

NATIONAL CANCER CONTROL PLAN FOR BARBADOS



2021 to 2025

Ministry of Health and Wellness

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FOREWORD

Cancers are among the leading cause of death and disability in Barbados. As Non communicable diseases they are part of the group of illnesses that is causing preventable loss of life. It is essential that The Ministry of Health and Wellness have clearly documented plans and guidance that facilitates the health sector to deliver a range of programmes and services to counter the effects of cancers in Barbados.

This document along with the wider efforts that it articulates and supports has resulted from the efforts of individuals and agencies both inside and outside of Barbados. In particular, the National Institute of Health, National Cancer Institute, and local health experts and stakeholders have worked together. Not only does the document propose a range of actions based on the reality of the burden of illness but it seeks to take into account the culture and resources available locally.

This document is intended as a complement to the NCD Strategic Plan and as a framework for cancer control efforts. I challenge all stakeholders to work assiduously to deliver care that is effective, compassionate and gold standard. I look forward to seeing the plans and proposals developed, implemented and delivered expediently. I commit myself and my ministry to be ambitious about objectives and timelines while being realistic about resource levels and burden of illness.

**Lt. Col. the Hon. Jeffrey D. Bostic
Minister of Health and Wellness**

April 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document represents the contributions of a number of dedicated individuals and agencies from multiple sectors in Barbados. The areas of expertise represented include palliative care, cancer screening, cancer treatment, psychosocial support, surveillance, and public health administration. This work was done with support from the National Institute of Health's National Cancer Institute of the United States of America.

In particular, we want to highlight the benefits gained by the Ministry of Health and Wellness from participating in various regional and international control fora in the development of this plan.

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National Cancer Control Plan for Barbados

VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

VISION

To improve the health and wellbeing of all Barbadians with emphasis on the prevention and provision of effective cancer control systems.

MISSION

To address the epidemiological trends and management outcomes related to cancers in Barbados, through a collective response from government, private sector and civil society.

GOALS

- To support public education initiatives regarding the significance of diet, exercise, tobacco control and relevant immunizations as cancer prevention measures;
- To establish cancer screening protocols and management algorithms for colon, breast, prostate and cervical cancer in Barbados;
- To envisage cancer detection protocols for female gynaecological cancers based on emerging evidence in this field
- To acquire the capacity and proficiency to conduct genetic marker testing as an enhanced cancer diagnostic tool
- To facilitate continuing medical education on critical aspects of cancer care for the multidisciplinary health care team;
- To create care pathways for cancer treatment;
- To facilitate the integration of palliative care into the health system;
- To complement the National Strategic Plan for NCDs particularly with respect to cancer prevention and control;
- Timely use of surveillance data to guide the implementation of the National Cancer Plan.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Cancer is second only to cardiovascular disease as the leading cause of illness and death in Barbados, with the main cancer sites of public health concern being prostate, colon, breast and cervix. A CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report of Cancer, December 2016, in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean for the period 2003-2013, showed that prostate and lung cancer were the leading cause of cancer deaths in men, while breast and cervical cancer were the leading cause of death in women. What is of great concern to Barbados is the premature death attributable to cancers and the potential years of lives lost, from cancer, in persons less than age 65 years.

The Chief Medical Officer's Report 2010-2012 indicates that at risk populations are persons 45 years and older with breast and prostate cancer. However, there is some good news! The World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization indicates that up to 30-40% of cancers are preventable using simple lifestyle interventions including abstinence from tobacco products, limitation of the use of alcohol, having daily healthy and nutritious diets and daily physical activity and exercise. The Strategic Plan for NCDs 2015-2019 gives a roadmap for prevention and control activities with respect to NCDs and includes specific targets and indicators for cervix, breast and prostate cancers. The NCD Plan calls for the engagement of all sectors of society to work together, using health promotion solutions and strategies to solve the current public health challenges facing our Nation.

Reliable and accurate data sources assist in priority setting and in monitoring of prevention and control measures. The Barbados Cancer Registry is a component of a broader non-communicable disease registry, the Barbados National Registry for Chronic NCDs (the BNR), which covers stroke and heart attack as well. This registry has been acknowledged by the WHO/PAHO as being an example of best practice. Data from the registry have already begun to positively influence policy and programme development within the Ministry of Health and Wellness; for example, the scaling up of our Expanded Programme on Immunization to include HPV vaccination for prevention of cervical cancer, more broad-based immunohistochemistry for breast cancer and integrating palliative care into cancer treatment. Outputs of the registry have also informed the NCD Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

In an effort to scale up a holistic and comprehensive approach to Cancer in Barbados, the Ministry of Health & Wellness partnered with the National Cancer Institute of the U.S. National Institutes for Health and hosted a two-day workshop in May 2015 with a view to completing an Action Plan for Cancer in Barbados. The duration of the action plan is 5 years, commencing 2020, and includes a wide cross section of stakeholders drawn from government, the private sector and civil society. This plan takes into account the major priority areas including screening, prevention and control, early diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. The plan is time bound with deliverables and the plan is costed. Monitoring and evaluation of the plan will be executed by a Working Group consisting of members drawn from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the private sector and NGO Community. The Action Plan is strong on prevention using the pillars of healthy and nutritious diets, abstinence from tobacco and broader use of the HPV Vaccine, and recognizes that a competent and well-informed team of health care professionals is necessary to complement a national prevention and control programme. The action plan therefore calls for adoption of protocols to guide screening, diagnosis and treatment of cancers, the training of health care professionals and a humane approach to persons in the latter stages of their cancer journey through the provision of palliative care services. Many of the activities of the Action Plan have been integrated into the NCD Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

Barbados is committed to offering a range of preventative, diagnostic and therapeutic services for persons at risk of, and who face the challenges of having been diagnosed with cancer. This plan will go a long way to support these services using multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches. It contains a SWOT analysis, outlines assumptions for the plan and stakeholder involvement with regard to each priority area. Finally, the strategic direction is outlined in a log frame.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strong national primary health care system and social service provision
Central tertiary care setting
Fundamental human resource infrastructure for all elements of cancer control
Population-based epidemiologic surveillance system for cancers
Government support
Engaged Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)
Availability of basic chemotherapeutic, nuclear medicine and surgical options

STRENGTHS

Limited national guidelines for cancer screening and treatment
Rudimentary pain management algorithms
Inadequate integration of palliative care into public health care system
Outdated nuclear medicine infrastructure
Limited chemotherapeutic drug formulary

WEAKNESSES

To increase technical and human resource capacity through advanced education and training opportunities for health care and allied workers
New multi-sectoral (government/NGO/Academic) programme creation
Enhanced local research on cancer epidemiology and evidenced-based medicine
Incorporation of holistic care techniques into cancer support and palliative care

OPPORTUNITIES

System-wide technical and organizational deficiencies
Dynamic financial operating environment prone to significant external pressures
Competing public health concerns i.e.: new and emerging diseases

THREATS

ASSUMPTIONS

The viability of any plan assumes that infrastructure is considered and made available at all times so that the plan can be implemented and measured.

- Appropriate policy environment to facilitate the development and implementation of the plan;
- Funding is available;
- Dedicated human resources for primary and tertiary interventions;
- Engaged peer and family support regarding cancer control and prevention methods.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

	Prevention	Early Detection & Screening	Diagnosis and Treatment	Palliative Care
GOVERNMENTAL				
Ministry of Health and Wellness	X	X	x	x
Barbados Drug Service			x	x
Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training	X	X	x	x
NGO'S AND CIVIL SOCIETY				
Barbados Cancer Society	X	X		x
Healthy Caribbean Coalition	X			
Cancer Support Services	X	X		x
Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners (BAMP)	X	X	x	X
Barbados Nurses Association	X	X	x	x
OTHERS				
Insurance Companies/ Corporate Funding	X	X	x	x
Assisted Care Facilities				
Pharmacies distributing Cancer Drugs			x	x

LABORATORY SERVICES				
	Prevention	Early Detection & Screening	Diagnosis and Treatment	Palliative Care
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Laboratory		X	X	
Barbados Reference Laboratory		X	X	
Chem Screen Laboratory Services Inc.		X	X	
Integrated Pathology Services		X	X	
MEDIA				
Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation	X	X		
Voice of Barbados	X	X		
Barbados Advocate	X	X		
Nation News	X	X		
Barbados Today	X	X		
Loop News	X	X		
Barbados Gazette	X	X		
Bajan Reporter	X	X		
EDUCATION				
University of the West Indies /Chronic Diseases Research Center	X			x
Chronic Disease Research Center	X	X		x
Barbados National Registry		X	X	
Barbados Community College	X		x	
University of the Southern Caribbean	X			x

NATIONAL CANCER PLAN LOG FRAME

Priority Area 1: Prevention

Up to 40% of all cancers are preventable and there is overwhelming evidence from the literature that abstaining from tobacco products, healthy diet and regular exercise and immunization (human papilloma virus) of both preteen girls and boys can prevent cancers. The first report of the Surgeon General of the USA in 1964 gave the world the unequivocal evidence that tobacco causes cancer of the lungs and chronic pulmonary disease and since then has been associated with many other cancers including stomach, oropharynx and bladder. As a commitment to international efforts on tobacco prevention, Barbados signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004. The FCTC was the first global public health treaty that requests member states across the globe to take the appropriate preventative action to limit the effect of tobacco smoking including tax, regulatory and policy measures.

Adoption of healthy diets and daily exercise reduces the risk of all non-communicable diseases including some cancers. Diets that contain high levels of red meat and processed foods and that are low in fiber have been written about extensively in the literature. The evidence is stronger for association with colon, stomach and breast cancers; conversely food with protective nutrients may add many disease-free years as well as pleasure from good eating.

Barbados added the HPV to its Expanded Programme on Immunization in 2013 and although uptake has been less than expected, the plan calls for new approaches directed at reversing this trend through broader acceptance of the vaccine by the public.

Strategic Area	Objectives	Activities	Process Indicators	Responsible Agency	Cost (BDS)
Diet & Exercise	Objective 1: 80% of educational messages on diet and exercise and their roles in the prevention of cancer developed and disseminated via PSAs, Ads and Social Media by March 2022.	Activity 1: Conduct Public Education campaign promoting the benefits of diet and exercise in the prevention of cancer.	Documentation outlining Public Awareness Campaign % of educational messages and material on diet and exercise and its role in the prevention of cancer developed and disseminated.	National Nutrition Centre, Health Promotion Unit, Task Force on Wellness.	\$ 200,000
	Objective 2: At least 50% of approved recommendations from the National Stakeholders Dialogue Summary Report Implemented by March 2022.	Activity 2: Conduct National Stakeholder Dialogue on Cancer Prevention and its relation to diet and exercise conducted by March 2021.	National Dialogue Summary Report completed. % of recommendations from National Stakeholder Dialogue summary report implemented.	Barbados Drug Service, National Nutrition Centre, Health Promotion Unit, Task Force on Wellness.	\$5,000

<p>Tobacco Control</p>	<p>Objective 1: 100% of educational materials regarding packaging and labelling of tobacco products developed and disseminated by March 2022.</p> <p>Objective 2: Strengthen surveillance for evidence based decision-making by March 2022.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Conduct Public Education Campaign to support legislation regarding packaging and labelling of tobacco products.</p> <p>Activity 2: Conduct Global Youth Tobacco Survey and School Health Survey by March 2022.</p> <p>Activity 2: Conduct Behavioral Risk factor Survey by March 2024.</p>	<p>% of educational Materials Regarding packaging and labelling of tobacco products developed and disseminated.</p> <p>Survey Reports Completed</p> <p>Survey Reports Completed</p>	<p>Cancer Control Committee/Health Promotion Unit</p> <p>SMOH NCD/Health Promotion Unit</p> <p>SMOH NCD/UWI/CDRC</p>	<p>\$25,000</p> <p>CDC/PAHO</p> <p>Budgeted in NCD Strategic Plan</p> <p>Budgeted in NCD Strategic Plan</p>
<p>HPV</p>	<p>Objective 1: At least 70% of 11 year olds (boys and girls) vaccinated before the age of 12.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Conduct community health outreach to increase administration of HPV vaccine to children in the target group.</p> <p>Activity 2: Engagement of the Private Sector in the HPV Programme to support increase uptake.</p> <p>Activity 3: Conduct annual meetings with the managers of the vaccine administration sites to support increase uptake in vaccinations.</p>	<p>% uptake in the target groups</p>	<p>SMOH (S)/Health Promotion Unit</p> <p>Barbados Cancer Society</p> <p>SMOH (S)/Cancer Control Committee</p>	<p>MH Budgeted Activity</p> <p>\$5000</p>

Priority area 2: Early Detection

The cancers of major health concern in Barbados are breast, cervix, prostate, colon and the female gynaecological cancers, accounting for over 54% of all cancers. The screening methodologies for the cancer patient should be standardized using current available evidence and within the financial limits of Barbados to provide care. It is also recognized that screening, early diagnosis and early detection occur both in the private and public sectors and it is therefore critical that all early detection be grounded and consistent using available evidence. This process should be guided by the adoption of national protocols and guidelines. These will be informed by modern and international best practice and the local technical capacity of health care systems.

The Plan calls for quality training of all members of the health care team. Along with this approach is an effort to further engage the public including patients and their families through information sharing and empowerment. This approach will not only include engagement through traditional media but interventions emphasizing social media will be applied.

Strategic Area	Objectives	Activities	Process Indicators	Responsible Agency	Cost (BDS)
Early Detection of Barbados leading cancers	<p>Objective 1: Improve early detection</p> <p>through the development, dissemination And updating Of screening guidelines for The leading cancers by March 2022.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Establishment of a</p> <p>Committee to guide the development of the screening guidelines by March 2021.</p> <p>Activity 2: Development of screening guidelines for cancers affecting the Barbadian Population by March 2022.</p>	<p>Committee established. Guidelines Finalize d and disseminated. Public Education Campaign in place. Guidelines reviewed and Updated as required.</p>	<p>Health Care Specialist Team Cancer Control</p> <p>Committee, Barbados Cancer Society, BAMP, Patient Advocacy Group, Healthy Caribbean Coalition</p>	\$35,000

Priority Area 3: Diagnosis and Treatment

It has been estimated that 40% of cancers are preventable through lifestyle and immunization measures, however, for those persons who do develop cancer there is a need to design effective services that aim to achieve a cure where possible, or prolong and improve quality of life. These services should be evidenced based with clear guidelines including pathways to care. Therefore, the areas related to diagnosis and treatment in the National Cancer Control Action Plan will seek to augment the knowledge base regarding diagnosis of treatment of cancer as well as the times to treatment.

Strategic Area	Objectives	Activities	Process Indicators	Responsible Agency	Cost
Continuing Medical Education	Objective 1: Increase the number of staff exposed to training on critical aspects of cancer diagnosis and treatment on an annual basis.	Activity 1: Conduct two CME courses on critical aspects of cancer diagnosis and treatment annually.	Number of persons trained	BNR, Ministry of Health, Cancer Control Committee	\$5,000
Treatment Pathways for Cancer	Objective 1: Improve treatment pathways for cancers by March 2022.	Activity 1: Conduct care audits on access and referral systems to cancer treatment on an annual basis and implement recommendations for improvements to treatment pathways for cancer.	Audit reports available. Number of recommendations implemented.	Cancer Control Committee	\$20,000
Patient Education	Objective 1: Educate the public on the signs and symptoms of cancer and the benefits of early detection by March 2022.	Activity 1: Develop a public education campaign on: early detection, family support and treatment adherence.	Patient Education Programme in place.	Cancer Control Committee	\$40,000

Strategic Area	Objectives	Activities	Process Indicators	Responsible Agency	Cost
<p>Access to pharmaceuticals and modern nuclear medicine* infrastructure</p>	<p>Objective 1: Improved access to first line chemotherapeutic drugs and nuclear medicine by March 2023.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Conduct costing exercise for the sustainable delivery of first line chemotherapeutic agents. Activity 2: Conduct appropriate assessments of the newly introduced chemotherapeutic agents. Activity 3: Conduct assessment of nuclear medicine* system and services.</p>	<p>Costing exercise completed. Assessment Reports Available Assessment Report available.</p>	<p>Barbados Drug Service, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Corporate Barbados Cancer Control Team with relevant Technical input from NCI Cancer Control Committee</p>	<p>*significant costs To updating QEH nuclear Medicine Capacity. PET Scan acquisition Or outsourcing to local Private sector if this Becomes available</p>

Priority Area 4: Palliative Care

Palliative care is a holistic approach to health care provision that improves the quality of life of patients and their families who face the challenges associated with life threatening illnesses. It is applicable from the point of diagnosis and extends into the period of bereavement. The integration of culturally appropriate palliative care into health care systems has been demonstrated to improve the quality of life of patients; while reducing the cost of care for those who are most ill patients through reduction in hospitalizations and length of hospital stay.

Barbados has yet to achieve full integration of palliative care into the health care systems, therefore for those who are most ill, the Barbados National Cancer Control Action plan represents an opportunity to accelerate the integration process through promoting palliative care as a core component of cancer control and a key element of NCD provision.

Strategic Area	Objective	Activities	Process Indicators	Responsible Agency	Cost
Education and Awareness	<u>Objective 1:</u> Strengthen support to key stakeholders in the development of public awareness campaign (including the benefits of Palliative care and access pathways) by 2023.	<u>Activity 1:</u> Provide technical advice and support for Public Awareness Campaign.	Public Awareness Campaign developed and executed.	Health Promotion Unit Barbados Association of palliative care BACA USA University of the Southern Caribbean Cancer Control Committee	\$20,000
Capacity Building for Healthcare Providers	<u>Objective 1:</u> Support interdisciplinary training in Palliative Care including the use of palliative care drugs such as opioids by March 2022.	<u>Activity 1:</u> Conduct assessment of locally available training and training needs and Make recommendations based on the findings.	Assessment reports on training and training needs Available. Completed audit reports. Completed report on the updated drug Formulary.	Planning and Research Unit	\$20,000

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	<p>Objective 2: Identify gaps and Make recommendations for the improvement in the provision of Palliative Care services by March 2021.</p> <p>Objective 3: Ensure that essential Palliative Care drugs are included in the National Formulary by March 2023.</p>	<p>Activity 2: Conduct audits of institutional and community based Palliative Care services.</p> <p>Activity 3: Review the formulary and advise on the essential drugs to be included.</p>		<p>Cancer Control Committee SMOH (S)</p> <p>Cancer Control Committee</p>	
<p>Access and Referral Pathways</p>	<p>Objective 1: Support creation of admission and discharge pathways at public and private healthcare institutions by March 2023.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Conduct admission and Discharge pathways audit and make Appropriate recommendations.</p> <p>Activity 2: Advise on the creation of a multi-Disciplinary discharge team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.</p>	<p>Completed Audit</p> <p>Completed report on the Proposed multi-Disciplinary team for the QEH.</p>	<p>Health Promotion Unit</p> <p>Cancer Control Committee</p>	<p>\$5,000</p> <p>\$12,000</p>

PRIORITY AREA 5: SUPPORTIVE CARE

- a) Nutritional support and recommendations in keeping with existing best practice guidelines and utilizing current nutritional support within public and private sectors**
- b) Holistic complementary medicine and care especially in the areas of: acupuncture, mind-body medicine, nutritional therapy (not as alternative medicine but strictly complementary), spiritual support, naturopathic medicine, and physical-rehabilitation therapy**
- c) Utilize existing linkages and form new ones with local care support groups**
- d) Improve regulatory oversight of the complementary medicine sector**
- e) Provide training to complementary medicine sector to aid support and integration into cancer management pathways (*include in capacity building for healthcare providers noted on pg.15*)**

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

It is intended that the implementation of this action plan will be the first of many steps to ensuring access to high quality cancer care for all Barbadians. This plan is a vital part of the Ministry of Health and Wellness' strategy to reduce cancer cases and associated deaths of the island's population while also improving the quality of life of cancer patients throughout their journey.

The successful implementation of this action plan should greatly inform the development of a comprehensive cancer control strategy for Barbados which includes all of the cardinal features of cancer control- i.e. prevention, early detection and screening, diagnosis and treatment and palliation, coupled with holistic care, with these all being delivered in socially acceptable and affordable ways.

The integration of emerging diagnostic capabilities e.g. genetic tumour marker testing, and gold standard radiological diagnostics e.g. PET scans, is envisioned as part of a broader health sector development plan that would provide timely local access to patients in Barbados.

The authors believe that the action plan is a realistic and highly achievable in the context of the committed multi-sectoral stakeholder environment that exists in Barbados.

