognised achievement, highlights the Medical Laboratory's adherence to international standards. It also assures the members of the public, that is the clients we serve, of the reliability, competence, integrity and the overall quality of the established management systems that are in effect here at the ERHA, thereby leading to increased public confidence in test results generated by our Lab.

The professionalism, commitment and individual contribution of each member of this team has assisted our clinical team to improve patient outcomes by conducting over 9,194,745 tests during the last five years. That is truly amazing.

From The Chief Executive Officer of the
Eastern Regional Health Authority

"Caring is the Key"

Stepping to Wellness



The ERHA Wellness Club is utilising creative ways to encourage persons to invest in their health and adopt a healthy lifestyle. On April 27, 2025, over **50** persons from various communities within the Eastern region and staff ventured on a hike to Turure Watersteps, Cumaca.

The relaxing walk along the trail through the

lush green vegetation and the scent of the clean fresh air created the perfect natural environment for persons to **"Get Moving"** under the TTMoves campaign banner. The event was part of the ongoing initiative aimed at promoting physical activity, social interaction and mental well-being.

World Day for Safety and Health Celebration

The Occupational Safety and Health Department hosted an outreach programme in observance of World Day for Safety and Health at Work which is celebrated internationally on April 28. The main purpose of the event was to increase the awareness of staff on the importance of promoting safety at the workplace and how it can reduce the number of work related injuries. The event was held in the lobby of the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus on April 25, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. under this year's theme, ***"Revolutionising health and safety: The role of AI and digitalisation at work".***

Members of staff and clients were informed on how new technology such as AI digitalisation can have an impact on workers safety and health.

Trivia questions and games were used to keep persons engaged and to remind them about the crucial role they play in workplace safety. Booths were also set up by Safety Plus Limited and NATCO to display their latest products.

See highlights below.



Encouraging Women to Prioritise their Health

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer amongst women globally. Symptoms are usually not visible when the cancer is in its early stages hence it is important for early detection.

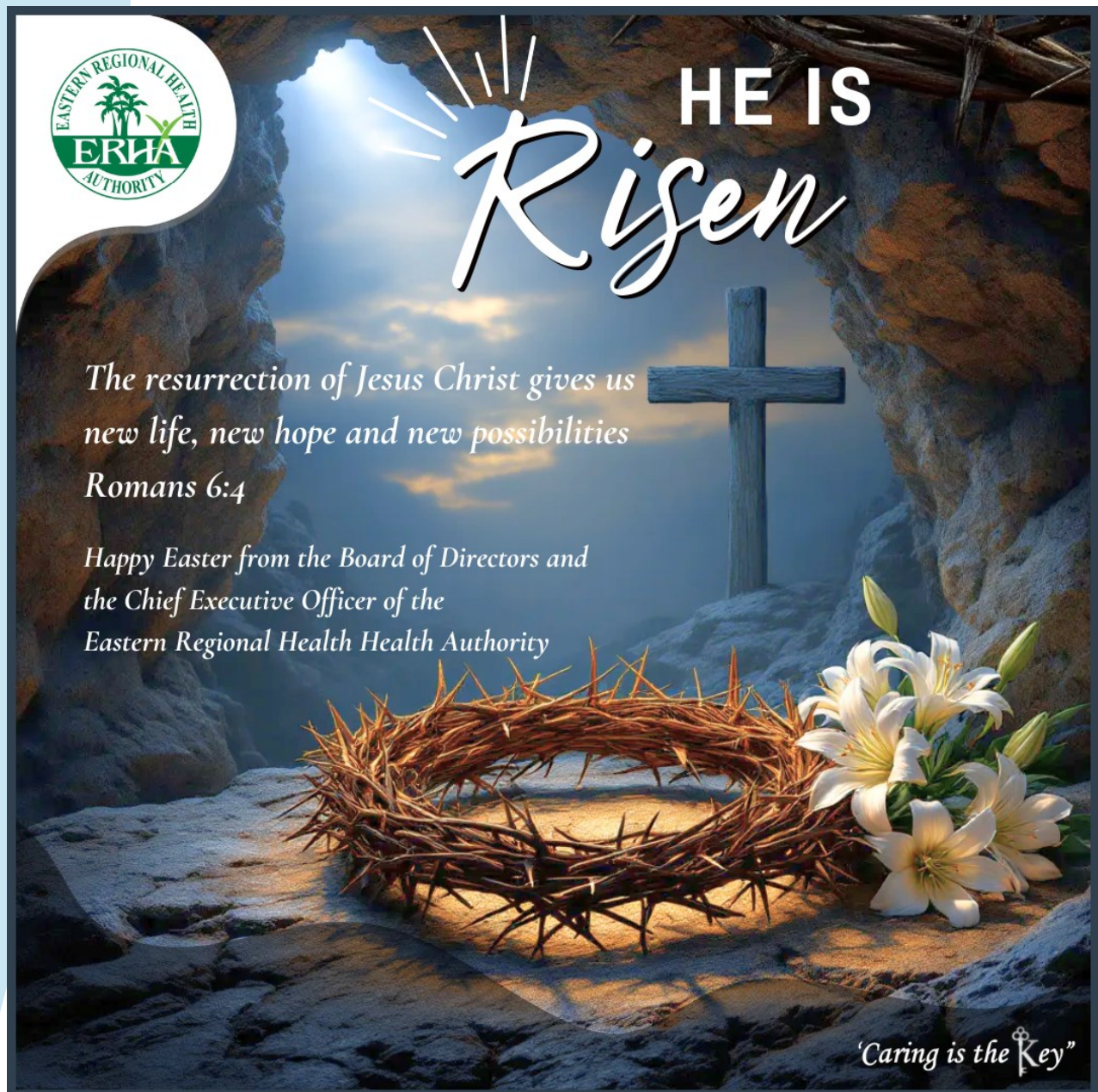
A health programme for women was conducted at the Manzanilla Outreach Centre on April 26, 2025, to increase access to primary care

services for women in the community.

Recognising that early detection can save lives, over **20** women prioritised their health and attended the outreach to receive basic screening, papsmear and breast examinations.

Persons are encouraged to do their screenings annually.

Happy Easter

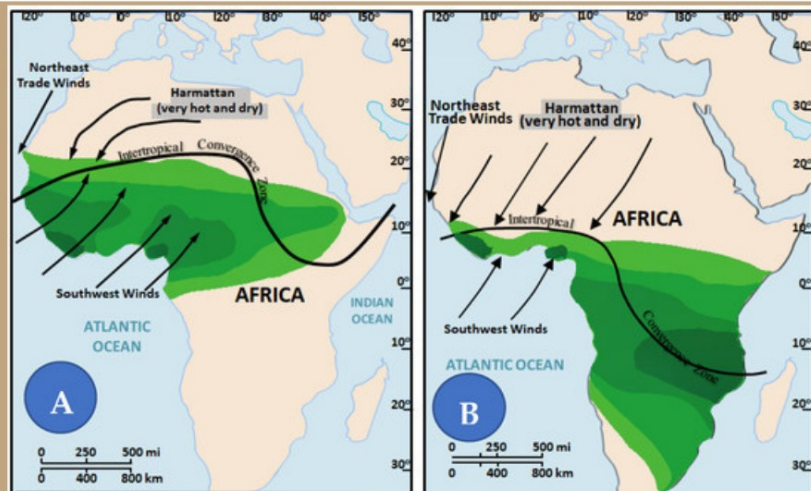


SAHARAN DUST

What is Saharan Dust?

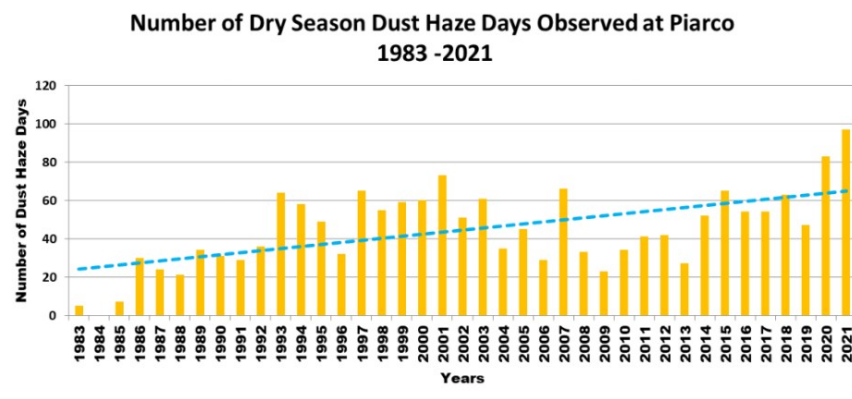
The Saharan Dust, also known as the Saharan Air Layer consists of sand, dust and other particles which are lifted into the atmosphere from vast desert areas in North Africa. The dust is transported by the Hamrattan winds which travel westwards across the Atlantic Ocean.

The Saharan Air Layer is a mass of extremely dry and dusty air which is typically located between 5,000 and 15,000 feet above sea level. Saharan dust often acts as an inhibitor of tropical cyclone development as it takes moisture away from the atmosphere making it harder for thunderstorms to develop.



Increase in Saharan Dust in Trinidad and Tobago:

Saharan Dust Days Increases around Trinidad and Tobago:



The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service suggests that the dust events have markedly become more frequent.

The Saharan Dust has been present during the 6 month dry-season as follows:

- 1980s - 25-35 days;
- 2020 - 60 days.

It has been observed that more dust has been transported out of the Saharan in the last 100 years than in centuries past. NASA has predicted that due to climate change and ocean warming that Africa's annual dust plumes will actually shrink to a 20,000-year minimum over the next century. Research has also linked Saharan Dust Plumes to other natural climate events, such as El Niño events and global warming.

SAHARAN DUST

Saharan Dust Effects:

Saharan Dust can cause:

- Dry Cough
- Itchy Eyes
- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose
- Sneezing
- Watery/Itchy Eyes

High concentrations of Saharan Dust can affect persons with pre-existing respiratory complications such as:

- Persons with pre-existing lung conditions such as asthma disease.
- Persons with pre-existing heart disease.
- The elderly.
- Children.

Staying Safe:

Before the dust arrives:

- Stock up on necessary medication for pre-existing conditions.
- Prepare your home by sealing entryways and staying indoors.

When the dust arrives:

- Stay Indoors and limit outdoor activities.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Protect your eyes, nose and mouth by wearing N95, P95 AND P99 face masks and goggles or sunglasses.
- Monitor any symptoms and treat accordingly.
- Use steam to humidify dry environments. If you are congested, inhaling steam can clear your pathways.

How can you monitor the quality of the air?:

Air Quality Index (AQI) The air quality index is a scale used by government agencies to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become. As the AQI increases, a large percentage of the population is likely to experience severe adverse health effects



Air Quality Index Scale

Good 0-50	The air is fresh and free from toxins. People are not exposed to any health risks
Moderate 51-100	Acceptable air quality for healthy adults but mild threat to sensitive individuals.
Sensitive groups 101-150	Inhaling such air can cause slight discomfort and difficulty in breathing.
Unhealthy 151-200	This could be typically problematic for children, pregnant women and the elderly.
Very Unhealthy 201-300	Exposure to air can cause chronic morbidities or even organ impairment.
Hazardous 301-500	Beware! Your life is in danger. Prolonged exposure can lead to premature death.

You can check the Air Quality in your area by using the following link:

<https://ei.weblakes.com/RTTPublic/DshBrdAQI>

In case of an Emergency, you can call the following numbers:

Fire: 990 Ambulance: 811 Police: 999 ODPM: 511 T&TEC: 800-8832

Sources: <https://ttweathercenter.com/saharan-dust/>, https://www.myfoxxhurricane.com/saharan_dust_car.html, <https://health.gov.tt/saharan-dust>



April 2025

Sangre Grande Hospital Campus

Ojoe Road, Sangre Grande
Tel: 228-3742/226-4744/668-2273
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: 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

Rio Claro Accident and Emergency

Tel: 226-9230

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

Toco Accident and Emergency

Tel: 226-9428

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

