



# CARIBBEAN WELLNESS DAY 2022

## OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, OUR HEALTH

Reimagining Healthy Spaces:  
*Active Societies, Smoke-Free Caribbean and Healthy Schools*



9 September 2022

### Media Release

## CARPHA, HCC and PAHO call on the Caribbean Community to “Reimagine Healthy Spaces” for Caribbean Wellness Day

The Caribbean Community is celebrating Caribbean Wellness Day (CWD) 2022 under the theme “Our Neighbourhood, Our Health”. In commemoration of the day, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), are calling on the region to “Reimagine Healthy Spaces” around three main themes - Active Societies, a Smoke Free Caribbean and Healthy Schools.

In a statement commemorating the occasion, Dr. Joy St John, Executive Director, CARPHA noted that, “We take this opportunity, at this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, to create a renewed vision and re-commit to the practices and policies that we know support the health and wellbeing of our Caribbean people.”

Built spaces and urban planning laws can significantly impact the level of movement in society and is a crucial element in ensuring a healthier Caribbean.

“The commitment of governments towards the implementation of intersectoral public policies and programs so that all neighbourhoods have basic services, safe public transportation, areas where we can socialise, safe streets, places to walk and green spaces, is so important.” PAHO Director, Dr. Carissa F. Etienne said. “I want to recognize the efforts of many municipalities in the region that are working on making their municipalities healthy, responding to the needs of people, and facilitating strategies that improve the conditions of places where they are born, work, study and have fun,” she added.

Another issue to be addressed during the “Reimagine Healthy Spaces” campaign is the negative impact that cigarettes have on both public health and the environment.

Dr. St John noted that, “Millions of trees are cut down annually to produce the number of cigarettes that the industry demands to maintain profits, while cigarette butts and packaging can contribute to environmental pollution.” She asserted that, “This reimagining of a smoke-free Caribbean, that limits the negative impact of the tobacco industry on our health and our environment is necessary, not just for our own health but for the health of the next generation.”

Sir Trevor Hassell, President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition noted that “Healthy Schools are a cornerstone of our neighbourhoods and a building block of a productive society. A Healthy school is smoke-free, promotes inclusive physical activity and is protected by healthy school policies.” He elaborated, “These policies would limit the sale and marketing of foods full of sugar, fats and salt both in and around schools, while increasing the availability of healthy foods and drinking water.” In

keeping with this, the recently launched digital campaign, '#ActOnFacts - The Food in Schools Matters', encourages public and policymaker support for the introduction of policies that puts the health of our children at the centre.

### **Caribbean Wellness Day**

Caribbean Wellness Day is celebrated each year on the second Saturday in September to address the threat posed by non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The day was originally conceived by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and is an integral part of the Port of Spain Declaration where the region united to fight the epidemic of NCDs. The event aims to increase awareness and promote activities to address non-communicable diseases including mental health issues.

The overall theme for Caribbean Wellness Day for the five year-period, 2020-2024 has been, "Power Through Collective Action". It is this collective power that can be harnessed to affect the much-needed changes that can transform our spaces into enabling environments for a healthier Caribbean people. Collectively, the region has the power to bring the vision of a healthier Caribbean to life - one person, one neighbourhood, one nation at a time.

CARPHA, HCC and PAHO invite the public to join the celebration by visiting our social media pages to share your vision of Healthy Spaces. The campaign will feature key facts around the need for change, enable conversation in our communities and encourage our leaders to continue to build on the commitments made in the historic Port of Spain declaration.

Follow the campaign by using the hashtags: #CaribbeanWellnessDay, #CWD2022, #CWDHealthySpaces

**###**