



Press Release

Tuesday 7th July, 2020

NCDS AND COVID-19: BUILDING BACK BETTER SERVICES

On July 7th, PAHO/WHO Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean hosted a webinar entitled NCDs and COVID-19: Building Back Better Services.

The webinar was developed to explore the relation with NCDs and COVID-19 latest data and operational guidance, with key insights from experts and country perspectives on how to balance the demands of the health system during the pandemic, and how to execute an adaptive, forward-looking strategy inclusive of Non-Communicable Diseases to build back better.

More than 180 professionals attended the webinar. Among them were representatives from Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education, Commerce, Transport; Planning Units; Non- Governmental Organizations; Regional and International Organizations; Academia; Trade Unions; Private Sector; Media; Youth Representatives and Persons Living with Non communicable Diseases.

In his Feature Address, Sir George Alleyne, Director Emeritus PAHO/WHO warned of three uncomfortable truths which we must face. He identified these as an aging world, the continued presence of NCDs and the emergence of “another infectious disease pandemic.”

Dr. Anselm Hennis, Director Non communicable Diseases and Mental Health, PAHO/WHO, gave a presentation on ‘Results of NCD service delivery and COVID-19 surveys’. He identified a need for communications messages on NCDs and COVID-19, and healthy eating. Then he recommended technical guidance to help manage persons with NCDs and COVID-19; and capacity building in the area of tele-medicine, virtual consultation and mental health support.

Dr. Hennis also delivered a presentation on ‘Recommended modifications for the safe and effective delivery of NCD services’. Here he outlined such strategies as providing adequate resources for health activities including COVID-19 Response;



amending governance and coordination mechanisms to meet the response required; prioritizing essential health services; optimizing service delivery settings and platforms, and health workforce capacity; maintaining availability of essential medicines and supplies; and strengthening communication strategies.

During the webinar, remarks were delivered by the Hon. Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment in Antigua and Barbuda, while Chief Medical Officer of St. Lucia, Dr. Sharon Belmar-George, gave an update on the trends noted during implementation of the HEARTS programs in Saint Lucia.

Also, Ms. Trudy Griffith, President, Diabetes Association of Barbados, reflected on the Impact of COVID-19 on service delivery.

Discussion followed the presentations. Dr. Carlene Radix, Head of the Health Desk at the OECS Secretariat and Mrs. Maisha Hutton, Executive Director, Healthy Caribbean Coalition, engaged in a Round Table Discussion on the topic 'Revitalizing NCD Services and adapting new modalities to build back better'.

-Link to Webinar-

The webinar NCDS AND COVID-19: BUILDING BACK BETTER SERVICES can be accessed via the below link, located on the website of PAHO/WHO Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Countries:

<https://www.paho.org/en/news/8-7-2020-video-webinar-ncds-and-covid-19-building-back-better-services>