



# The Eastern *Vibes*

**Monthly Newsletter 2026**

**May 2026, Issue #142**

## Empowered Nurses Save Lives



The Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) celebrated Nurses Appreciation Day under the International Council of Nurses theme **“Our Nurses, Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives”** on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at the BP Resource Centre, Mayaro. This year’s theme emphasised the

need to support and strengthen nurses through education, leadership and professional development. It acknowledged that empowered nurses play a vital role in providing high-quality care, improving health outcomes and advancing healthcare systems.

### In this Issue

- Empowered Nurses Save Lives
- Snap Shot of Nurses Appreciation Day (Cont’d)
- Snap Shot of the Satellite Dialysis Unit Nurses Appreciation Awards
- International Nurses Day Message
- Increase in Qualified Staff to Preserve Life and Property
- The ERHA Honours Mothers on Mother’s Day
- Educating Mothers On Midwifery
- Empowering Clients to Manage High Blood Pressure
- Raising Awareness on Mosquito-Borne Diseases
- Re-establishment of Sangre Grande and Toco Wellness Committees
- Promoting A Healthy Lifestyle
- Reading Food Labels
- Career Fair
- Blood Donation Drive
- World No Tobacco Day Observance throughout the ERHA
- Health Promotion throughout the ERHA
- Congratulations Dionne Ovid
- Happy Mothers Day
- Happy Indian Arrival Day
- Snap Shot of Indian Arrival Day
- World No Tobacco Day
- ERHA Mother’s Day Giveaway
- Good News
- Atlantic Hurricane Season 2026

## Empowered Nurses Save Lives (Cont'd)

Dr. Stephan Bhagan, Deputy Chairman - Board of Directors in his special remarks brought greetings from the Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodoie, Minister of Health, the Honourable Dr. Rishad Seecharan, Minister in the Ministry of Health and Dr. Sandeep Maharaj, Chairman of the Board of Directors. He indicated that nurses are number one in the healthcare system and shared his personal experience from working alongside nurses.

Dr. Bhagan stated that he recognised the commitment and dedication of nurses when he was an intern especially on the weekend shift which commenced on Friday afternoon until Monday morning. He observed their diligence and what genuine nursing care is about as they worked tirelessly at 2:00 a.m. in the morning to ensure that the individuals in their care were well taken care of.

During her greetings, Mrs. Angelina Rampersad -Pierre, Chief Executive Officer stated that the mission of the Authority cannot be achieved without the support of nurses and midwives as they are the heartbeat of the health system. She informed that the ultimate goal is to empower nurses to enhance their ability to care for patients and highlighted some of the key achievements that have been accomplished during the last fiscal year. These included: increased staffing; training programmes; creation of policies to enhance service delivery among others. Mrs. Rampersad-Pierre also spoke about the shared responsibility and empowerment of our clients to bring about changes in behaviour and to achieve meaningful

results.

Ms. Eleanor John-Eccles, General Manager-Nursing applauded the nurses of the ERHA for the work that they do. She highlighted that this year's theme spoke not just about saving lives but also about the nurses saving themselves and their profession by becoming empowered. Ms. John-Eccles reminded nurses that they are important, worthwhile and the work they do surpasses many other jobs.

The audience was also addressed by Mrs. Nicole Reece-James, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Association for Midwives (TTAM). She said, "***At TTAM, we are committed to supporting our hard working midwives through education, regulation, research, leadership and of course an enabling environment.***" She further stated that with proper investment in the nursing profession and in all nursing personnel, nurses will continue to save lives and do the things that their clients are dependent on them to do.

The Trinidad and Tobago National Nurses Association (TTNNA) was represented by Mr. Corey Dillon, General Secretary who brought greetings on behalf of the President of the TTNNA Mr. Idi Stuart. He indicated that the TTNNA has a vision for Trinidad and Tobago where nursing and midwifery personnel wake up motivated and invigorated to go to work; where they are celebrated and cherished for the work that they do; where the public and professionals alike respect their views and these views form a part of the superstructure upon which health and the wider society are anchored and to be a

## Empowered Nurses Save Lives (Cont'd)

The feature address was delivered by Mr. Corey George, President of the Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago. He challenged nursing personnel to empower themselves by focusing on their **"what's next?"** Mr. George gave a personal account of his journey from a Registered Nurse at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex and the realisation of his **"what's next?"** He highlighted that the answer to **"what's next?"** lies within each one as you are the one who must define your career path and determine the direction your life will take.

Mr. George stated that, **"The success of every organisation depends on the hard work,**

**sacrifice and dedication of their workforce. The power truly lies within your hands, within our hands. Not all of us will become head nurses or nurse managers but every single one of us has the ability to transform lives."**

Another high point in the celebration was the presentation of recognition awards to departments throughout the Authority for their exceptional commitment, professionalism and valuable contribution to the improved health and well-being of clients and communities.



# Snap Shot of Nurses Appreciation Day

# NURSES Appreciation



# Snap Shot of the Satellite Dialysis Unit Nurses Appreciation Awards

# DIALYSIS UNIT NURSES APPRECIATION AWARDS





# International Nurses Day

*“Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Saves Lives”*

**A message from Ms. Eleanor John-Eccles,  
General Manager-Nursing**



History has shown that Nurses are critical drivers of healthcare, both locally and internationally. We have seen the advancement of Nursing from the “lady with the lamp”, Ms. Florence Nightingale, to Nursing today with all its advanced technologies. Within this highly technical environment driven by “AI”, Nurses have maintained their relevance by pivoting from a mainly task-oriented role to one focused on holistic care co-ordination. Nurses continue to manifest the uniquely human “caring” attributes which no artificial intelligence can realistically replicate. All these advancements have allowed for the improvement of the care that Nurses provide to our patients, resulting in positive outcomes.

During the past year, Nurses at the ERHA have shown resilience amidst all the challenges in the healthcare environment; at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus and Primary Care, uninterrupted care was given.

Many programs were initiated at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus and recruitment of Nurses are ongoing to meet the demands of the service. In Primary Care, outreach activities continues, as we meet the clients in their environment and introduce empowerment strategies to enable support and improvement of health status.

The ERHA acknowledges the commitment and contribution of all nursing personnel throughout the Authority. This year, we continue to support the celebration and appreciation of our Nurses on May 8, 2026 and wish you all the best.

The theme for this year Nurses’ Appreciation is “Empowered Nurses Saves Lives” and we will continue to provide opportunities to empower Nurses, so that you can in turn, empower the client thus saving lives.

We thank you for your dedication and hard work and I take the opportunity to wish all nursing personnel a “Happy Nurses’ Week”!

*“You may not control all the events that happen to you  
but you can decide not to be reduced by them”  
Maya Angelou*

## Increase in Qualified Staff to Preserve Life and Property



**The Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) remains committed to preserving life and property through a proactive approach to risk management. This approach includes but is not limited to hazard identification, proper emergency planning, established procedures and continuous staff training. By implementing both short-term and long-term precautionary measures, the ERHA ensures that all associated risks are addressed promptly, effectively and efficiently.**

Over **110** new Safety Wardens have been added to our team to assist with the realisation of our safety commitment throughout the Authority. These staff members participated in the Safety Warden Training Programme held on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at the BP Resource Centre, Mayaro. The programme was hosted by the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Department.

The ERHA Safety Warden Programme is designed to equip persons with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage **RISKS** by identifying hazards, implementing short-term precautionary measures, notifying

Occupational Safety and Health Officers, Departments and responding to emergencies. The programme also focused on ensuring a prompt and orderly evacuation of buildings during an emergency situation, protection of assets and property and restoration of operations to normal as quickly as possible.

Ms. Farah Mohammed, Manager-Occupational Safety and Health addressed participants on the critical role they play in the organisation and emphasised the importance of being vigilant when it comes to safety issues. Senior Station Officer Singh from the Mayaro Fire Station delivered an informative presentation on fire safety which highlighted among other topics the proper use of various types of fire extinguishers and emergency evacuation procedures. Additionally, Ms. Arlini Timal, Manager Corporate Communications, OSH Agency provided participants with information on the legal requirements outlined within the OSH Act.

To reinforce learning, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service conducted a simulation exercise at the Mayaro Fire Station, to give trainees hands on experience in fire suppression and emergency response.

## The ERHA Honours Mothers on Mother's Day



Dr. Sandeep Maharaj, Chairman of the Board of Directors ERHA and Mrs. Angelia Rampersad-Pierre, Chief Executive Officer present a mother at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus with a personal care package.

Mothers and expectant mothers warded at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus were honoured by the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) on Mother's Day for their immense contribution and sacrifice. The excited mothers were congratulated by Dr. Sandeep Maharaj, Chairman of the Board of Directors ERHA and Mrs. Angelina Rampersad-Pierre,

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and presented with personal care packages. The Chairman and CEO also highlighted to the mothers and expectant mothers the important role they play in their children's health and well-being and reminded them to also take time to care for themselves.

## Educating Mothers On Midwifery

**Midwives and Doctors play a crucial role preventing unnecessary maternal deaths. They educate women about nutrition, health and family planning. They step in when complications arise.** Liya Kebede

The Domiciliary Department, in collaboration with the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFHI) Unit, hosted its first Mother's Day and Midwife education session on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2026, at the Antenatal Clinic, Sangre Grande Hospital Campus.

The event aimed to provide clients with health education through a fun, interactive and engaging approach while also recognising and appreciating the valuable contributions of mothers and midwives.

Under the theme "**Mothers and Midwifery**" informative presentations were delivered utilising an interactive and engaging approach. Topics include the role and importance of midwives, the services provided by the domiciliary unit and the benefits of breastfeeding. Antenatal exercises to promote maternal wellness during pregnancy were also demonstrated.

Presentations were delivered by Licensed Midwives Khadine Balloo, Viklin John and Marella Mark, along with pupil Midwife Faytonia Rahim and Ms. Chennel Davis-Gentle, BFHI Coordinator (Ag.).

Attendees also received tokens of appreciation as part of the celebration.

# Empowering Clients to Manage High Blood Pressure



**According to the International Society of Hypertension (ISH), hypertension is diagnosed when systolic blood pressure is 140 mmHg or higher or diastolic blood pressure is 90 mmHg or higher.**

In observance of World Hypertension Day which is observed annually on 17<sup>th</sup> May, the Matura Outreach Centre hosted an outreach programme on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 under the theme, ***"Controlling Hypertension Together"***.

Presentations were delivered by Ms. Denise Peters, District Health Visitor and Ms. Mica Gonzalez, Registered Dietitian and Health Education Assistant, to highlight the importance of managing high blood pressure. The nutrition team demonstrated how to create a healthy, balanced diet and information was shared to reduce sodium intake by using green seasonings and herbs to flavor food.

Recognising that sleep hygiene has an impact on blood pressure control, participants were advised to:

- ◆ **Reduce screen time 1 – 2 hours before bed (phone, TV, laptop)**
- ◆ **Build a bedtime routine**
- ◆ **Create a comfortable environment or setting that allows for uninterrupted sleep**
- ◆ **Avoid caffeine eight hours before bed and alcohol close to bedtime**
- ◆ **Avoid nicotine from smoking, vaping and hookah**
- ◆ **Use natural substance which promote better sleep**
- ◆ **Use a sleep diary to identify and change factors responsible for poor sleep**

Exercise was also identified as an area to focus on and the Wellness Instructor assigned to Matura was present to facilitate light to moderate aerobic activity.

Health Screening; HIV Testing and Medical Counselling were also provided to clients.

# Raising Awareness on Mosquito-Borne Diseases



**Mosquito Awareness Week is observed May 4-8 annually. According to the Pan American Health Organization it aims to raise awareness on mosquitoes and the diseases they transmit, including dengue, chikungunya, Zika and yellow fever.**

In recognition of Mosquito Awareness Week, the Eastern Regional Health Authority conducted several activities to raise awareness on Mosquito-Borne Diseases and promote preventative measures.

The Health Education Department, Nariva/Mayaro conducted lectures on Mosquito Borne Diseases at the Brothers Road Outreach Centre, Mayaro District Health Facility, Rio Claro Health Centre and the Guayaguayare Outreach Centre on these dates respectively 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2026.

The lectures focused on the growing trends of mosquito borne diseases and steps persons can implement to eliminate breeding sites. They also shared ways people can protect themselves against the spread of mosquito borne diseases such as dengue fever, yellow fever, zika and chikungunya. Pamphlets were also distributed to

reinforce the key messages shared during the session.

On 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 the Insect and Vector Control Division (IVCD) hosted a Mosquito Awareness Prevention Outreach at Xtra Foods Carpark, Sangre Grande which attracted over **150** persons.

The County Medical Officers of Health for County St. Andrew/St. David and Nariva/Mayaro provided insights into the symptoms of mosquito-borne diseases and discussed precautions that can be taken to reduce the risk of infection. Members of the Public Health Inspectorate and ERHA's Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David also facilitated a booth where participants engaged in mosquito-themed games such as **"Pin the Proboscis on the Mosquito"** and trivia questions to test the knowledge gained.

At the IVCD booth, visitors received information about the life cycle of mosquitoes; identifying and reducing mosquito breeding sites; chemicals used to control the spread of mosquitoes and the equipment used when spraying. The laboratory division demonstrated how to identify the mosquito species and provided information on how to test the mosquito populations against insecticides.

The University of the West Indies Life Sciences, alongside the Field Naturalist Club, displayed live mosquito larvae and eggs using microscopes, giving attendees a unique opportunity to observe the early stages of mosquito development first hand.

# Re-establishment of Sangre Grande and Toco Wellness Committees

**A Wellness Committee plays a vital role in fostering a healthy and supportive community environment. It is essential for designing targeted programmes and ensuring the sustainability of wellness initiatives.**

Wellness Committees were officially re-established in Sangre Grande and Toco following the hosting of their Annual General Meetings (AGM). Ms. Adanna Antoine-Ramcharitar an official from the Ministry of Community Development, presided over the Sangre Grande meeting which was held at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre (SGEHC) on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2026. She highlighted the Ministry's continued support for community wellness initiatives.

Mr. Marvin Joseph, Principal of Toco Anglican Primary School officiated at the Toco AGM which was held at the Toco Health Centre on 28<sup>th</sup> May,

2026. His leadership and guidance contributed to the successful reformation of the Wellness Committee.

Twelve members were elected for each committee and appointed to serve in various positions on the committee. They expressed a desire to promote health and wellness initiatives throughout the communities of Sangre Grande and Toco.

At the SGEHC, Ms. Astra Edwards-Bennett, Wellness Coordinator, recognised the role members played in the committee and also expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Community Development for its ongoing support and partnership.

The re-establishment of the Sangre Grande and Toco Wellness Committees is a significant step in advancing community wellness and fostering a culture of health, collaboration and active participation throughout the region.

## Promoting A Healthy Lifestyle

**Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and hypertension continue to have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities.**

The Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David hosted a Healthy Lifestyle Lecture on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at Metal Industries Company Limited, Sangre Grande, to demonstrate what can be done to decrease the impact of NCDs. Basic health screenings were conducted and Ms. Mica Gonzalez, Registered Dietitian and Health Education Assistant, delivered a presentation on understanding NCDs. During the session the definition of NCDs was explained and emphasis was placed on Diabetes, Hypertension and Dyslipidemia; symptoms;

causes; complications; risk factors and measurements. The presentation also covered practical measures to reduce the risk of developing NCDs using the acronym S.H.A.P.E.

**S** - Screening for health conditions

**H** - Healthy weight

**A** - Avoid alcohol and smoking

**P** - Physical activity

**E** - Eating healthy

The lecture reinforced the importance of making informed health choices and taking proactive steps towards a healthier future.

## Reading Food Labels

Reading food labels is an important step in making informed and healthier choices when shopping. Understanding the information empowers consumers to identify hidden allergens, monitor sugar and sodium intake and better manage chronic illnesses like diabetes or hypertension.

On 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 the Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David hosted a Health Hub Webinar on Reading Food Labels.

Over **30** persons participated in the webinar, conducted by Ms. Mica Gonzalez, Registered Dietitian and Health Education Assistant. The attendees were provided with practical knowledge to help them make healthier dietary

choices.

Topics covered included how to:

- **Identify serving sizes**
- **Calculate nutrients per serving**
- **Identify different types of sugars and salts listed on food labels**
- **Compare similar food products and select healthier options when shopping**

The interactive presentation encouraged participants to become more informed consumers and reinforced the importance of proper nutrition in maintaining and improving health and well-being.

## Career Fair



Mr Ronald Ram Health Education Aide at Rio Claro Presbyterian Primary Career Day



Mr. Peter Jeffrey Health Education Officer chats with students at the Guayaguayare R.C. Primary School

**Career Days provide students with an opportunity to explore a wide range of professions, gain insight into real-life work experiences and interact with professionals who can inspire them. Children also learn the skills they need for their future career choices.**

The Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) participated in several Career Days in the region on 15<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2026 at the Navet Presbyterian, St. Thomas Roman

Catholic, Rio Claro Presbyterian and Guayaguayare Roman Catholic Primary Schools.

The ERHA team comprised representatives from the Health Education, Dental, Nursing, Nutrition, Pharmacy and Medical Social Work departments who provided students with information about the diverse career opportunities available within the Authority.

## Blood Donation Drive

**A single decision to donate your blood can save several lives! Blood is vital to life and a constant supply is necessary for patients in need such as pregnant women, those undergoing cancer treatment, persons with inherited blood disorders or who need emergency surgery among others.**

Over **50** persons made a life saving decision to give blood during the Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department Blood Drive which was held during the period 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus Blood Donation Centre. What is even more commendable is that they made Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRD).

VNRD is the process of donating blood, plasma or blood components without receiving payment. This system helps build a national

pool of blood supply ensuring blood is available to patients on a clinical need. This will help reduce the burden on patients and their families, who may face challenges sourcing blood during medical emergencies.

The Blood Donation Team also supported a blood drive hosted by SEWA TT on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at the SEWA TT Multi-purpose Operation Centre, Piarco.

Visit our Blood Donation Centre or call to learn more about becoming a donor.

Sangre Grande Hospital Campus Blood Donation Centre

**Monday - Friday:** 7:30 a.m.– 2:30 p.m.

**Saturday:** 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Contact:** 226-9779

Call to make an appointment or visit [www.health.gov.tt](http://www.health.gov.tt)



# World No Tobacco Day Observance throughout the ERHA

**World No Tobacco Day is observed globally on 31<sup>st</sup> May annually to raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use and to encourage effective measures to prevent and reduce nicotine and tobacco addiction.** World Health Organisation

Despite ongoing smoking cessation campaigns and heavy taxation on cigarettes, over 8 million persons die each year from the use of tobacco. A single cigarette contains over **7000** chemicals, at least **70** of them being cancerous. Tobacco use affects most organs in the body and is linked to numerous health conditions including cancers, respiratory illnesses, miscarriages, infertility and infant death. The growing popularity of vaping, particularly among young people, is also a major public health concern. Vaping can lead to serious health concerns such as permanent damage to the lungs, irritation of the airways, coughing, chest pains, increased blood pressure and heart rate, vomiting and nausea.

In observance of World No Tobacco Day, the Eastern Regional Health Authority conducted a series of activities which reached more than **1060 persons** throughout the region.

In St. Andrew/St. David and Nariva/Mayaro, the Health Education Departments conducted educational sessions at several health facilities located in Manzanilla; Valencia; Sangre Grande; Brothers Road; Guayaguayare; Biche; Rio Claro and Mayaro Districts.

During the sessions, clients received information on the harmful chemicals found in cigarettes and other tobacco products, as well as the negative health effects associated with smoking and vaping. Special emphasis was placed on the relationship between smoking and chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma.

During the period 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 the Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David also mounted a booth at the Sangre Enhanced Health Centre. Visitors received information on the dangers of tobacco use, smoking cessation strategies and available support services. Interactive displays, including lung health models, cigarette and smoking cessation props and trivia activities were used to reinforce key messages and engage participants.

In Nariva/Mayaro, the Health Education Department also visited secondary schools in Biche; Guayaguayare; Rio Claro East and Mayaro on 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 respectively to engage the students on this very important topic. The sessions focused on the harmful effects of tobacco use and vaping, particularly among young people and highlighted the importance of healthy lifestyle choices.

Recognising the challenges some people face to stop smoking and vaping, cessation tips were provided. These included engaging in regular exercise, reading or listening to music, drinking water, chewing sugar-free gums or mints, calling or texting a friend for support, spending time outdoors, practicing deep-breathing techniques and eating healthy snacks.

All clients were encouraged to quit smoking and vaping and were provided with information on the smoking cessation clinics. These clinics offer support and guidance to individuals seeking to overcome nicotine addiction and improve their overall health and well-being at the Manzanilla and Cumuto Outreach Centres, Toco and Rio Claro Health Centres and Mayaro District Health facility.

# Health Promotion throughout the ERHA



**Outreach activities promote health awareness, encourage early detection of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and empower and encourage people to take control of their well-being.**

The Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) continued its commitment to promote wellness initiatives in collaboration with key stakeholders by participating in health fairs throughout the community.

The Health Education, Nutrition and Medical Social Work Departments, St. Andrew/St. David participated in a Health and Wellness Fair held on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at the Nazarene Holiness Centre, North Eastern Settlement, Sangre Grande.

**32** persons benefited from information on NCDs; men's health; women's health;

smoking cessation; nutrition; hydration; stress management and self-care.

Also in attendance were members of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service, Optometrist Today and Guardian Holdings Limited.

In Nariva/Mayaro, the ERHA team supported a Community Outreach Expo hosted by the Ministry of Community Development on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2026 at the Mayaro Civic Centre.

The multi-disciplinary team, comprising of Nursing, Health Education and Nutrition Departments, provided clients with a range of services including basic screening; HIV testing; pap smears; mental health and medical social work counselling. To support healthy lifestyle choices, informational brochures were provided to participants.

# CONGRATULATIONS

Tuesday, May 19, 2026  
guardian.co.tt

21

**We** Life & Culture

DIONNE OVID

How a reluctant recruit became

## NURSE OF THE YEAR

CAROL QUASH

**W**hen Dionne Ovid became a nurse 16 years ago, it was just as a way of securing permanent employment. But her perception changed with time, paving the way for a level of commitment that rarely comes without a love for a profession.

On May 10, she was presented with the T&T Nurses Association's Registered Nurse of the Year award for her dedication to the work she now has no regrets choosing, and to her patients at the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus, where she is assigned to the Critical Care Unit.

"I didn't even know I had been nominated, and I was shocked when I got the text message," Ovid told Guardian Media.

"Not that I don't know that I'm capable and I am deserving. It's just that sometimes it's not always about the award and the recognition."

For her, it's always been about doing her job with compassion, sometimes having to get creative when resources are not readily available.

In 2018, she came up with a concept she named the DoBlock—an organisational tool to help reduce mishaps and clutter in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

"And even though this didn't take off as I had hoped, what I was happy about was that it gave other nurses the inspiration to do something outside the box. Because we are always creating, we are always innovating, we are always figuring it out. What the public doesn't know is that we have to use whatever resources we have to ensure that the patient has the best care."

She recalls having to use cardboard and bandages to make makeshift boots to help patients in the ICU with plantar flexion, commonly known as foot drop.

"They're not walking because most times they're sedated or paralysed for a long time, you can see the feet pointing towards the bed rather than lifted towards the ceiling. Sometimes the plantar flexion boots are not available and we have to improvise...My aesthetics are horrible, but it is effective," she said with a chuckle.

Ovid is also a part-time clinical instructor at the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago, the institution at which she herself was once a nursing student. She now has a Master's in Education with an emphasis in health promotion from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, and reminisced on how her career in nursing unfolded.

"I kept trying to get a job and I would do anything and everything that I could. I found myself in construction at one point, I did the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme, I was in Civilian Conservation Corps Programme, I worked in a hardware, did on-the-job training. And I kept asking, 'when will I get something permanent?' I applied to the police service and coast guard," but to no avail.

Eventually, her mother suggested she get into nursing and, although it was not something she thought she would like, she decided to do it. It was not an easy journey, she said, but she took it in stride, giving of her best in the classroom and on the wards.

"I wish people could see the depth of what we do...It's a satisfaction and a God-given ability and blessing."

But Ovid's compassion extends beyond caring for patients. In 2022, she started a non-profit organisation, Nurses Fraternity of Trinidad and Tobago, with the objective of taking care of the caregivers.

"Because as much as we pour into people, we cannot expect others to pour into us. We have to pour into ourselves."

She said she has witnessed too many of her colleagues get sick and die because they were so busy taking care of others that they didn't take the time to take care of themselves, some on the cusp of retirement.

"We want to change that narrative. When we started this organisation, it came out of memorial services that we were keeping for our colleagues who died during the COVID-19 pandemic."

She said the organisation is there to support working and retired nurses in any capacity it can—medically, financially, socially, emotionally and otherwise—as long as it has the resources to do so.

"We are also committed to continuing education. So we do seminars and workshops based on the topics that nurses want to really gain knowledge about and expertise in."

And for the overachiever that she is, the Sangre Grande mother of one said when she was first assigned to the Eastern Regional Health Authority, one of her dreams was to become a legal adviser to the region.

"I don't know where that came from, but it was a consideration. Right now, though, I won't mind studying to become a nurse practitioner," an advanced level of nursing that allows for the examination of patients, the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses.

"Which seems kind of unattainable at this point because of the cost," but something that remains on the table of goals.



Dionne Ovid on duty.



Dionne Ovid



# HAPPY ♡ MOTHER'S DAY

*The ERHA extends warm wishes to all mothers and mother figures. Your role within our community is an integral thread in the fabric that shapes our collective well-being. Every step toward better health strengthens the people around us. Take a moment today to care for yourself.*

*Wishing you a Mother's Day filled with love.  
From the Board and Management of the Eastern Regional Health Authority*



 [www.erha.co.tt](http://www.erha.co.tt)  Erha Trinidad & Tobago

*"Caring is the Key"*



# HAPPY Indian ARRIVAL DAY

We recognise the strength and determination of our East Indian diaspora and for your outstanding and invaluable contributions.

We honour your past, celebrate your journey and are inspired by your sacrifices and resilience as we embrace the future together.

From the Board and Management of the Eastern Regional Health Authority

"Caring is the Key"

## Snap Shot of Indian Arrival Day



Brothers Outreach Centre



Rio Claro Health Centre



Biche Outreach Centre



Biche Outreach Centre



Brothers Outreach Centre



# WORLD No Tobacco Day

## Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction.

### 1 The Psychology Behind Nicotine Addiction

Nicotine doesn't just create habits it creates addiction. The earlier it starts, the harder it is to stop.



### 2 Flavoured Vapes and Their Hidden Risks

Flavours attract.



Don't let sweet flavours hide dangerous truth. Don't be fooled by the packaging, colours or flavours. Addiction is still the product

### 3 Social Media, Peer Pressure & Vaping/Smoking

Vaping and smoking are being marketed as a lifestyle, but addiction is never a trend.



### 4 Emerging Nicotine Products and New Trends

Disposable vapes may look harmless, but they still deliver addictive nicotine.



### 5 Quitting Nicotine: Support & Recovery

Quitting is hard, but support makes it possible. Every quit attempt matters.

**Join one of the ERHA's Smoking Cessation Clinics Today!!**





*ERHA's Mother's Day  
Giveaway*

WINNER



*Violet  
Albert-Hernandez*

CONGRATULATIONS!



## Commendations to Staff

### **Outam Ramnarine**

#### **ERHA Trinidad & Tobago**

Last night I visited Rio Claro A&E with a family member and I want to publicly thank the nurses, ward attendant and special, special thanks to Dr. Chillar..

Excellent service thank you all for taking your time and being so kind to my family...

*Sent via Facebook by Outam Ramnarine  
May 15, 2026*

### **Anderson Guinness**

Big up the surgical and nurse staffs @ Sangre Grande Hospital professional and friendly 🙏

*Sent via Facebook by Anderson Guinness  
May 16, 2026*

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

# Atlantic Hurricane Season 2026

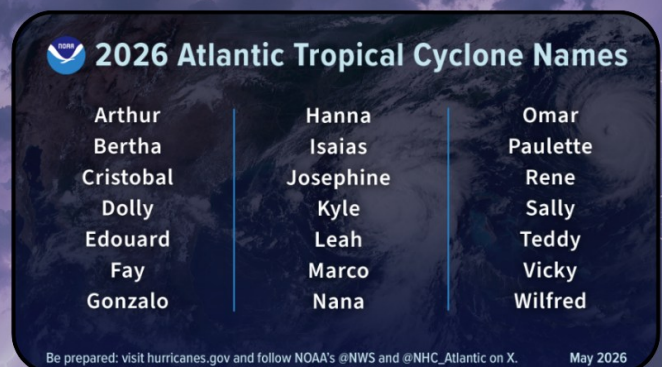
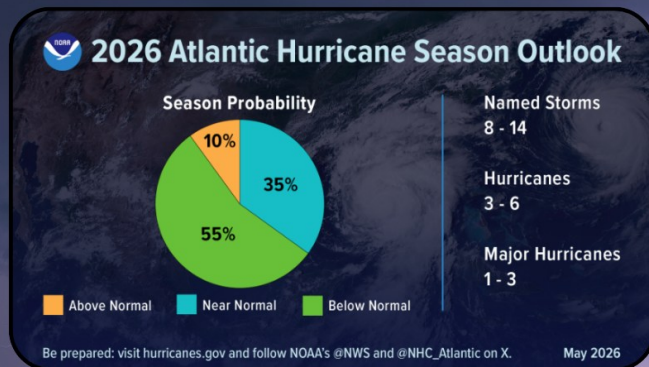
## Atlantic Hurricane Season 2026 - Predictions:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has predicted a below-normal hurricane season for the Atlantic basin this year. The season, which runs from June 1 to November 30 predicts a 35% chance of near-normal season, a 10% chance of above-normal season and a 55% chance of below-normal season.

## What has been forecasted?:

- A total of 8-14 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher)
- 3-6 of those are forecasted to become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher)
- 1-3 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5 (winds of 111 mph or higher)

An average season has 14 names storms, 7 hurricanes and 3 major hurricanes.



## Trinidad and Tobago - Area of Interest:

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service (TTMS) stated that there is:

- a 49% chance of below normal hurricane activity
- a 37% chance of below normal tropical storm activity
- the most likely number of named tropical storms expected within Trinidad and Tobago's area of interest is three.

## Preparation Tips for Hurricane Season:

- Have a family emergency plan
- Stay updated with forecasts from the TTMS. Download the TTMS App & follow them on social media
- Stock up on emergency supplies
- Take measures to protect property-secure loose items, reinforce your home (doors, windows, roofs)
- Plan for pets and livestock
- Know the location of your nearest shelter, routes to access them and contact information for the Disaster Management Unit (DMU) of your Municipal Corporation

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

Fire: 990    Ambulance: 811    Police: 999    ODPM: 511    DMU Hotline

Sources: <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-predicts-below-normal-2026-atlantic-hurricane-season>



May 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  
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