



PRESS RELEASE

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Working Together for a Sustainable Healthcare System: The Bermuda Health Council Releases Its Strategic Plan for 2009-2012

Linda Merritt, Chairman of The Bermuda Health Council (BHeC) is proud to announce that the BHeC has just published its Strategic Plan for 2009 to 2012. "The plan focuses on the goals of Quality, Equity, Efficacy and Accountability in the Bermuda healthcare system. These goals are in line with the mission of the Health Council, which is to regulate, coordinate and enhance the provision of health services in Bermuda," said Ms. Merritt.

The goal of quality is to ensure patient safety and enhance the quality of care by regulating health services, health insurers, health professionals and the cost of prescription drugs to the health system. Being ill is a very vulnerable time for anyone; it is a time that we need to have confidence in those caring for us, and to know that we are getting the best possible healthcare for ourselves or our loved ones. The BHeC understands this, and wants to increase the level of awareness among Bermuda's residents of both the quality of healthcare options that are available on the island, and of the commitment of the BHeC to ensure that this quality is maintained.

The goal of equity revolves around the idea that all Bermuda residents - young, old, rich, poor, black, white – should have fair access to the Island's healthcare system. It is the Health Council's goal to ensure that all residents have access to the legally mandated minimum level of health insurance coverage. The BHeC also works to make sure the minimum-level of health insurance, the Standard Hospital Benefit, adequately covers basic essential services.

The third goal, efficacy, is about managing costs to ensure the Island's healthcare system is both affordable and sustainable over the long term. The cost of healthcare is felt by individuals and households day to day; under this goal, the BHeC will be actively seeking to identify ways to make sure healthcare is affordable for the country as a whole. The Health Council is in a prime position to identify ways to mitigate increases in the future cost of healthcare on island.



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The final goal outlined in the Bermuda Health Council's Strategic Plan is accountability. It is the Council's goal to make itself accountable to the stakeholders of the healthcare system - the public and health service providers. The Council pledges impartiality and objectivity in its decision-making. Such an approach will ensure accountability which strengthens stakeholders' confidence in the system.

The Acting CEO of the BHeC, Dr. Jennifer Attride-Stirling, stated, "the production of the Strategic Plan and the desire to create public awareness of the plan were inspired by stakeholders' calls for more information about the BHeC's direction and activities. This was taken as an opportunity to re-launch the BHeC with a new vision, clear direction and new branding to accompany our reinvigorated mission to enhance the quality of healthcare for all our residents."

About the BHeC: The Bermuda Health Council was established by the Bermuda Health Council Act 2004 to regulate, coordinate and enhance the delivery of health services.

The BHeC came into operation in 2006. Core activities since then have revolved around assuring public access to essential health services through requirements for minimum health insurance coverage, and enhancing the regulatory framework for healthcare locally.

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