



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

The Ministry of Health

Press Statement

The Hon. Kim Wilson, JP, MP Minister of Health

Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027

Date: 17 February, 2022

Good Day Media and Members of the Public,

Today, we are here to announce the launch of the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027, a five-year strategic plan for strengthening the Island's health system and improving our health outcomes.

You may recall our previous Health Strategy, which outlined Bermuda's path forward between 2014 and 2019, was due to be updated just before the global pandemic hit in 2020.

Covid-19 presented the healthcare system — here and around the world — with unexpected and unprecedented challenges. For us in Bermuda, it further highlighted some of the strengths and weaknesses of our healthcare system, and forced us to pause and rethink some of our goals and priorities.

Today, we are excited to share our refreshed Strategy with you as we progress toward the Ministry of Health’s vision of “healthy people in healthy communities”.

Prepared with the assistance of KPMG’s global health experts, the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027 is the product of meetings with the Ministry, and includes input received from the Strategic Leadership Group established prior to the pandemic, as well as the dedicated and diverse group of stakeholders who make up the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Steering Committee.

One of the highlights of this Strategy is its focus on the need for greater collaboration among healthcare industry stakeholders. We are building stronger partnerships so that, together, we can find solutions to the health challenges the Island is facing, while also ensuring more efficient use of healthcare system resources.

The Strategy also outlines a shift to a more people-centered approach to healthcare with the aim of delivering essential care that meets the needs of individuals and families today, and for many years to come. It aims to bring about health system reforms that enable people feel more included in the decision-making process around their health and wellness, as well as improving the patient and family experience as a whole.

Furthermore, the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027 prioritises the promotion of healthy living and preventative care.

We know that health promotion and disease prevention are essential ingredients in building a stronger health system, and we will be joining forces with other healthcare and community stakeholders to ensure this message is amplified and reaches all segments of our Bermuda population.

Many of the chronic illnesses that are impacting our community and placing a large burden on our healthcare resources, are strongly related to lifestyle factors including poor diet, physical inactivity and smoking.

We in the Ministry understand that more must be done to empower and support people to lead healthy lifestyles, and we are identifying ways to provide greater tools and resources to the public. Through public policy and other measures, our aim is to make it easier for people to shift their mindsets and behaviours towards making healthy choices.

In total, the updated Health Strategy outlines eight (8) core areas that must be foremost in our minds as we seek to strengthen Bermuda's healthcare system. They are:

- promoting healthy living and preventative care,
- focusing on people-centered care,
- understanding our population's health needs,
- providing universal access to healthcare coverage,
- strengthening our healthcare workforce,
- harnessing healthcare technology,
- partnership and collaborative working, and,
- preventing wasteful care and promoting efficiency.

You may be asking why the need to strengthen Bermuda's healthcare system and why now? The fact remains that in its current state, Bermuda's healthcare system is unsustainable. In addition to the high costs, which continue to grow year on year, the health of our people is also struggling in many respects.

According to statistics gathered pre-pandemic, 50% of Bermuda's residents have at least one chronic condition such as diabetes, heart or kidney disease; while 75% of our population is overweight or obese. Additionally, one-third of residents have high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol.

In terms of cost, \$29 Million is spent annually on dialysis alone, and the demand for this service grows by 10% each year. Bermuda spends 11.55% of our GDP on health, which is the third-highest in the OECD. The Island's health expenditure grew 92% between 2006 and 2017. If nothing is done now, it is forecast to grow a further 43% in the next two decades.

We understand that the positive changes we need to achieve will not happen overnight. Bermuda's health system challenges are complex and will require collaboration between all stakeholders to see the people-centered, multi-year change required for a more sustainable future.

The Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027 continues and refreshes Government's commitment to a healthy Bermuda. The necessary health system strengthening is incremental, however, and will take place over the long-term, initially a period of three to five years. This is not a 'Big Bang' version of transformational change.

The strategic principles embodied in the Health Strategy provide a framework to address what are admittedly challenges of long-standing identified by stakeholders and the public.

Included in the Strategy is one of this Government's ambitions to ensure that all people have equitable access to essential, affordable health services through Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

As it stands, up to 35% of the population remains unable to access quality healthcare without financial hardship. This includes those that are uninsured - around 12% of Bermuda's population; as well as those have defined unaffordable health insurance or are underinsured, which accounts for approximately 23% of the population.

Providing universal health coverage — for an essential benefits package for all residents — is not something important only to Bermuda. The World Health Organization has challenged countries around the globe to look at healthcare as a basic human right, which is why many countries around the world have already begun the journey to adopting universal health coverage.

Although each country has taken a different path to achieving this goal, we in Bermuda must decide for ourselves — with the help of all stakeholder groups — what essential health services we will cover based on the current and future needs of our people, as well as the resources available.

We look forward to working with all healthcare stakeholders, including our local doctors, nurses, insurers and our businesses, union and community partners, to make the necessary changes to better Bermuda's healthcare system.

I am grateful for the work that has been done to date to develop the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027, and am optimistic about our path forward to creating a healthy Bermuda community.

Thank you.