



The Eastern *Vibes*

Monthly Newsletter 2026

January 2026, Issue #138

Carnival Burn Programme



Wellness Carnival Burn at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre

According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity increases the risk of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and other negative health consequences, while physical activity promotes health and well-being.

The Sangre Grande Wellness Centre recognised how important it is to encourage persons to become physically active and proudly kicked off its Annual Wellness Carnival Burn on January 24, 2026 at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre.

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Carnival Burn Programme

Over **105** persons participated in the Carnival Burn sessions which were conducted for four Saturdays and is scheduled to end on February 14, 2026.

The sessions were vibrant, energetic and reflected the enthusiasm of the members of the community and their commitment to improve their health and overall well-being. The programme harnessed the lively spirit of Carnival by incorporating Zumba and Aerobic routines to trending soca in a fun supportive environment.

The workout was expertly led by three qualified fitness instructors Ms. Karthy Portillo, Mr. Andrew La Rode and Mr. Chris Junior Portillo who kept the crowd motivated and moving from start to finish with infectious enthusiasm.

The Carnival Burn also attracted support from members of the Matura and Valencia Wellness Centres and staff who were always ready to inspire others to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The steady increase in attendance highlighted the positive impact of the initiative and the individual's readiness to embrace healthier lifestyle choices.



New Year's Babies at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus



Centre: Dr. Sandeep Maharaj, Chairman and Mrs. Angelina Rampersad-Pierre, CEO presents Mrs. Adanna Ward, (mother of the first baby delivered on New Years Day) with gifts.

The Eastern Regional Health Authority welcomed the first baby to be born at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus at 1:11 a.m. on

January 1, 2026. Mrs. Adanna Ward who resides at Malabar gave birth to a healthy baby boy who weighed 2960 grams and was delivered by Ms. Vonnetta Gooding, Licensed Midwife.

Dr. Sandeep Maharaj, Chairman; Mrs. Angelina Rampersad-Pierre, Chief Executive Officer and staff at the Maternity Ward congratulated Mrs. Ward on the new addition to her family and presented her with a hamper filled with baby products. Ms. Zennesha Sooklal, also give birth to a bouncing baby boy at 8:45 a.m. who weighed 2830 grams. Mothers and mothers-to-be who were present on the ward were all presented with gift bags.

Cancer Awareness Session



Mr. Ronald Ram, Health Education Aide discusses cancer at the Rio Claro Health Centre

Cancer awareness plays a vital role in saving lives by promoting early detection and encouraging preventive measures through healthy lifestyle choices.

With this in mind the Health Education Department Nariva/Mayaro held three Cancer Awareness sessions on January 27, 28 and 30 2026. The team delivered lectures at Brother's

Road and Biche Outreach Centres and Rio Claro Health Centre, targeting members of the Chronic Disease and Men's Health Clinics.

The sessions focused on increasing the public's understanding of cancer by highlighting modifiable and non-modifiable cancer risk factors. Participants were provided with practical cancer prevention tips which recommended screening guidelines and encouraged persons to learn and recognise early warning signs of cancer.

Participants were urged to take proactive steps toward reducing their risk by adopting healthier lifestyles and attending regular screenings. They were also informed about the resources available to the public.

The lectures were facilitated by Mr. Ronald Ram, Health Education Aide and Ms. Josane Williams, Health Education Officer.

Health Hub Webinar Series

In an ongoing effort to increase knowledge of illness prevention, promote overall well-being and share best practices in healthcare, the Health Education Department St. Andrew/St. David hosted a two-part webinar series designed to empower individuals to take control of their health. Over **120** participants attended the informative sessions.

The first webinar, titled **“Exercise Tips for Weight Loss”** was held on January 14, 2026, and featured Ms. Safiya Beckford, Registered Dietitian, Certified Personal Trainer and University Lecturer.

Ms. Beckford encouraged individuals to focus on overall health rather than the number on the scale. She emphasized that this can improve energy levels, blood sugar control, strength and overall fitness which often occur before visible weight loss. Ms. Beckford also reminded attendees that exercise supports heart health, blood pressure and blood sugar management, mental well-being, strength, mobility and independence with ageing. Participants were advised not to rely solely on body weight to measure progress, as factors such as muscle gain and water retention can affect results.

The session also highlighted aerobic exercise, resistance training, high-intensity interval training and everyday movement, with resistance training described as essential for weight management, bone health, injury prevention and healthy aging. Demonstrations of simple no-equipment exercises and guidance on recommended weekly physical activity were also shared, along with a brief overview of the role of nutrition in supporting exercise goals.

On January 20, 2026 the second session was held entitled, **“Know your numbers,”** featuring guest lecturer Dr. Tisha Pierre,

Internal Medicine Specialist and Primary Care Physician II. The session explored key health indicators, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, weight, waist circumference and BMI readings. Dr. Pierre explained the differences between the British and American blood pressure guidelines. She also explained important benchmarks for diagnosing and managing diabetes, the types of diabetes, including fasting blood glucose and the role insulin plays in regulating blood sugar. Dr. Pierre also discussed the importance of the HbA1c test. This test reflects the amount of sugar the body has been exposed to over the past three months.

Practical guidance was also shared on blood sugar monitoring for persons living with diabetes, noting that the values used to diagnose diabetes differ from those used to manage the condition. For individuals with diabetes, a pre-meal blood sugar reading of 80–130 mg/dL is considered good. A reading of less than 180 mg/dL one to two hours after meals also indicates effective diabetes management. Additionally, an HbA1c reading of less than 7% is considered a good target for persons living with diabetes.

Attendees also learned about racial differences in waist circumference and weight measurements used to assess the risk of developing Non-Communicable Diseases. Dr. Pierre noted that risk thresholds for waist circumference and weight are higher for Caucasian populations compared to Black/Coloured, Asian and Arab populations.

The sessions concluded with an interactive question-and-answer segment to reinforce learning.

Staff Wellness Initiative



Health screening at CHA Buildings

Staff wellness initiatives are implemented to enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of employees, which directly increases engagement, morale and productivity while lowering absenteeism and turnover.

The Nursing and Health Education Departments Nariva/Mayaro and St. Andrew/St. David recognise that taking care of yourself before others is essential as your own well-being is the foundation for effectively supporting others. The departments held basic health screenings for staff at various administrative buildings. The screenings were conducted on January 16, 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2026 at the main administrative offices.

Staff were able to access Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar Testing, Body Mass Index and Health Education. These screenings form a part of the **“Know Your Numbers”** campaign, which encourages proactive monitoring of key health metrics. Knowing these numbers is essential in identifying potential risk for conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

The Health Education Department, Nariva/Mayaro, also distributed Health Diaries which serve as a practical tool to help staff track their health numbers and support ongoing personal wellness management.

ERHA Team Supports “Let Her Play, Keep Pumpin 2026 Programme”



Health screening at Sangre Grande Civic Centre

The Health Education Department St. Andrew/ St. David and the Nursing Department partnered with the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs to promote healthy lifestyles during their

programme “**Let Her Play, Keep Pumpin 2026 Programme.**” The event was hosted on January 21 & 28, 2026 at the Sangre Grande Civic Centre and attracted over **150** persons.

Our team hosted an interactive health education booth and provided information on Non Communicable Diseases, Women’s Health and Smoking Cessation. A multi-pronged approach was used to capture the attention of persons and to present the information in an easy to follow format. Engaging props, trivia questions and handouts were all used to reinforce the message to support healthier lifestyle choices. Basic health screening was also provided by the Nursing Department.

Goal Setting for NCDs

Setting goals is an excellent strategy for managing daily activities that can impact both your physical and emotional well-being. For individuals living with Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), having clear and specific goals can provide motivation, direction and a sense of purpose. Small achievable goals can also make managing chronic conditions feel less overwhelming.

Recognising the importance of setting health goals when dealing with chronic disease management, the Health Education Department Nariva/Mayaro conducted a series of educational sessions in health facilities within the district. The sessions focused on helping clients understand how practical goal setting can support long-term disease control and improve the quality of life.

The sessions were held on January 6, 9, 13, 14 and 26, 2026 at the Guayaguayare Outreach Centre, Rio Claro Health Centre, Brothers Road and Biche Outreach Centres and Mayaro District Health Facility.

Over **75** clients from the Chronic Disease Clinics participated in the discussions. During the sessions, clients were provided with tips to overcome common barriers to manage NCDs such as maintaining lifestyle changes, staying motivated and balancing daily responsibilities.

Clients were also encouraged to set one small health goal they could start immediately. Emphasis was placed on starting small, remaining consistent and building confidence through gradual progress.

The sessions were facilitated by Ms. Josane Williams, Health Education Officer.

Influenza Vaccination Drive



S&S Persad Supermarket,
Rio Claro

Xtra Foods Plaza, Guaico,
Sangre Grande

Xtra Foods Plaza, Guaico,
Sangre Grande

According to the Ministry of Health “The influenza season typically spans from October of one year to May of the following year. It is important to note that the vaccine is formulated for each specific season, to provide protection only for that period. Therefore, it is important to receive the updated influenza vaccine every year.”

The Eastern Regional Health Authority has launched a seasonal influenza mass vaccination drive to intensify efforts to safeguard the health of residents across the eastern region of Trinidad. This is a key public health initiative aimed at reducing the impact of influenza during the peak social activities of the carnival season.

Over 800 persons responded to the campaign entitled, **“Protect Yourself this Carnival”** and updated their vaccination status.

The vaccination drives were held during the period January 5-25, 2026 at high trafficked areas within the region. These include: Xtra Foods, Guaico; Former Unit Trust Corporation, Eastern Main Road, Sangre Grande and S&S Persad Supermarket, Rio Claro.

The ERHA encourages all eligible persons to get vaccinated. The influenza vaccines are available at all public health centres across Trinidad and Tobago.

Tokens of Appreciation to Staff



Packed boxes for staff

In a heartfelt gesture of gratitude, the Board of Directors of the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) distributed tokens of appreciation to staff members in recognition of their unwavering dedication and service.

The ERHA remains steadfast in fostering a supportive environment where employees feel valued and recognised.

Increasing Awareness on the Effects of Alcohol



Ms. Sherifa Ali, Health Education Aide at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre

550 clients improved their knowledge on the effects of alcohol during their participation in educational sessions conducted by the Health Education Department St. Andrew/St. David. The sessions were held at the Valencia and Manzanilla Outreach Centres and Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre during the month of January.

In Trinidad and Tobago, social drinking is often part of celebrations, lime culture and family gatherings. Alcohol use has many immediate or short-term effects that increase the risk of harmful health and social conditions such as violence, injuries, risky sexual behaviours and alcohol poisoning. Alcohol poisoning is a medical emergency which results from high blood alcohol levels. This can happen when a person drinks a large quantity of alcohol in a short space of time. Having too much alcohol in your blood stops your body from working properly and can be life-threatening.

Alcohol poisoning symptoms include:

- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Problems with bladder or bowel control

- ◆ Irregular pulse or heartbeat
- ◆ Slow or irregular breathing

Women who drink excessive amounts of alcohol are at an increased risk of:

- ◆ Breast cancer
- ◆ Infertility (Difficulty in getting pregnant)
- ◆ Miscarriage (Miscarriage is the spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before the 20th week)
- ◆ Stillbirth (A stillbirth is when a baby is born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy)
- ◆ Premature delivery
- ◆ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Men who drink excessive amounts of alcohol are at an increased risk of:

- ◆ Possible low sperm count
- ◆ Damaged sperm
- ◆ Shrinking testicles
- ◆ Erectile Dysfunction or Impotence

Secondary School Carnival Programme



Secondary School Carnival Programme at North Eastern College



Educational Session at Biche Secondary

The Health Education Departments of St. Andrew/St. David and Nariva/Mayaro conducted a series of informative sessions to promote adolescent and young adult well-being to students in the region.

Over **915** students were engaged during the presentations which focused on the dangers of vaping and drug use, the influence of music on behavior, risks associated with alcohol and smoking, sexual health, carnival safety. The sessions also sought to dispel common myths to reduce risky behaviors in high pressure social settings.

On January 12, 2026, Ms. Josane Williams, Health Education Officer and Mr. Ronald Ram, Health Education Aide, visited the Cushe Government Primary School where they delivered a dynamic session on the health dangers of **"Vaping and Drug Use"**. The presentation debunked common myths associated with vaping, marijuana and tobacco. The students were also advised about the harmful health effects of engaging in these activities and available support resources.

On January 21, 2026 Ms. Josane Williams, Health Education Officer, Ms. Zalina Khan, Health Education Aide and Mr. Ronald Ram, Health Education Aide, conducted a drug use

sensitisation session at the Biche Secondary School entitled **"Keep Your Lungs Clean Say No to Vaping and Other Drugs"**. Students learned about the chemical ingredients in tobacco products and vaping liquids as well as the harmful effects that these products have on the human body. The lecture was concluded with an educational game entitled **"Myths versus Facts."**

The Health Education Department in collaboration with the Medical Social Work Departments St. Andrew/St. David, facilitated the Secondary School Carnival Programme at North Eastern College on January 26, 2026, for both students and staff members. The interactive sessions explored the powerful influence of music on behaviour, the risks of alcohol consumption, the negative effects of smoking, sexual health and Sexual Transmitted Infections and also provided essential carnival safety tips.

Throughout the session, students were invited to listen to various music tracks and to share their thoughts and emotions in real time. The excitement continued as they participated in skits and answered quizzes, making the learning experience both engaging and memorable.

Poison Management and CPR Training Session



Mr. Kerwin Stephens Pharmacist III lectures to members of the public on poison management



Dr Nathaniel (left) looks on as members of the public demonstrates CPR technique on infants and first aid for choking.

The Health Education Department in collaboration with the Pharmacy and Accident and Emergency Departments Nariva/Mayaro, hosted its first Poison Management and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training Session at the Brothers Road Outreach Centre on January 29, 2026.

The informative and interactive session was designed to provide community members with essential knowledge and lifesaving skills to effectively respond to poisoning incidents and medical emergencies.

The first segment of the session was facilitated by Mr. Kerwin Stephens, Pharmacist III. He delivered an engaging presentation on the management of stings and bites from common poisonous insects and reptiles. Participants were shown how to recognise symptoms, how to administer appropriate first aid measures and to know when to seek urgent medical attention. He also highlighted the valuable resources available to the public for poison-related emergencies and guidance.

The second segment of the session focused on CPR and First Aid training and was conducted by Doctor Nathaniel and Doctor Thannoo. They provided clear demonstrations on the correct

techniques for performing lifesaving CPR and administering first aid for choking in both infants and adults. Emphasis was placed on proper hand placement, compression depth, rescue breathing and safe choking intervention techniques.

Participants were then engaged in a practical, hands-on training component. Under the careful guidance of the doctors, with the use of mannequins they practiced CPR and choking response techniques. This practical exercise assisted to develop the confidence and competence of participants to apply the skills learned during the demonstrations.

The training marked a significant step in strengthening community preparedness and empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively in emergency situations.

The Health Education Department extends sincere thanks to the departments and the facilitators for their collaboration and commitment to community health education.



Commendations to Staff

Shaneeza Muntaz

Yes their service is great I took both the flu shot and tetanus, I usually don't allow anyone to touch my upper left arm since I had surgery for a broken humerus 5 months ago but the nurse that injected me was so gentle and counted herself lucky since she was the 1st person in months I allowed to touch my upper arm.

**Sent via Facebook by Shaneeza Muntaz
January 22, 2026**

MrsHappi Bri

You all know I'm a sucker for great customer service. Must publicly thank the nurses who were giving the tetanus and flu shot immunizations at Xtra Foods today. Great service! Just by their beautiful personality if you are afraid of injections they made you feel so comfortable to get it. They save me that trip to the clinic because you know how long I putting off that visit to the clinic because even though I work in the field of health, somethings I don't like in visiting clinics. Thanks ERHA. Job well done!

**Sent via Facebook by MrsHappi Bri
January 15, 2026**

Let us never cease to provide quality service with compassion and dignity as we demonstrate that, "Caring is the Key."



Commendations to Staff

Kenneth Brewster

People of Sangre Grande never talk Sangre Grande Hospital bad please. I was hospitalised with a dog bite for 48 hours and a surgical operation was done by a young doctor on Friday night his staff who assisted him with the minor operation was very friendly and loving.

After the operation I was placed on Ward 1 Surgical where every change of shift the staff maintained the same professional standard.

I observed the staff, who did there duties with care, professionalism, unbiasedness and dedication.

So MOH please take a page out off the book of the Sangre Grande Hospital and follow their professional work ethics. Share share share love all the time Kenneth Brewster.

**Sent via Facebook by Kenneth Brewster
January 25, 2026**

Abenash Sonnylal

The best hospital and very friendly doctors and staff 100% rating keep it up.

Sent via Facebook by Abenash Sonnylal

Let us never cease to provide quality service with compassion and dignity as we demonstrate that, "Caring is the Key."

DRY SEASON 2026

What To Expect For This Dry Season?

The **2026 Dry Season (January-May)** rainfall outlook indicates:

- Moderate chances for near-normal rainfall, wetter than usual conditions during the first half (January - March) and near normal in the second half of the season (March - May).
- 97 dry-days (a dry-day is defined as a day with less than 1.0 mm of rainfall).
- A 57% probability for 5 - 7 day dry spells.

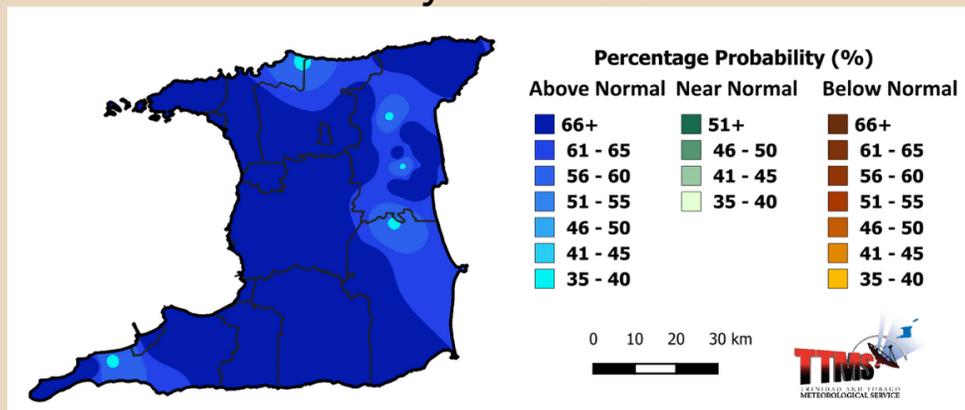
How Will This Dry Season Affect Us?

These wetter than usual conditions will have:

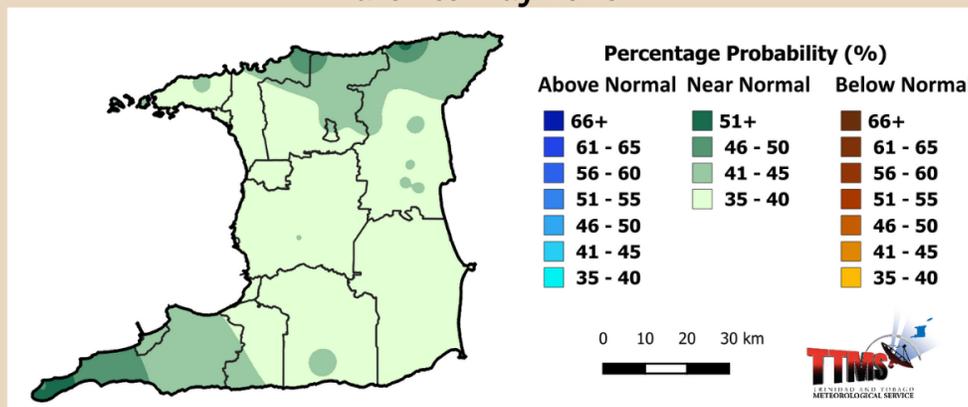
- A positive effect on surface and ground water recharge rates and stream flow rates.
- An increase in breeding areas for insect vectors such as mosquitoes.
- A decrease in forest, bush and landfill fire potential which will lead to improved air quality.

Probability of Most Likely Category of Rainfall:

January to March 2026

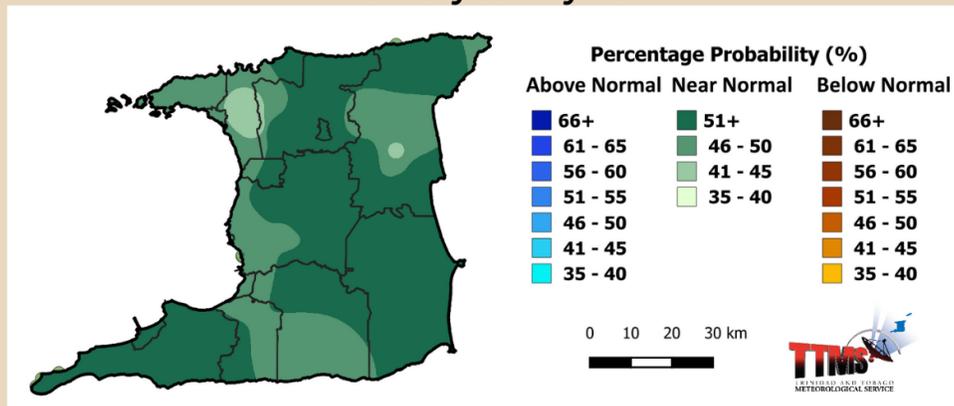


March to May 2026



DRY SEASON 2026 Cont'd

January to May 2026



What Are The La Niña and El Niño Influences?

January to March 2026 has a moderate to high probability (56%-76%) for above normal rainfall amounts over most areas. This is as a result of the remnants of La Niña , which started in late 2025.

March to May 2026 will have a near-normal rainfall (75%-125% of the Long Term Average). This is as a result of a rapid transition to El Niño, which will bring on warmer and drier conditions.

How To Prepare For This Dry Season?

For the first half of the season, which is wetter than usual:

- **Assess and secure water storage** (e.g., barrels, tanks) with covers to prevent mosquito breeding.
- **Clean gutter and drains** regularly so rainwater flow away from the house.
- **Flash flooding** can occur - prepare an evacuation plan and have an emergency food storage.
- **Plan for variability** - even with wetter trends early on, dry spells can still occur.

For the second half of the season, which is near normal conditions:

- **Stay hydrated** and avoid being in the sun.
- **Wear mask** and limit outdoor exposure for Saharan Dust.
- **Stay cool indoors.**
- **Water Usage Habits** - take short showers, wash full loads of laundry, reuse water for plants.
- **Dress appropriately** - wear light-colored and loose-fitting clothing made of natural fibers.

In case of an emergency, you can contact the following numbers:

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

Sources: <https://www.metoffice.gov.tt/node/1012>



January 2026

Sangre Grande Hospital Campus

Ojoe Road, Sangre Grande
Tel: 228-3742/226-4744/668-2273
Fax: 668-4368

Brothers Road Outreach Centre

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

Cumuto Outreach Centre

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

Manzanilla Outreach Centre

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

Rio Claro Health Centre

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

Rio Claro Accident and Emergency

Tel: 226-9230

Toco Health Centre

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

Toco Accident and Emergency

Tel: 226-9428

Mayaro District Health Facility

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

Coryal Outreach Centre

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

Grande Riviere Outreach Centre

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

Matelot Outreach Centre

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

Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre

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

Valencia Outreach Centre

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

Biche Outreach Centre

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

Cumana Outreach Centre

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

Guayaguayare Outreach Centre

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

Matura Outreach Centre

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

Sans Souci Outreach Centre

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

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**

Website : www.erha.co.tt



ERHA Trinidad & Tobago



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